

Clute (L.)
TOBACCO—ITS USE AND EFFECT ON THE HUMAN SYSTEM.

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[Read at a Sanitary Convention held at Ionia, Mich., Dec. 13 and 14, 1883; and reprinted from a Supplement to the Annual Report of the Michigan State Board of Health for the year 1884.]

[REPRINT No. 157.]

In submitting this paper, I claim no merit for original research; I act only as a middleman. That the use of tobacco is bad for humanity I have no doubt. No one approves of it as being a good thing; still its use is very general.

If we could confine its effect to those who seem to enjoy it, perhaps it would be better to pass it by; but this cannot be done. A person might as well think of living with a skunk in the cellar, without protest or effort to get him out, as to permit the tobacco chewer and smoker full swing in society without effort to, in some small degree, press upon him the rights of those who are so fresh, green, and unsophisticated as not to adopt the manly (?) habit. To light a cigar with ease, and adjust with proper precision the angle it should form with the nose, and delicately tip the ashes from the burnt end is, as the world goes, a real accomplishment, and requires as much tact and brain development as for the South-sea islander to nicely discriminate how many fingers he shall use to dip into his poi and carry them with their adhesive load to his mouth, without a continuous drizzle from the calabash in which the poi is made. Whether it shall be one-fingered, two-fingered, or three-fingered poi is a question that as much bothers the young heathen, as the average young American is troubled to learn how to smoke and yet not disgrace himself by a clownish grip of the weed with his teeth.

Among the effects of tobacco I notice, 1st, It tends to make many who use it filthy and regardless of the comfort of others. To blow into another's face smoke loaded with decomposing matter from diseased lungs and teeth, is a common occurrence among smokers. To fill the office of hotels with such smoke and oblige those who cannot endure it to leave, is an everyday affair. To spit tobacco juice on floors and carpets, in utter disregard of common decency, is frequently done. For a company of chewers and smokers to gather around a hot stove and by the hour squirt tobacco juice over its surface until the air is full of the sickly odor that comes from the evaporated saliva, is thought proper and in accord with such conduct as befits gentlemen of the weed. Note, too, the perfect hog-like condition in which the chewer will leave his seat in the cars; see his teeth, his mouth generally; note the stench from his clothes. Consider all these facts, and say whether the use of tobacco does not tend to make one filthy and regardless of the comfort of others.

2d. The use of tobacco injures health, the most competent medical authority so says. Taylor, on Poison, a standard work, quoted and used in all our courts as excellent authority, says that tobacco may act as an irritant poison, although it more directly affects the brain, spinal marrow, and heart; that it appears chiefly to affect the brain and heart. Numerous cases are cited of deaths occurring by tobacco poisoning. Those who work in tobacco factories are poisoned by inhaling the vapor which arises where large quantities are kept. The primary effects are said to be headache, nausea, languor, loss of appetite and sleep. The secondary effects are manifested by a general disturbance of health.

The practice of smoking and chewing produces a kind of morbid luxury and is as earnestly to be condemned as the opium habit of the Chinese. The volatile oil of tobacco, containing nicotine, is brought into immediate contact with the mucous membrane, producing faintness, giddiness,

and sickness in those not accustomed to the practice. Two cases are cited where smoking produced death in a short time. In a sense, the system adjusts itself to the effect of tobacco, as the arsenic eater and opium chewer's system does. Those who insist that many use tobacco and escape without seeming direct injury to health, and therefore argue that it is harmless, could with like reason show that the opium habit is harmless. Then we have a right to look at the effects on posterity. The father may not suffer, and yet may transmit a tainted blood and corrupt taste to his children.

The most known effects of tobacco are said by Taylor to be a tendency to produce blindness, palpitation of the heart, paralysis, diarrhea, and disease of the teeth and mucous membrane of the mouth and tongue. Dr. Drysdale, in a paper read before the British Medical Association, August, 1874, says that in the course of one week he met with two cases of complete blindness in men, entirely due, he was sure, to the use of tobacco. One patient was twenty-seven years of age, and had been an extensive smoker for six years; the other was twenty-four years old and had smoked and chewed for years.

