

be considered pure fat, which is easy of digestion and assimilation if the condition of the stomach be normal and too much be not taken. Cheese is a highly nitrogenous and exceedingly valuable food. It not only is easily digested but also assists in the digestion of other foods. Its price, when we consider these important desiderata, recommends it for more extensive use than it at present enjoys.

The vegetable foods are characterized by low albuminoids and high carbo-hydrates. The amount of fat in most of them is small, and need hardly be taken into account as a nutrient. Peas and beans (fruit of the Leguminosæ) stand out as exceptions in containing large percentages of albuminoids. Oatmeal also more closely approximates animal foods than any of the other cereals. The starch and sugar of vegetable foods is as a rule very digestible. The vegetables proper consist largely of starch, or allied substances, and water. Potatoes, cabbage and many other vegetables are also valuable for the mineral salts they contain. Asparagus, lettuce, celery and some others contain but little nutritive matter, but play a very important hygienic rôle, aiding the digestion of other viands, diluting the more concentrated foods, and thus rendering them more easily assimilable; the salts and active principles many of them contain have a beneficial and medicinal effect on the system. Vegetables must form a large part of every wholesome diet. Fruits are largely water, and are divided into (*a*) Sweet, in which sugar predominates when ripe; (*b*) Acid, containing tartaric and citric acid, generally refreshing and giving a healthy tone to the organs; (*c*) Starchy; and (*d*) Oily, the essential oils in which give the peculiar flavour. Fruits, though having a low nutritive value, are, when ripe, easy of digestion. The pectose of green fruit is indigestible. This as the fruit ripens turns to pectin, akin to sugar, which, as before stated, is easily digested. The odour and flavour of fruits, due as before mentioned to oils and volatile ethers, chiefly abundant in the pericarp, seem to enhance their palatability.

Here a word may be said of a large class of substances which act rather as stimulants than nutrients. Tea, coffee, spices and alcohol come under this category. They act as appetisers, and in moderation as useful and proper excitants of the digestive organs, especially in cases of enfeebled digestion.