

He added, that being one day in England, in the course of a conversation with some officers of the London jails, these officers had found the sum exorbitant. They said that each prisoner in London did not cost them, for food, more than 4 cents daily. "If we fed them, they added, at the rate of 8 cents, as you do in your country, our jails would soon become insufficient to receive the mass of those who would rush in solely to be fed in such a luxurious manner."

These examples suffice to demonstrate how few aliments are required to keep life and repair the wastes of the organism. Twenty grammes of nitrogen and 300 grammes of carbon are all that is wanted: or in other terms, physiologists have found that within 24 hours, 125 grammes of meat were sufficient for an adult, associated to 300 grammes of potatoes and 50 grammes of butter and cheese. The food which is taken in excess is not absorbed; it then undergoes chemical changes in the alimentary canal and at last putrifies; and quantities of gas such as carbon-dioxide, carburetted hydrogen and hydrogen sulphide are formed, as I said before, in explaining the fermentation produced during the digestive process. It is then, especially, that dyspepsia arises and that constipation and irritation, causing diarrhoea which does not always empty the bowels, are produced. Some of the putrid substances are absorbed, and then appear signs of evident poverty of the blood, a febrile condition, torpor and heaviness, fetor of the breath and sometimes, possibly, even jaundice.

When excess of albuminates continually passes into the system, if especially a certain amount of exercise is not taken at the same time, there is a want of proportion between the absorbed oxygen and the absorbed albuminoids which lead to imperfect oxidation. Nitrogenous substances, instead of being converted into soluble urea, remain in the state of insoluble uric acid; gouty affections have no other origin. Should excess of starchy food be taken, an excess of fat is produced which accumulates in the tissues, leading to obesity with all its inconveniences.

In conclusion, what can we say of Tolstoi's third proposition, that animal alimentation should be replaced by vegetable diet? You know that there exists a certain class of individuals who contend with Tolstoi that animal alimentation is absolutely useless; they are called vegetarians