

Tobacco v. cholera / M.D.

Contributors

M. D.
British Anti-Tobacco Society.

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Tobacco v. Cholera.

To the Editor of the Echo.

SIR,—It is amusing to find oft-exploded fallacies re-appearing from time to time, and heralded as new and “remarkable discoveries.” The antiquated notion that Tobacco smoke affords an excellent protection against infection, has been repeatedly exposed, but once more it crops up as fresh and vigorous as ever. A few days ago, a telegram reached this country from Berlin, and appeared in the columns of most of the Daily Papers, announcing that two Hamburg doctors had “made the remarkable discovery, that only a few minutes’ contact with Tobacco leaf, had sufficed to shrivel up the cholera bacillus, to which Tobacco smoke also rapidly proved fatal.” Now this so-called “remarkable discovery” is in reality ancient history. The “discovery” which the two gentlemen referred to have apparently *not* made, is that Tobacco leaf or the smoke of the burning leaf, will shrivel up and destroy the leucoeytes or white corpuscles of the blood, which are the natural protectors of the body against the invasion of the cholera bacillus and other infectious microbes.

The man who chews Tobacco, and the man who smokes, instead of fortifying the system, weakens it, rendering it a more easy prey to the cholera microbes. The fumes of burning Tobacco, like the fumes of burning sulphur, if inhaled, are productive of injurious effects on the tissues of the body. Tobacco is one of the most costly disinfectants; it is also one of the least effective outside of the body, and one of the most injurious within. Hence it comes that those who use Tobacco are more liable to fall victims to cholera or any other infectious disease which may happen to prevail in a community. If

Tobacco smoking had been a protection against cholera, Hamburg ought to have suffered from its ravages less than almost any other place, because smoking is, perhaps, more commonly indulged in there than elsewhere.

We know, however, that Hamburg has suffered from cholera in an exceptionally severe manner. The best of all disinfectants is pure air, it is also the cheapest. Smoke of any kind pollutes the air, loads it with noxious vapours, and therefore, should be avoided as much as possible. Tobacco smoke is the worst kind of all, it contains some of the most noxious vapours with which chemists are acquainted; smoking, therefore, is at all times injurious, but it is especially dangerous during an epidemic.—
Yours, &c., M.D. Manchester.

Dr. William Parker on Tobacco.

Nicotine, is the alkaloid of Tobacco, which imparts to the weed all its power as a stimulant, is one of the most deadly poisons. One drop of it will cause immediate death. This virus gradually permeates the body of the smoker. A skilful eye and touch can easily detect its presence even in the skin. The reaction from this, as from every stimulant, occasions a depression of spirits, which craves other stimulants. A striking confirmation of this is found in the fact that *no inebriate* in our Asylums can be reformed, till he abandons the use of Tobacco. Thus experience shows that the depressing effect of the weed makes the temptation to drink irresistible by the reforming inebriate.

In France, quite recently, it was ascertained by the Government that from 1815-1832 the yearly revenue from Tobacco was 28 millions of francs, and the number of Lunatics and Paralytics in the kingdom was 8,000; while *now* this revenue is 180 millions of francs annually, and the Lunatics and Paralytics number 44,000. The Emperor Napoleon, in order to discover whether there was any proper connection between these two statistical items, ordered that in all the Colleges a competitive examination should be instituted between the smoking and non-smoking pupils. The non-smokers, as a rule, were found to be vastly superior to their competitors in all attainments; and an edict from the Emperor broke, in one memorable day, 30,000 pipes.

To be had of the Editor of the Anti-Tobacco Journal, "Clissold Lodge," 30, Bethune Road Stoke Newington, N.

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