Affections of the gums and tongue are frequently seen in old smokers, and their tongues will look as if painted with a solution of nitrate of silver. Dyspepsia and diarrhea, the same doctor says, are more frequently caused by smoking than many will admit, and Dr. Taylor agrees with him in saying that the habit is productive of many nervous diseases which those who indulge in tobacco persistently assign to other causes. Numerous cases are cited where tobacco has been used as a poison to produce death. In June, 1854, a man was charged with the death of an infant ten weeks old, by poisoning it with tobacco. He insisted that he put the tobacco in its mouth to make the infant sleep, but the infant was completely narcotized, and died the second day. A quarter of an ounce infused in a pint of liquid is said to be sufficient to destroy three persons, and Dr. Taylor suggests that it is very likely used to quite an extent to aid the purpose of robbers, and that porter and other liquors sold in brothels are often drugged with tobacco or snuff. This is the best thing I have heard of a "brothel," but it would be better if they would put in arsenic in such quantity that one drink would suffice to prevent a second visit. This would do much to purify the morals of society.

I have cited thus fully from Taylor on Poisons, because he is a recognized authority in courts, and no one can charge him with being a temperance fanatic. The principles he has gathered and discussed in his book are constantly referred to, and are largely the guide of our judges in passing upon the questions of the liberty, life, and death of our citizens. Now I add to Dr. Taylor's authority the testimony of the following well-known, able, and experienced physicians:

Dr. Avery, of Greenville, in reply to my question as to his opinion of the use of tobacco, says: "I have no hesitation in saying that in my judgment the use of tobacco is most decidedly injurious to all young and growing persons, to all persons of spare habits and nervous temperament, and at most of doubtful benefit to all other persons."

Dr. Martin, of Greenville, says: "*Tobacco works only injury to the user.* In a practice of nearly twenty years I cannot recall an instance where, as medical adviser, I ever recommended its use as conducive to health. Its effects on the system are seen on every hand. I believe it to be one of the most potent causes of disease of the heart, now so common. The various nervous affections which are growing more prevalent, may be traced in numerous instances to the influence of tobacco. Acting, as it does, directly on the nervous system,

which regulates and controls every organ of the body, all the vital processes, such as digestion, assimilation, nutrition, and secretion, are affected injuriously by its poisonous influence."

Dr. Logan, of Ionia, strongly condemns its use, and speaking of its effect, says: "It first stimulates the heart's action, then renders its action irregular, and finally paralyzes it. Its inebriating effects are akin to those produced by spirituous liquors. Long continued smoking produces nervous debility, irregularity of the heart's action, mental weakness, deranged digestion, palpitation, wakefulness, etc."

Dr. Barnes, of Ionia, in reply to my request for his opinion as to the use of tobacco, says: "I have observed with considerable care the effects of tobacco upon the human system and am convinced that they are very pernicious. When used to excess (and it is next to impossible to use it in moderation any great length of time) it deranges the nervous and circulatory systems, and is, I think, one of the most frequent causes of dyspepsia, which is attended with pain in the chest, palpitation and irregular action of the heart, and dizziness of the head. I have come to think that in very many of the sudden deaths which are attributed to heart disease, or paralysis, tobacco is a potent factor in the cause. It is also the cause of blindness or partial loss of vision, in many cases."

Dr. Romig, of Ionia, gives his views in brief as follows: "The habitual use of tobacco is injurious. Young persons, and especially those of an excitable or nervous temperament, are greatly injured by using tobacco, even in small quantities. Some of the effects produced by its use are dyspepsia, defective nutrition, paleness and emaciation, and various nervous disorders, the most frequent of which are palpitation of the heart, hypochondriac feelings, and neuralgic pains, especially of the head and eyes."

