

**Practical observations on the use and abuse of tobacco : greatly enlarged from the original communication on the effects of tobacco smoking, which appeared in Medical Times and Gazette, August 5, 1854 / by John Lizars.**

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**Publication/Creation**

Edinburgh : W. H. Lizars, 1854.

**Persistent URL**

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

(27)

ON THE

USE AND ABUSE

OF

TOBACCO.

BY

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EDINBURGH:

W. H. LIZARS. LONDON: S. HIGHLEY, JUN.;

AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

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PRINTED BY W. H. LIZARS, EDINBURGH.

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## PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

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### USE AND ABUSE OF TOBACCO.

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ALTHOUGH for a considerable time past I had collected many important facts regarding the Use and Abuse of Tobacco, the publication of these practical observations has nevertheless been in some measure accelerated by the perusal of a paper by Professor Sigmond of Vienna, "Upon Syphilitic Contagion from Cigar Smoking," which appeared in the *Medical Times and Gazette*, under "Selections from Foreign Journals." From the brief statement there given, it is difficult to decide what opinion Dr. Sigmond entertains on the subject—whether he considers that the Tobacco generates the syphilitic ulceration of the lips, tonsils, and gums; or that the cigar is impregnated with the venereal virus, through the medium of the manufacturer of it.

Many cases of syphilitic virus, introduced into the healthy constitution by smoking a cigar or pipe used by a diseased person, have come under my notice. The practice is by no means uncommon in some ranks of life, for two individuals to smoke the same pipe or cigar alternately, the one taking a puff or *draw* after the other,



and in this way the morbid poison produces a similar effect to what is exemplified in the communication of yaws or sibbens, by drinking out of an infected cup or vessel. I have often been consulted by gentlemen having marked syphilitic ulcerated throat, which they could not account for, having had no primary symptoms on the genitals. On interrogating them, they have admitted lighting a pipe used by another, or having accepted of a puff of a friend's cigar. Some patients have presented themselves with syphilitic ulceration on the lower or upper lip, or the commissure between them, having a thickened base. Some have had syphilitic ulcers of the mucous membrane of the cheeks, tongue, and tonsils. A few have had, with the preceding ulcers, secondary eruption of the skin and loose hair: while others have been affected with secondary condylomata. I once witnessed an operation performed upon a woman with syphilitic ulcer of the lower lip, combined with a hardened base, produced by smoking a pipe of a syphilitic patient. Excision of the diseased mass was resorted to by the operator, a man of great experience and dexterity, mistaking the affection for carcinoma. In a few weeks after the operation, the secondary syphilitic eruption manifested itself, and was cured by the hydriodate of potass. It is scarcely possible to heal a syphilitic sore, or to unite a fractured bone, in a devoted smoker — the constitution seems to be vitiated like his who is affected with scurvy. A remarkable change occurs to the excessive smoker, when he labours under influenza or fever, as he then not only loses all relish for the cigar or pipe, but even actually loathes them. Does not this important fact



satisfactorily show, that the *furor tabaci* depends on the morbid condition produced on the salivary secretion and organ of taste by the deleterious drug, and at the same time illustrate the pathological law, that two morbid states seldom or ever co-exist in the same individual? The sudden removal of all desire to smoke, affords the best refutation to the delusive representations which the unhappy Tobacco victim urges for continuing the injurious habit, on the ground, that its abandonment would be prejudicial to his health, and proves, if he had a *will* to relinquish the pipe or cigar, he would soon find a *way*. The best argument to use in dealing with the obstinate prejudices of such people, is to tell them, that an *accidental* attack of a new disease can *safely and at once* occasion the total withdrawal of Tobacco, without producing any bad consequences.

When Tobacco is too much indulged in, it produces, both locally and constitutionally, the most dire effects. Locally, smoking causes ulceration of the lips, tongue, gums, mucous membrane of the mouth or cheeks, tonsils, velum, and even pharynx. Many, from smoking, produce carcinomatous ulceration of the lower or upper lip, or its commissure, requiring excision of the diseased structure. One individual, a captain of the Indian navy, fell a victim under my care (from smoking Cherouts). When I first saw him, he had ulceration of the mucous membrane of his left cheek, extending backwards to the tonsil and pharynx of the same side, having all the characteristic appearances of carcinoma. The disease resisted every variety of treatment. Internally — alteratives and mild diet; externally — fomentations, poultices, a solution of honey and



