

Here, we must make a distinction. It is evident that animal food is not absolutely necessary. Herbivores are beings like us, having the same physiological laws of nutrition, heat and respiration and still they do not starve although they consume no meat whatever. The Hindoos, Arabians, Chinese and others are satisfied with rice, dates, flour, vegetables, and fruits. If, to these aliments they join milk, eggs, butter and cheese they then possess a perfectly sufficient alimentation.

Chemists and physiologists agree in saying that in bread, peas and beans, there is enough azote to supply nutrition of the body. Cheese of all others is the alimentary substance which under the smallest volume contains the greatest quantity of nitrogen. Therefore the question is decided; we can live and live comfortably without eating meat. But this proposition by no means involves the consequence that animal alimentation must be given up. It is understood, and accepted that a certain quantity of nitrogen is necessary to the repair of our tissues. Milk, cheese, eggs, flour, fruits and vegetables can fully supply this quantity of nitrogen, but that alimentation has the inconvenience of requiring a large alimentary mass and consequently necessitates a more laborious digestive work than if a small quantity of meat were added to it. 100 grammes of bread contain about 1 gramme of azote, whereas 100 grammes of meat contain 3 grammes of it. Therefore as far as the nutrition in nitrogen is concerned, three times more bread than meat would be required to meet the wants of the organism. Besides, in supplying our system with the necessary quantity of azote, by the means of feculents and vegetables alone, we would be compelled to introduce into the stomach a disproportionate quantity of starchy food, with all the dangers of an excess of this kind of alimentation. In short, no one group of aliments is capable of alone properly sustaining healthy life and a combination of all, or nearly all the different constituents of diet is required to accomplish the best results.

It remains to me, now, but to thank you for your kind attention. I fear that I have perhaps abused your good will by the length of my paper. The only excuse I have to offer is that I had unfortunately no time to make it shorter. As it is, all my ambition has been to interest you. If I have succeeded I declare myself happy and satisfied.