

To his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales : a letter / by the Rev. George Trask.

Contributors

Trask, George, 1798-1875.
Copland, James, 1791-1870.

Publication/Creation

London : Elliot Stock, [1861?]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hvfzdh79>

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**

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

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE PRINCE OF WALES

A LETTER BY THE REV. GEORGE TRASK,
FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.A.



“MY LORD: I am told that God has endowed you with intellect, and, though born and bred amidst courtiers, you are not insensible to the dictates of friendship and common sense.

American citizens, with one voice, thank you for your late visit, and trust that Divine Providence may make it a presage of signal good to your nation and our own.

We gave you, my lord, unmistakeable evidence of affectionate homage, when “the shout of a king” went up on every hand, and men of all parties cried “God save the Queen,” and you, the heir of her illustrious throne! Hence, in this appeal, I shall not disgust you by offering a needless amount of homage, nor degrade myself by unnecessary apologies.

Your likeness is among us in daguerreotypes by thousands; and it may gratify you to know that our artists have in no instance disfigured the countenance of your royal highness by the presence of your meerschäum with its noxious fumes.

But I am sorry to say that our youth, far and near, have discovered that the Prince, whom we delighted to honour, is a devotee of this idol—a victim of this master-vice of the age!

Wherever these dear boys trace you in your route, whether on railroads, rivers or lakes, in Canada or Illinois, in Baltimore or Boston, on the heights of Quebec or on the banks of the Potomac, they see you with this idol in your mouth, environed by smoke!

I have spent ten of the best years of my life in battling tobacco, in warning our rising millions against this fashionable abomination and its AFFINITIES, and in forming Bands of Hope. Hence, you compel me to tell you, my lord, that your example has been contagious, and in this particular pernicious.

We were afflicted with juvenile smokers before. These young Etnas were about us in abundance. But now our tobacconists, urged by cupidity, are rapidly manufacturing the Prince of Wales Cigars, and, by this fascinating brand, our urchins and dandies are fast copying this vice of yours, who may never copy your virtues.

I hate tobacco as lord Nelson hated a Frenchman. “I will fight a Frenchman,” was his language, “wherever I can find him; wherever he can anchor, my ship shall be there.” Hence, even your royal highness may expect no quarter for this vice; for, God helping me, I will battle it alike on a throne or in a dungeon.

English travellers reproach us for our national intemperance; English philanthropists for our atrocious system of slavery. For this fidelity your countrymen have our thanks.

And now, my lord, I wish in some measure to reciprocate this kindness; I wish, if possible, to save you from a baneful habit, which has power “to bind kings with chains, and bring princes to nothing.”

I might dwell on the expensiveness of your habit; but what are hundreds of pounds, annually consumed in smoke, to a royal purse? "The gold and silver," I add, however, "are the Lord's."

I might dwell on the waste of time—"the stuff," my lord, "which life is made of;" but an English earl has shown that the victim of tobacco, in one form, must waste a twentieth part of his life in his indulgence. This must suffice upon this point.

I might pour ridicule upon your habit, my lord; for never does prince or subject appear so ridiculous as when he becomes a puffing locomotive, or a smouldering volcano!

I do not address you, however, in your individual capacity or position, but as a prospective monarch; for I wish to induce you to abandon a habit which will essentially impair your ability to rule over the most powerful nation on earth.

In the first place, my lord, your habit may prove fatal to self-control, and, by enslaving you, incapacitate you to rule others.

You early made use of this poison. You use it freely, and already it may have gained the mastery. The man who is mastered, is one who has lost the power of resistance—one who is subject to some despot, some passion or imperious appetite. Artificial appetites are despotic masters; and the appetite for this poison, once formed, is eminently such; it becomes a ruling passion, swaying its victims at will.

We have many political demagogues in America, who make a vast uproar respecting foreign despotisms, who disgust us by their vulgar and boisterous boastings of liberty, whilst they themselves, victimized by this nauseous drug, are abject slaves! They care more for this popular poison than for God, man, or state.

Thus is it with us, my lord. How is it with you? Which has the ascendancy, you or your meerschaum? "As the eye of a servant is unto the hand of his master," is not your eye upon this fond idol? Is it not among your last indulgences at night, and your first in the morning? What luxuries flowing from the munificent hand of God—what fruits—what food—what pastimes—what friends—what studies—what sciences—what affairs of state—what province in all the vast amplitude of your dominions, occupies half so much time or attention as your fond cigar, or your idolized pipe? Here, here is a power—let no one deny it—which carries "kings into captivity, and binds princes at its pleasure."

No man, my lord, who has the soul of a man, can contemplate the mission of England and America—a mission, under God, which is to spread constitutional liberty and Christ's religion over the earth—but must regard you, England's coming king, with intense interest and genuine good will. We wish you to be a prince "who shall have power with God and man"—"a tower of strength and salvation."

But how can you, my lord, victimized by this narcotic, unable to rule yourself, rule a kingdom of such dimensions?—a kingdom which stretches "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," and whose "morning drum-beat encircles the globe?"

Ah! my lord, blast not the hopes of expectant millions of England and America! Be not the prey of artificial appetites! Act upon the sublime sentiment of Jeremy Taylor: "He who hath the fewest wants is the most like God!" With the great Apostle say, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."



W
Col
Col
No.

