

SMOKING.

(BY J. PORTER, OTAHURU.)

The origin of tobacco smoking is buried in oblivion, and no tombstone has been discovered to mark the spot. When the Druids wanted a smoke they did not use tobacco, but filled a large wickerwork cage with human beings and set fire to it. They got their smoke, but it was a very injurious habit—for the people in the basket. Chimneys have smoked from pre-historic times, but not tobacco.

The first known use of tobacco for smoking was among the American Indians, partly as a religious ceremony, and to-day men seem to make as much of a religion of smoking as of anything else. At all events the pipe is lighted and consumed with more regularity and enthusiasm than church is attended. We can safely state that this habit has engaged the minds and energies of men and women for centuries.

Women's minds; men's energies. Men have no mind to trouble about it, though women sometimes give them a bit of theirs.

A man with a pipe in his mouth looks as happy as a pig with a pail of buttermilk or a baby with its bottle. Next time you have the chance compare the two—the man with his pipe and the baby with its bottle. There is the same idiotic grin on each face, the same silence, the same attitude of sensual enjoyment. Yet women do not like it (the habit, not the baby) for three reasons—the smell, the expense, and because they do not like it.

Men admit the force of the reasons, and go on smoking. Men love the smell. It is incense to them (it does incense their wives though.) Its associations are almost sacred. It is bound up with their pleasantest hours. They remember sitting with the girls who are now their wives (smoking the same pipes and brand that they use now) and promising to give up the habit as soon as they were married, and their eyes twinkle at the recollection. All their happy bachelor days were impregnated with tobacco smoke; their jolliest companions fairly reeked of it; their college studies were more often filled with smoke than learning. The observance of holidays had always included an extra allowance of tobacco. In short, they had saturated with smoke every enjoyment, the memory of which they had wished to preserve, and with every fresh pipe they come out as fresh as on the day they were smoked and stored.

I think it will be granted that a man loves tobacco with a deep and increasing love—a love that grows on him more rapidly than his hair, and is not so liable to fall off. But the question of most importance is 'Is it a wholesome, healthful habit?' Fortunately this is a question which it is easy to answer, for it has been thoroughly threshed out for ages. On looking up authorities, combining and condensing the same, I find the answer to be as follows:—Tobacco smoking is a deadly, harmless, poisonous, innocuous habit, calculated to strengthen and permanently weaken the eyesight, injure and invigorate the nerves, and destroy and recuperate weak lungs. It leads to insanity and soothes and calms the tired brain. It is the fruitful source of indigestion, contentment, crime, happiness, poverty, intellectual vigor, and idleness.

One of the greatest curses that has ever been introduced into civilized countries, it is at least perfectly harmless, and certain to lead to that place of eternal smoking, the fumes of which this dirty, wicked habit continually remind one of; in fact, the contentment and placidity of temper induced by smoking, besides lengthening life, will infallibly ensure a life of eternal happiness in the world to come.

With this testimony of authorities there is no reason why anyone should have any doubts on the subject. The question is settled once for all. How restless it is to come across one answered question in this world of enigmas—one discussion that need never be reopened, one verdict final. We are so accustomed to finding the facts of last year melt into guesses and slip from under us; so many beliefs that men have clung to and loved have been borne away before the floods of more recent knowledge, that it is quite reassuring to be able to stand on this expression of opinion and feel that we are at last on solid rock against which the surges of the centuries may beat, but which they will be powerless to change or destroy.

It is generally admitted that boys should not smoke, as it does not kill them outright, but checks their growth, and makes it more difficult to get them off your hands. The habit certainly costs money, but so do children, hairpins, boots, and most other luxuries, and it has its uses. It serves as a subject of conversation, which, alternated with dress, prevents a lot of time from being wasted; and better still, it prevents a lot of talk, because a man cannot talk the whole time and keep his pipe burning. This is supposed to be the real reason for women's not talking to the habit.

If a man has a fit of the blues, it will dis-

appear in the smoke of his first pipe, turning the smoke blue.

The church disapproves the indulgence, but some of its ministers get smoke in their eyes and wink at it. It is a pity we cannot discover smokeless tobacco now we have smokeless gunpowder; then if we could get noiseless pianos and babies, odourless onions, tasteless cod liver oil, invisible mashers, and painless toothaches, life might be worth living.

