

ON SMOKING

Smoking is a very peculiar habit, in fact, more than peculiar, because under its spell are bound most of the inhabitants of the world today. Very few are those fortunate ones who have escaped this more or less dangerous practice, which, though it may only injure the health of a few, nevertheless makes disastrous onslaughts on the pocketbooks of many. Is it not peculiar that in this day so many are enslaved by this habit, when, as we know, the favourite maxim of our modern world is, "Do something different?" I sometimes wonder if it all cannot be traced back to that greatest fault of the human race, the very first obstacle that Adam tripped over, the sin of pride.

We know that usually this habit begins in childhood and this is how oftentimes it happens. At various times children have noticed their elders smoking, and, when a group of them get together, as they naturally tend to do, one of them, bolder than the rest, tries it himself. Some of the others, not to be outdone, also make the attempt. At first their smoking is in a spirit of emulation; later, after much suffering, in a spirit of pride because of their own achievement. Finally, if not prevented by parents or others, smoking becomes a confirmed habit with them. Some may call it a pleasure, but in nine cases out of ten, it is not so, because frequently after the third stage has been reached, it becomes a necessity, and constitutes a bondage from which there is almost no hope of escaping.

Tobacco today is consumed in much larger quantities than in the good old days, twenty or thirty years ago. This is partially due to the fact that all classes and members of society have today much more money than formerly. Money was scarcer in those days, and was chiefly possessed by adults, very little of it ever falling into the hands of the younger members of a family. As a result of this, very little smoking was done by the younger generation. When a young fellow reached the age of manhood, smoking with his elders was his declaration of independence. If he had any important business with another person, such as, for example, might well be transacted on a front porch on a suitable evening, he had with him in much prominence his cigar or his pipe to make that person aware of the fact that here was a full-grown

man, a man of the world, and to duly impress the person with the importance and dignity of that man. Thus at that time smoking was a pleasure, for it was moderately indulged in and was first taken at an age when it could be most appreciated. It not only soothed the nerves and satisfied the desires, but also served to increase a man's self-importance and to feed his vanity.

As to boys, since they never had much money, they were confined to stealing a whiff now and then from somebody's pipe and to indulging in smokes of paper-wrapped string, tea, dried leaves, etc., which acts to their parents constituted grievous sins to be atoned for by some very agonizing punishments. We see thus that smoking (of tobacco is understood of course) was seldom indulged in until man's estate had been reached, and then only in moderation.

Very different are conditions in modern times. Billions of cigarettes alone are being smoked yearly. Smoking is in many cases seldom a pleasure but nearly always a necessity. Men, women, and children are smoking, some even from the cradle. Some children begin at home. Their parents consider it cunning or clever. Others simply imitate their parents or others, outside the house, for it is a well-known fact that children, like monkeys, are born mimics—which may be another argument for Darwin and evolution—and since they have the money and it is difficult to stop them, they have no difficulty in supplying their wants. Once they have begun, it is very natural that they should keep on smoking. Finally the habit becomes so strong that they are unable to stop, and when they grow up, they become as lambs led to the slaughter by the czars of the tobacco industry. It is almost impossible to stop smoking after the habit has become strong. The great will power which is required is had by only a few.

Another peculiarity which we notice in modern times is the vast number of women who have fallen under the spell of the Goddess Nicotine. This they have adopted as another phase of that more modern, more masculine life they would lead. Emulation, pride, and habit again work hand in hand to bring about this condition. It is not very modern for them to smoke, for we know that Indian women used to smoke centuries ago. They only imitate the habits of men and it becomes more and more

apparent every day that both Darwin and Barnum were right. They are entering into a life long slavery which entails not only an un-feminine habit and a great expense, but which also, for their sex particularly, may have a serious effect on the health.

A habit such as this can rarely be broken off, but large consumption certainly can be moderated. In moderation lies the only true pleasure in this habit, as in all others.

—J McC., '32



Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among his worshippers.

—William Cullen Bryant

'Tis education forms the common mind:
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

—Pope

Books are men of higher stature, and the only men
that speak aloud for future times to hear.—*Mrs. Browning*