Your habit, my lord, may not only disable you, but, through you, future kings on your throne. We desire no extinction of this royal line. May it go on *crescens eundo* in virtue and glory "so long as the sun and moon shall endure." You seem designated as the prince who is to perpetuate this dynasty; hence it is persumable that you are to transmit rulers for the English throne. How desirable you should be a model man, and transmit model kings!

Tobacco is undeniably a poison, which injures the health, strength, and manly courage of ordinary mortals; and we are yet to learn that the laws of Nature pay any such deference to royal blood, as to suppose it may not injure you. Divine authority has said, "It is the honour of a king to search a matter." We ask you, then, to go to the royal shelves, consult some volume which treats on vegetable poisons, and learn the nature and baneful effects of tobacco.

Set it down, my lord, as a scientific and philosophical truth, that God no more intended you should make this poison a bosom friend than prussic acid, arsenic, herbane, or a rattlesnake with his fatal fangs. As a poison, it disturbs the entire physical economy—affects the nervous system, at one time maddening the sensibilities, at another rendering its victim as amiable and oblivious as a sleeping babe!

We paint imperfectly, my lord, but we paint from life. We think this poison, used by one generation after another, injures the nerves, strength, and style of man; or, in the language of an English physician, "It destroys the very principle of manhood." In the lapse of time its votaries take on a peculiar type—they become tremulous and timid, lank and lean—they do not rise to the stature of men, and, what is worse, they afflict church and state by entailing on their posterity their own physical and moral deterioration. Says another English physician, "The sin of the father is never so strikingly visited on his children as in the sin of tobacco-smoking."

I know, my lord, that some, who by chance may glance at this humble tract, will treat this subject with contempt. But, should you consult such statesmen as lord Palmerston, such divines as the Dean of Carlisle, and such authorities as Brodie, they might tell you that the man is not born who can take "the gauge and dimensions" of this insidious enemy, which "has smote great nations." Why have Mexico, Germany, Turkey, Italy, and Spain now so little nationality? Tobacco with them has had free course, and is a mighty cause, among others, of their inferior position. May not such be the fate of England.

The example of a prince, says the word of God, may be "clothed with desolation." Hence, we aim to defend "Young America," my lord, against your injurious example. But we cannot forget that there is Young Ireland, Scotland, and England, and that you have humble Reformers in your own dominions wielding the battle-axe against this and kindred evils, amidst indifference and derision.

It is the character of a virtuous prince to live for the good of his people. Hence, we beg you, my lord, to drop your meerschaum and its affinities; and as you are prospectively the head of the Church, we beg you to be the head of the Temperance Cause amidst a loyal and noble people. A cause of such intrinsic excellence, working so admirably in all places and times, may not borrow one iota of glory from prince or potentate; still, so much are the masses weighed by names, that you,

STIT

Y

Om

72

1

77

the Prince of Wales, have power sufficient to give it a glorious impulse, which will be felt till time shall end.

Advance, my lord, and honor the injunction, "It is not for kings to drink wine, nor princes strong drink." Give your princely strength to struggling reforms by pledging total abstinence from intoxicating drinks and deadly drugs. You will then be the crown of rejoicing to the Sons and Daughters of Temperance the world over; and Bands of Hope will spring from the peat lands of Ireland, from the blue hills of Scotland, and from the cold regions of the Canadas, and bless you. Dear boys and girls, by millions, will clap their hands, and give you such a throne in their hearts as no earthly monarch ever filled.

Respectfully, your friend, my lord,

GEORGE TRASK."

Fitchburg, Massachusetts, U.S.A., Dec., 1860.

OPINIONS OF DR. COPLAND F.R.S. AUTHOR OF THE ENGLISH
"MEDICAL DICTIONARY."

"The habit of smoking Tobacco has given rise to the following ill effects, which have come under my observation in numerous instances, and that of all the medical men with whom I am acquainted.

"1. Smoking weakens the digestive and assimilating functions, impairs the due elaboration of the chyle and of the blood, and prevents a healthy nutrition of the several structures of the body. Hence result, especially in young persons, an arrest of the growth of the body; low stature; a pallid and sallow hue of the surface; an insufficient and an unhealthy supply of blood, and weak bodily powers. In persons more advanced in life, these effects, although longer in making their appearance, supervene at last, and with a celerity in proportion to the extent to which this vile habit is carried.

"2. Smoking generates thirst and vital depression; and to remove these, the use of stimulating liquors is resorted to, and often carried to a most injurious extent. Thus two of the most debasing habits and vices to which human nature can be degraded, are indulged in to the injury of the individual thus addicted, to the shortening of his life, and to the injury and ruin of his offspring.

"3. Smoking Tobacco weakens the nervous powers; favours a dreamy, imaginative, and imbecile state of existence; produces indolence and incapability of manly or continued exertion; and sinks its votary into a state of careless or maudlin inactivity and selfish enjoyment of his vice. He ultimately becomes partially, but generally paralyzed in mind and body—he is subject to tremors and numerous nervous ailments, and has recourse to stimulants for their relief. These his vices cannot abate, however indulged in, and he ultimately dies a drivelling idiot, an imbecile paralytic, or a sufferer from internal organic disease, at an age many years short of the average duration of life. These results are not always prevented by relinquishing the habit, after a long continuance or a very early adoption of it. These injurious effects often do not appear until late in life."

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.