water, nitric acid. From this case and other instances, it would appear that the cigar induces carcinoma just as readily as the *cutty-pipe*. It would seem that the pungent oil of the Tobacco, combined with the heat, constitutes the exciting cause. The ulceration of the lips, especially the lower, so closely resembles syphilis, that it requires great care and examination to distinguish it. If there be no carcinomatous condition of the ulcerated surface of the lips, mouth, or throat, rinsing the mouth with a solution of honey (a teaspoonful in a tumbler of warm water) three or four times a-day, prescribing an alterative powder of the bicarbonate of soda  $\mathfrak{dij}$ , rhubarb  $g_v^{ra}$ , colomba  $g_v^{ra}$  twice a-day; a blue pill once a-week; light diet, as the farinaceous, with occasionally fowl or veal; confinement to a large well ventilated room; and the rigid abstinence of the pernicious weed, will generally soon effect a cure. In some, it may be necessary to touch the ulcerated surface with nitric acid every fourth or fifth day.

Some devoted smokers say that they cannot give up such a luxury, any more than the drunkard can give up his stimulus. But I have known instances of both classes of individuals manfully giving them up. There is an officer in Her Majesty's Service, who had upwards of ten severe attacks of delirium tremens, and is now a teetotaller, and has been so for upwards of fifteen years. And the following case, from the Half-Yearly Abstract of the *Medical Sciences*, for January onwards to July, 1854, page 70, satisfactorily shows, that Tobacco can be given up. It is likewise a terrible illustration of its baneful effects on the constitution. Drs. Rankin and Radcliffe, the editors, head it — A case of *Angina Pectoris*,



*resulting from the Use of Tobacco*, and thus introduce it — “The following case possesses a very high degree of interest.” The history of the case is related as follows by Dr. Corson of New York.

A highly intelligent man, aged sixty-five, stout, ruddy, early married, temperate, managing a large business, after premising that he commenced chewing Tobacco at seventeen, swallowing the juice, as is sometimes customary, to prevent injuring his lungs from constant spitting, and that years after he suffered from a gnawing, capricious appetite, nausea, vomiting of meals, emaciation, nervousness, and *palpitation of the heart*, dictated to Dr. Corson recently, the following story —

“Seven years thus miserably passed, when one day after dinner I was suddenly seized with intense pain in the chest, gasping for breath, and a sensation as if *a crowbar were pressed tightly from the right breast to the left, till it came and twisted in a knot round the heart, which now stopped deathly still for a minute, and then leaped like a dozen frogs*. After two hours of death-like suffering, the attack ceased; and I found that ever after my heart *missed every fourth beat*. My physician said, that I had organic disease of the heart, must die suddenly, and need only take a little brandy for the painful paroxysms; and I soon found it the only thing that gave them any relief. For the next twenty-seven years I continued to suffer milder attacks like the above, lasting from one to several minutes, sometimes as often as two or three times a day or night; and to be sickly-looking, thin, and pale as a ghost. Simply from revolting at the idea of being a slave to *one vile habit alone*, and without



dreaming of the suffering it had cost me, after *thirty-three years'* use, I one day threw away Tobacco for ever.

“ Words cannot describe my suffering and desire for a time. I was reminded of the Indian, who, next to all the rum in the world, wanted all the Tobacco. But my firm will conquered. In a month my paroxysms nearly ceased, and soon after left entirely. I was directly a new man, and grew stout and hale as you see. With the exception of a little asthmatic breathing, in close rooms and the like, for nearly twenty years since I have enjoyed excellent health.”

On examination, Dr. Corson found the heart seemingly healthy in size and structure, only *irregular*, intermitting still at every fourth pulsation.

After such well-marked examples of manly firmness, no one need pretend to affirm, that the luxury of smoking, snuffing, plugging, or chewing, or quidding, cannot be given up. Or that the stimulus of wine or spirits, or malt liquors cannot be relinquished. I may here remark, that chewing or quidding does not seem to irritate the mucuous membrane of the mouth to the extent that smoking does—it never causes ulceration.

Some of the constitutional effects of Tobacco have been already detailed under Dr. Corson's case. But I shall begin by stating, that these constitutional effects are numerous and varied, as giddiness, sickness, vomiting, dyspepsia, vitiated taste of the mouth, loose bowels, diseased liver, congestion of the brain, mania, loss of memory, amaurosis, deafness, nervousness, palsy, emasculation, and cowardice.

