

A Treatise on the Evils of Tobacco

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We would like to say a few words through your columns on the subject introduced at our last meeting, in the song so ably reworded by Miss Southwick, Viz: Tobacco. We do not wish to deal with the abominable habit of chewing, but only with the more general one of smoking.

First, is it wholesome? We think not. There are smokers who claim that as Doctors recommend people in certain cases to smoke, it cannot be detrimental to health. It might as reasonably be urged, that as in some cases poisons, such as, opium, and arsenic are beneficial, therefore, they are good to indulge in at all times. Again, pure air is universally acknowledged to an essential of good health; how then is it possible that it can be healthy to sit for hours in rooms, the atmosphere of which would give one unused to tobacco-smoke a splitting headache in half an hour. We have not space to dwell longer on this aspect of the subject, but will proceed to a more delicate one, namely, whether it is polite to smoke in the presence of ladies. There are, as we all know, many different opinions on this subject. It is urged by some that ladies like it, nay enjoy it. Perhaps some do, but we believe that the majority only tolerate it, either because they have not the courage to express their opinions, or, being themselves unselfish, and knowing the weakness of men, they do not wish to deny them what they seem to consider one of their greatest enjoyments.

One of the strongest arguments against smoking is, we think, that when once indulged in, the habit takes such hold on a man, that, becoming second nature, he indulges in it more and more as he gets older, until, if forced to give it up, it would have a very depressing effect on his happiness and temper, particularly the latter. Much has been said of the extravagance of smoking from a money point of view, but of that we say nothing, believing that provided we have enough of these useful and necessary articles, dollars and cents, we have a perfect right to spend that part of our income in the way that gives us most enjoyment, always supposing there is no harm in it, which we believe is not the case as regards smoking.

We have not the faintest hope that the above remarks will have the effect of abating one cigar or pipe from the daily allowance of any of our bearers, but we would urge all grown-up people to do their best to persuade boys that it is not necessary to true manliness, to go through the sickening torture of their first smoke, but that on the contrary it would show more spirit if they would refuse to yield to the persuasions of bigger boys, and so avoid fettering themselves with a habit so hard to break, as that of smoking.

Much more might be said on this subject, but we are afraid that we have already exhausted the patience of many a smoker among our bearers, so will stay our hand, after asking any gentleman to give a clear and sufficient reason why ladies should not smoke that is not equally applicable to gentlemen. – Yrs, & etc, A Tobacco Ex-Chewer!