Dr. Long, of Ionia, gives his opinion in the following language: "I regard it as unquestionably injurious in any form in which it may be used. It is a potent cause of nervous affections, and by its effects upon the nervous system is the indirect cause of disease of many organs of the body; it enfeebles the intellect, and no doubt will entail suffering upon generations to come by heredity. In no case is it medicinally useful, at least where more efficacious remedies are not applicable, and such as are not open to the objection of habituating the patient to their use. It is not entitled to a place in medicine, and is no more worthy of cultivation than the deadly opium of Java."

A teacher in our public schools refers me to an instance of the effect of tobacco on a boy now about fourteen years of age, who has smoked and chewed for three or four years. At ten he was an ordinarily bright child, with average prospects of making a man; now he sits a good deal of the time in a half-stupid condition, complains much of headache, and is evidently approaching a demented state.

From all sources comes unquestionable evidence that tobacco is injurious. The testimony I have cited to you, confirming as it does the doctrine of Taylor, would be sufficient to convict any citizen charged with crime, supposing his conviction to depend on showing that tobacco is injurious to the human system. But aside from its effects on the human system, the expense of using tobacco is great. It loads every consumer with a worse than useless pecuniary burden. It takes money that in many instances would make comfortable a wife and children, who are now doomed to live in cheerless, miserable homes.

Rev. W. Gardner, of Kalamazoo, who has done much earnest work in sounding the alarm because of the tobacco evil, in a lecture delivered in Ionia

regarding the expense to the people for tobacco in the old fourth internal revenue district in Michigan, said, basing his statement on information obtained from the collector of the district, "that the annual cost to consumers in the district was estimated at one million five hundred thousand dollars. The same year the total current expenses of the State University of Michigan was, on the authority of President Angell, \$142,402.51. The money paid for tobacco by the people of the old fourth district would pay the current expenses of ten institutions like the University of Michigan, and leave a surplus, in round numbers, of \$7,600. The same year there were in attendance at the University nearly 1,500 students. At the same rate of expenditure, the money paid by the consumers of tobacco in the fourth district would bring 15,750 young men and women within reach of as fine educational advantages as are found in America. Considered from an economic and health standpoint, there is no reform that is more deserving of attention of all who have the welfare of the people at heart."

There were six internal revenue districts in Michigan, each consuming as much, and some more, than the fourth. We see at once that the expense is truly appalling; and when we consider that we claim to be a civilized nation, it is well nigh incredible to think that so much of the muscle, blood, and energy of our people is annually wasted in the production, manufacture, and use of this noxious weed. Ruining as it does many who use it, blighting and marring everyone who partakes, what shall be done to stay the tide of woe that is rising and sweeping over the human race?

In 1855, while upon the island of Nukahiva, one of the Marquesas group in the south Pacific ocean, I made this entry in my journal: "Tuesday, February 27.—To-day I have been ashore with others of the crew, having a day of liberty and general recreation, visiting among the natives, and rambling about this beautiful island. Among the curious things which I noticed as forming a part of the manners and customs of the people, is the disgusting habit they have of lurching from each other's heads. They actually partake of warm, living flesh from each other, and this without any process of vivisection whereby the head is at all mutilated or in the least harmed. The method is simply this: Not having much to do for the inside of the head they devote the outside to raising lice, and it seems to be a comfortable pastime for one to sit and with his companion's head in his lap, carefully pick out and eat the lice. The sight of such a feast was a matter of great interest to us all, and the disgusting habit was freely denounced as a heathenish practice, only possible among the very lowest order of the human race. One of our crew, a young man from New England, with a fine physical development and fair mental power, insists that before witnessing this sight he had no thought that any portion of mankind were ever so low in their tastes, and that the spectacle tended to make him a confirmed believer in Darwin's theory of the origin and development of the human race. But I noticed that my friend, while making his sharp criticism of this South sea island habit, had a large chew of plug tobacco in his mouth, and frequently sent out over the deck a quantity of tobacco juice and saliva. The thought occurs to me, Which is the most to be condemned, these ignorant savages, for eating lice, which in no way harm them, are inexpensive, and to their taste 'luscious,' and fat, or the use of tobacco by one who knows better and has had the full benefit of schools and all the advantages which are supposed to pertain to a highly civilized race? Is civilization, after all, a mere matter of taste, and is the poor islander to be frowned upon as of heathenish habits merely because he prefers lice to tobacco?"