When a youth commences his apprenticeship to smoking Tobacco, he suffers often the most miserable sickness



and vomiting conceivable — almost as bad as sea sickness. It generally produces these symptoms so rapidly, that it is evident it does so through the nervous system, for he is rendered giddy in the first place. The antidote or cure for this miserable condition is drinking strong coffee, or brandy and water, and retiring to bed or sofa. If he perseveres, he has just to suffer onwards, until his nervous system becomes habituated to the noxious weed, and too often to the bottle at the same time. It is truly melancholy to witness the great number of the young who smoke now-a-days; and it is painful to contemplate how many promising youths must be stunted in their growth, and enfeebled in their minds before they arrive at manhood.

Dyspepsia from the use of Tobacco, evidences the same symptoms as when the disease is produced by drinking or gluttony, and want of exercise in the open air. The cure is, by "*throwing away Tobacco for ever*" — by prescribing a blue pill once a week, the alterative powder morning and evening, prescribed under ulceration of the mouth, the infusion of quassia, or quassia and gentian combined, mild nutritious diet, as coffee or tea, with lightly toasted bread, beef-tea with or without rice, or toast for three or four days, a glass or two of sherry wine, and exercise in the open air, either on foot or horseback, or carriage, or still better, all combined. Exercise should be taken before meals, and the patient lounge on a sofa for two or three hours after meals. Change of air, fully fifty or one hundred miles distant is of great benefit. After three or four days, beef-steak or mutton-chop should supersede the beef-tea, and then a few vegetables, well boiled, may



be taken. A few drops of the balsam of copaiba, say 8 or 10 drops, combined with ten of aquæ potassæ, and a teaspoonful of sweet nitre, in half a cup of cold water sweetened, and taken at bed time, has a most soothing effect. Frank's Specific is the most elegant and agreeable preparation of copaiba, even preferable to the capsules. There is an imitation of Frank's specific prepared by the chemists in London.

The vitiated taste of the mouth is generally a symptom of dyspepsia, and is to be cured in the same way.

The looseness of the bowels is to be treated by "*throwing away Tobacco for ever*," by prescribing an astringent mixture of the electuary of catechu, prepared chalk, syrup of ginger and laudanum; by farinaceous and milk diet for eight days, with rest in bed for four or five days, then for the same time on sofa. At the end of eight or ten days, beef soup with rice, or lightly toasted bread, puddings of rice, sago, and arrow root, for four or five days. Then beef-steak or mutton-chop, with rice, lightly toasted bread, and a glass or two of port wine, made into negus or mulled. Exercise in the open air should now be freely taken.

During the prevalence of Cholera, I have had repeated opportunities of observing, that individuals addicted to the use of Tobacco, especially those who snuff it, are more disposed to attacks of that disease, and generally in its most malignant and fatal form.

Disease of the liver seems to be caused by the Tobacco exciting the system, and by the dyspeptic symptoms produced. It is to be treated by "*throwing away Tobacco for ever*;" by prescribing half a grain of the protoioduret



of mercury, with or without opium, according to the state of the bowels, made into a pill with the extract of gentian, morning and evening; by an infusion of quassia, or quassia and gentian combined; by blistering over the region of the liver, and dressing the tender surface with mercurial ointment. In some cases it is necessary to keep a portion of the blistered surface open for some time. In the commencement, rest and farinaceous and milk diet. Afterwards exercise in the open air, beef-tea with rice, or lightly toasted bread for a few days; and then beef-steak or mutton-chop, and a glass or two of sherry. If the protoioduret threatens to affect the mouth, it should be given up—and the same with the mercurial dressing of the blistered surface. Dr. Scott of India's foot-bath, of nitro-muriatic acid, is often beneficial. When convalescent, nothing is so beneficial as change of air.

Congestion of the brain occurs almost only in those much addicted to smoking, in whom a cigar is never out of the mouth; but I have witnessed it also to occur in the snuffer of the plant. It is denoted by headache, want of sleep, or rather restless nights, and occasionally flushing of the countenance. The worst case I have had under my care was a foreigner, who travelled for a manufacturer of cigars—he was at the same time fearfully nervous. He had a red swollen countenance, as if he combined the bottle with his smoking, but this he assured me he never did—the Tobacco was enough for him. I inserted an issue or seton in the nape of his neck, purged him with calomel and aloes, put him on as low a diet as he would permit, confined him to the house, and entreated him to smoke as few cigars as



possible. In a fortnight the congestion of the brain was subdued, and then he was allowed gradually more and more nourishing diet and exercise in the open air. He returned to Edinburgh in two years after in good health, but still nervous even from the moderate use of cigars. He said that he had tried to give them up altogether, but that he had found it impracticable, and probably as much from his situation as a dealer in the weed.