I have known cases where the habit has caused death. For instance, there was my old friend Brown (his name is not Brown, but I will call him by that as it is

my favourite name. It is borne by so many of my friends you know.) who took to the weed when a boy against the remonstrances and despite the warnings of his friends. When he became a man he was so extravagant in its use that his doctor strongly recommended him to give it up, as he thought it was endangering his life. It would have taken more than this to stop Brown. When he was about sixty years of age Brown's friends noticed something the matter with his lip. Nothing serious, just a slight inflammation, to which Brown himself paid no attention. They warned him of the danger of continuing to smoke with

an incipient cancer on the lip, but he only laughed and said he was not afraid of his lip; it was other people's 'lip' that troubled him.

Men may sport with death for a time, but only for a time. It was only twenty short years after this that Brown went to stay with a friend in the country, whose name was Jones. Mr Jones was a firm anti-tobaccoist, and had just signed a pledge to abstain from tobacco in all its forms (which he need not have done, as it always made him as sick as a dog). This pledge, which was about half the size of the room, Jones wished to hang, and asked Brown if he would go up the ladder to put the cord over the nail in the wall. Brown consented and mounted the ladder. He had in his mouth one of those long straight pipes that always make you wonder what the effect would be if the smoker fell on to it. While he was standing on the top step of the ladder he appeared to turn dizzy, reeled, and fell with a sickening thud, striking the back of his head on the floor. He was stone dead, another victim to the tobacco fiend, for but for this his friend would not have wanted to hang the pledge on the wall. The only proof I have to offer in the support of this story is the pipe, and that is lost, but anyone who doubts the truth of the anecdote could get one like it for 1s 6d in any pipe shop. It was a cousin of this Mr Jones who was such an ardent anti-tobaccoist that he first turned out his son, and then his lamp for smoking.

No animal smokes. Man smokes. No man who smokes can be a beast. Logic.

I once knew a man who came into a fortune through smoking. He started in early life, and by middle age he made a business of it rather than a pleasure. He was the heaviest smoker in England. Must have smoked many a ton in his life, but it was not tobacco he smoked, it was bacon, and it made him a rich man. I have heard a non-smoker say, 'If God had intended man to smoke, He would have built him a chimney.' The proper way to answer such a man is to say, 'If God intended you to talk like a fool He would have given you a fool's cap. If He had intended you to eat oysters He would have given you a mouth like a pike; if to drink lemonade a neck like a giraffe, so as to get more sensation for the same money; if to eat high game He would have turned your nose upside down. If He had intended you to travel by steam He would have fitted you up with a little boiler and some wheels,' and so on. It is an infinite subject. When God puts man into the world He does not intend him with a suit of clothes, a portmanteau, a houseful of furniture, and a pipe, but He gives him inventive and constructive faculties, and leaves him to look after himself (after giving him the raw material), knowing that if he wants to smoke he will build himself a chimney or use his nose as one; that if he wants to talk nonsense he will make his own fool's cap or talk nonsense without one; and that if a man wants to write nonsense he can buy all the foolscap he needs to write it on.

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UNDISCOVERED ISLANDS.

ARE there any undiscovered islands in the North or South Pacific? Islands to whose people, if they are inhabited by human beings, the world is unknown? Many experienced navigators have expressed the opinion that such islands may possibly exist. Then why have they not been discovered is the question that naturally follows. Hundreds of vessels are crossing and recrossing those great spaces annually, and English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and American exploring expeditions, especially alert and venturesome during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, have left on the maps of the silent waters a network of lines marking their search for new lands. Whaling ships have cruised far south of the Arctic in quest of bone and oil, moving with the trade winds, drifting with the ocean currents, and following no charted course. Unfrequented latitudes have been sought, even as far south as the Antarctic, and many profitable catches in the vicinity of the equatorial islands have been recorded. Disabled vessels have drifted far out of their course, and buccaners have searched for spoil on almost every line of longitude between the coasts of Mexico and the Spice Islands.

Thus it would seem that every considerable part of the Pacific Ocean must have been visited since Balboa first looked down upon its peaceful waters; but a glance at its mighty areas, with a knowledge of the limit of human vision in traversing them, will tend to correct the error of supposing that through all the agencies named anything more than a partial exploration of the Western Sea has been accomplished, or that nothing farther in the line of discovery may be reasonably expected.

No new islands of importance have been mapped for more than three quarters of a century. Previous to that period nearly every maritime power in Europe had been