Tossed in a whale-ship's fore-castle here in this remote harbor on the Pacific, I will attempt no answer, but when I get home will have some of the wise men of America tell me and explain in just what civilization consists."

The years that have passed since my visit to this island have not entirely cleared away the dim view I had of civilization in younger days. Perhaps the most that can be said of us is that we sin with light,—we know better than we do. Certain it is that with the tobacco evil clouding the best development of our race, with its poisonous effects undermining the health and tainting the blood of millions of our people, there is a seeming unaccountable indifference on the part of society to its use. All christendom denounces the opium habit of the Chinese, but is it a whit worse than the tobacco habit of the Americans? It is merely a "fashion." Young men endure as much misery to acquire the habit as Chinese infants do in having their feet rolled under and deformed, and for no more worthy purpose.

I trust no one will think that I expect this protest against the use of tobacco will do, if any, but the smallest fraction of good. Habits grow upon people, become deeply rooted in their natures, and no matter how bad they may be, it is a thankless task to remonstrate with those addicted to them. There would be about the same chance of success in attempting to reason a South sea islander out of his habit of eating lice, as in persuading a confirmed chewer or smoker of tobacco to renounce the habit. But sanitary reform recognizes no venerable errors, no ancient cobwebs of superstition are too sacred to be swept away by the reformer's broom. All along the line I note the alarm is being given. The Evangelical Association of Germany, in their conference held at Stuttgart, in Wurtemberg, in June, 1883, adopted the following resolution: "Inasmuch as the use of tobacco promotes drunkenness, and is degrading, therefore we will use all our influence against this evil."

Here you get at the drift of Christian thought in Germany.

The M. E. church in this country is taking a noble stand in opposition to intemperance, and the use of tobacco; and many other religious denominations are doing much to further this good cause, so that the outlook now is such as to give promise that not many years hence a man with a tobacco-poisoned body, and in continuous use of the weed, no matter how high he bids his pew-rent, cannot be recognized as a member in good standing of any respectable religious denomination; no more than he now can and be commonly seen drunk upon the street. And what is full better, he will not pass current in society, but be marked as one that civilization has failed to civilize.

This is to me an indication of the growth of civilization, a gradual upward movement of humanity. Who can stand in the way of such progress and not be a traitor to his home, to his country, to mankind? It is God moving in his mysterious way, through the operation of laws set in motion with the beginning of time.

It surely must be the object of this convention to put as much truth in circulation as possible; we ought not to seek to discuss facts and principles, and then store them away in the vaults of memory, as our government coins and piles away silver dollars. Society is fully cognizant of the tobacco evil, but the knowledge is not in general use. Can we do aught to make it more current. Manifestly we can do this much. Each can, by example and precept, aid in the cause. We are solemnly, as good citizens, bound to this course. "The better a man fulfills every requirement of life, alike as regards his own body and mind, as regards the bodies and minds of those dependent on him, and as regards the bodies and minds of his fellow citizens, the more varied do

his activities become." If you believe in theological dogmas, you are bound by every principle of revealed religion to stand for the highest type of Christian perfection, to see that your salt doth not lose its savor, lest you be cast out and trodden under the feet of men.

If you are not a believer in theological dogmas, remember you are in no way relieved from using your utmost effort to benefit mankind; all the moralities of religion are made clear and binding by the revelations of science. There is no place in the church, in the home, in society, no nook nor corner in the realms of truth, where the tobacco user can take refuge and find comfort as one having been just and fair to himself and as having performed his full duty to the human race.

Bear in mind this is not upon my authority, neither is it an *ex parte* hearing. I give you the opinion of our best physicians, I cite you to standard works upon the subject, I point to the victims of the habit daily seen upon our streets. From every source of information comes overwhelming proof to sustain what I have said in relation to this evil.