Mania is a fearful result of the excessive use of Tobacco — a consequence I have not yet witnessed. At a meeting of the Medical and Chirurgical Society of London on 2nd May, 1854, a paper was read, entitled, “Additional Remarks on the Statistics and Morbid Anatomy of Mental Diseases,” by Dr. Webster, wherein he cites, among the causes, the great use of Tobacco, which opinion he supported by reference to the statistics of insanity in Germany.

Loss of memory takes place in an extraordinary degree in the smoker, much more so than in the drunkard, evidently from Tobacco acting more on the brain than Alcohol. The cure consists in “*throwing away Tobacco for ever.*”

Amaurosis is a very common result of smoking Tobacco to excess; but I have never seen it produced by snuffing or chewing. It occurs with or without congestion of the brain. It is commonly confined to one eye. It is generally curable, but not always, by “*throwing away Tobacco for ever*” — by inserting a seton in the back of the neck, another seton in the temple or temples, according as one or both eyes are affected. In the course of eight or ten days, the seton in the temple is to be withdrawn, a common fly blister applied, and the blistered



surface sprinkled with strychnia. The bowels to be freely opened with calomel and aloes. The diet to be light, as the farinaceous. The patient should be confined in a large well-ventilated apartment, with an obscure light.

Deafness is not so common a sequence to smoking Tobacco as amaurosis, and is to be treated on the same principles, with the difference of applying the blisters and strychnia behind the ears.

Nervousness is remarkably common from indulging too much in smoking, snuffing, or chewing Tobacco. It is to be treated by "*throwing away Tobacco for ever*" — by having recourse to the shower-bath in winter, and sea-bathing in summer — by nourishing diet, attention to the bowels, the alterative powder, as prescribed under ulceration of the lips, the tonics as quassia, and gentian, and even quinine; exercise in the open air, and by mixing in quiet agreeable society, as the nervous system is easily and readily over-excited; and lastly, by change of air, and ultimately travelling about.

The form of palsy, produced by excessive smoking, is generally hemiplegia, and it is almost always incurable. It follows as often from too much snuffing as too much smoking. The treatment consists in "*throwing away Tobacco for ever*," inserting setons in the lumbar region, tonics, cold bathing, and good diet.

Emasculation will astonish the gay Lothario, for he will not be able to say — "For never in my youth did I apply the means of weakness and debility." I have been consulted by fathers of from thirty to forty years of age, who, having married in early life, have had two or three children soon after marriage onwards



to thirty years old, but have been surprised that they had eventually lost all inclination for sexual indulgence. On interrogating them, I have invariably found they were all excessive smokers; and on convincing them, that Tobacco was the cause of their temporary impotence, they have instantly "*thrown away Tobacco for ever,*" and in a few months after have returned to me, saying, that they had become fathers again. I have found unmarried men similarly affected with the want of the sexual *vis et animus*.

I have invariably found, that patients of this description were in spirit cowardly, and deficient in manly fortitude to undergo any surgical operation, however trifling, proposed to relieve them from the sufferings of any other complaint—in such cases chloroform is a great boon.

When we consider what was the effect of Tobacco in strangulated hernia in former days, we can readily comprehend its powerful narcotic effects; they are stronger than opium—opium differing from Tobacco only in constipating the bowels. The use of Tobacco for medical purposes has been long known, but its application has been carried *fundamentally*, of late, to the full extent the human body can be subjected—a cigar has been actually inserted into the anus by an American physician, as a medical re-agent—thus introducing the poison into every vital passage.

The number of people, who, from twelve years of age, are given to smoking, snuffing, plugging, and chewing or quidding the noxious weed, appears quite incredible. By its so general consumption, we must become changed in both corporeal and mental faculties—we cannot fail to be

enfeebled in body and mind, and become a deteriorated race. I once travelled with a gentleman from South America, who first filled his nostrils with snuff, which he prevented falling out by stuffing shag tobacco after it, and this he termed "plugging"—then put in each cheek a coil of pig-tail tobacco, which he named "quidding," in this country called "chewing;" lastly, he lit a Havannah cigar, which he put into his mouth—and thus smoked and chewed, puffing at one time the smoke of the cigar, and, at another time, squirting the juice from his mouth, as so graphically described by Dickens in the boat story, on its way to the far West. This gentleman was as thin as a razor, with an olive-coloured countenance, and frightfully nervous. The preceding is neither a caricature, nor an exaggerated account of the fearful extent to which the use of Tobacco is carried, not merely in Europe as we know, but as there is every reason to fear in every quarter of the globe, where it either grows, or is unhappily conveyed.





