

The the confessions of a smoker [sic] / by an Octogenarian.

Contributors

Octogenarian.

Publication/Creation

London : Pitman, [Between 1860 and 1869?]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ek5bx3zy>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>



Smoke Not! No. 29.

THE

The Confessions of a Smoker, By an Octogenarian.

In days of yore, when I was young,
I would no sage advice invoke ;
All wise restraints away I flung,
And spurned to wear a single yoke.
'Twas *then* my best resolves were wrung
From me, by clouds of curling smoke.

I wooed it with a boyish smile,
It made me think myself a man ;
'Twas just a freak to last awhile,
And lay aside like any sham ;
But ere my years had reached their prime,
It held me as a giant can.

I sucked and whiffed, and puffed and spat,
Resolved the nauseous thing to brave ;
With woundrous skill I did all that.
And well I worked the new-made crave,
Nor cared I to be called a " flat,"
A " mimic," a " poor silly slave."

They might have better called me king;
For well I conquered, well I won,
The mastery of every thing
By smokers prized, by smokers done ;
Nor failed through nose and ears to swing
The twirling smoke in manly (?) fun.

And well I learnt the parrot cries
The smokers make their chief defence,—
“Soothes the brain,” “kills moths and flies,”
“Hunger lulls,” “odours bad drive hence,”
The doctor says, “It would be wise,”
“Why is it sent?” O! vain pretence.

Then how the smoke reveals its place,
(The smoker can't conceal his deed)
Stale fumes remain, and and leave their trace
In scented garments, rarely freed
From odious smells, in time or space,
So vile the outcome of that greed.

And viler still its inner force,
As slowly it unnerves the man ;
While all unconscious of his loss,
He careless grows, nor heeds the pain
That harries on his downward course
To utter *selfishness* and shame!

Can mind conceive, or words pourtray
The nation's loss of wealth untold?
Time, thought, and health, all flung away ;
SELF first and last, with iron hold
Can tyranny more subtle sway—
More rude, defiant, shameless, bold?

Shameless, bold, all law defying ;
“Smoking is not permitted here.”
“Bosh, who cares for that?” denying
Rights and claims to others dear.
So, through clouds of smoke most trying,
Through sickening fumes we blindly steer.

'Twere well did selfish man alone,
Endure the burden of his thrall,
Not then would loathsomeness be thrown
On WOMAN—the fairest of them all—
Alas, they must in silence moan,
And bear the smoker's reeking gall.



22500834513

But most of all, I stand aghast
To see the wise and good, sell all
Their freedom, for an empty blast
Of vapid, harmful smoke, a fall
To deepening shame, examples cast
Abroad, tempting the weak and small.

"Deny thyself," "Do thyself no harm,"
So runs the word they've all approved.
And, lo! Tobacco's trumpery charm
Holds them in life-long servitude.
Such insult, thrust on virtue's palm,
Is sore disgrace, howe'er construed.

Why mar the human face divine?
Why weight it with a cumbrous load?
Why waft mere smoke with air sublime?
Why pierce the soul with such a goad?
Are hills in life so few to climb
They need be made along the road?

So as I turned it o'er and o'er,
And let the honest truth come out,
I had to write it down a bore;
A chain, a clog, a useless bout,
It riled me, pierced me, made me sore,
Put all my vows to utter rout.

In truth, I loathed these filthy pipes,
Foul pouches, cigarettes, cigars,
Fuzees, brown cases, matches, lights,
A "fragrant" store, which oft debars
The home of comforts and delights,
More rudely strains domestic laws.

And so at length, in burning ire,
I gathered up the frousome hoard
And fiercely thrust it on the fire,
Glad to be freed from such a fraud;
Not cowardly did I retire,
But to my manly self restored.

Oh, short-lived joy! oh, transient dream!
For one short month my hands were free,
But such a conflict ne'er was seen
As raged between myself and me,
And in the end (result most mean)
The smoking gained the victory.

And after that most sore defeat,
With failing love and growing hate,
I had the noxious weed to keep
And smoke from dawn to evening late.
O, horrid craze, with widening sweep;
O, dreadful coil, insatiate!

Nor let the young adept suppose
He will be able to refrain,
And bring the smoking to a close,
Just when his fancy would abstain,
Not thus, the vicious habit grows,
Too hot the forge, too fierce the flame.

Oh, speed your sails, ye "golden age,"
Bring to our shores a noble race
Of virtue-loving men, to wage
Incessant war with every trace
Of habits, which besmear the page
Of life, and mar its angel face!

The masses of the rising race,
No pleasure find in sucking smoke,
In puffs, and whiffs no wisdom trace,
No comforts gain, no health provoke,
No added charm to mouth or face,
Nor worthy purpose to promote.

Oh that with ardent vigour stirred,
Our sons—the pipe, would scorn and scout
Themselves with wholesome habits gird,
The smoking doom to endless rout.
YOUNG MEN arise! pronounce the word;
And stamp the senseless practice out.

Old smokers can't resist the foe,
Slaves they have lived, slaves they must die,
And to my grave this vice will go,
Learnt in my youth—the secret why—
Prostrate beneath the self-made woe,
I curse it with a bitter cry!

Oh ye who plough, and sow the seed,
And husband for the nation's weal,
Grow not the waste-producing weed,
Think of the loss, and shame we feel,
Why pander to a senseless greed?
Why probe the sore, 'twere wise to heal?

To be had of the Editor, "Clissold Lodge," 15, Bethune Road, Stoke
Newington, N., Pitman, 20, Paternoster Row.

WELLCOME INSTITUTE LIBRARY	
Coll.	welM0mec
Coll.	pam WM 272
No.	186* 021c