

## TOBACCO.

Perhaps the most eminent vegetable the earth has ever produced is that one which we shall discuss in this article in its several bearings upon society—in a pecuniary, physical and in an esthetic sense. We have made the assertion and have taken the bold ground at the outset, that tobacco was the most distinguished member of the agricultural kingdom, and we reiterate and maintain our position by these arguments:—From remote ages, even when Sir Walter Raleigh sat in his library soothing his philosophical mind with the smoke from a pipe, down to the present time, it has been the choice companion and chief solace of the most eminent and worthy men of science that the world has produced. Poets have sung its praises in all meters and with greater or less enthusiasm, encomiums have been pronounced upon it, words have been declared weak to express its virtues, in short, the whole vocabulary of complimentary adjectives has been exhausted in its honor. Thus has it been distinguished. But the truth of history prompts us to admit that the opposition tobacco has met with, though not in the least detracting from its popularity or its stability in the public estimation, has been, at any rate, no less vehement after its kind than the opposite fact. The pulpit has thundered its fulminations at it unavailingly; preachers have composed sermons, and lecturers have made "raids" upon the weed with, as they fondly imagined, the most terrific onslaught and unqualified success; but alas! the fact remains indisputable and unchanged, that there is more tobacco used to-day than at any former period of the world's history.

Whether we may attribute this to the obstinacy of human nature, or to the energy of the great family of nations in overcoming obstacles that are opposed to them, or to its cheapness, is a question which we shall not here discuss; what the causes are which lead to its increased consumption we cannot determine; the simple, isolated fact that it is so, stands incontrovertible. There may be some ingenuous spirits who would be disposed to deny our dictum in that tobacco is the most widely-known of the vegetable kingdom, and attribute those honors of popularity with which we have crowned the narcotic weed to cotton. They may ring the changes in vain upon that trite theme. The sound of the guns which daily thunder upon our Southern coast and States and of those which so rudely smote the walls of Sumpter dispelled any lingering doubts we might have had as to which of the potentates rightfully claimed our allegiance. Cotton is not king. A man may go without a shirt gladly, but deprive him of his tobacco and there will be a hiatus in his nature, which, when he is once under the influence of tobacco, nothing can supply. Nay, he may be so entirely uncivilized as to be wholly independent of those wants and usages which society has declared indispensable. Cotton in any form may be to him a drug and a detestable nuisance, a pocket-handkerchief may be more cumbersome than its bulk in lead. But if we search in the turban of the Bedouin Arab or the folds of talpa cloth which are wound about the loins of the indolent Otaheitan, we shall find some little store of the precious weed hidden in its folds, secure and unattainable save to his own personal fingers. Or of what value indeed is corn, wheat, in brief, any cereal, to him who is deprived of his matutinal cigar, pipe or other instrument that man employs to titillate his throat and nostrils with the pungent smoke? Simply of no value. The prisoner in the jail will deprive himself of a portion of his scanty ration so that he may have his tobacco-box full. The devotee to this luxury will deny himself food and even clothing, so that his craving for tobacco be allayed. But who ever heard of the contrary practice? Does the Arab give his "plug," supposing him to have such an article, for a new turban? No. Or will any semi-civilized fragment of humanity barter away that, to him, priceless roll which, while he is under its influence, merges kingdoms, principalities, powers and poverty into one grand brotherhood.

Assuming conviction to be irresistibly carried to the minds of our readers by these arguments, let us dwell first upon the production of tobacco in our own land. It is grown to some extent in the Connecticut Valley, but for the finer kinds a richer soil and warmer climate are required. In the *California Farmer*

we find a few remarks on the cultivation of this staple in that State. It is estimated that 1,000 pounds per acre of Havana tobacco could be produced there. The principal sources of supply, however, were found, previous to the war, in the Southern border States, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and to some extent, Southern Ohio and Missouri. Illinois has also grown tobacco, though not as a staple, we think. The plant is emphatically a tropical one, and flourishes much better under calm skies and lazy treatment than with our energetic Northern cultivation. Perhaps, the gentle tickling the slaves give it with hoes is better adapted to the secretion of its wondrous juices than the vigorous attention it receives from patent plows or drills. Evidently, some causes conspire against the successful growth of the choicer brands of the weed at the North. These will be discovered in time, and if the difficulties are inherent in the plant or only local, they will be surmounted and Northern "grit" will bring to market tobacco grown under shelter, of a finer quality than ever. So far as relates to the Southern States, all our intelligence goes to prove that but very slender crops have been planted this year—as would naturally be the case in a country disturbed by war. All ruminants, therefore, must expect to pay an increased price for their consolation.

But let us look at the effects produced by tobacco upon the human body—that wonderful organization which repulses with more or less vigor the assaults of poisons in every shape—of fever, of hunger and thirst and all the ills that besiege its many fortresses. Let us see how we shall fare if we make the weed our lingual and labial friend. Ree's *Cyclopedia* says that a drop of the oil placed on a cat's tongue causes convulsions and death in the space of a minute; and certain of the wise medical men of the day have declared that not less than twenty thousand in our land die annually by the use of tobacco. Dr. Shaw names a catalogue of some eighty diseases which, he says, may be traced to the use of this poison; and yet another authority asserts that a relative used the weed to such an extent that he literally *snuffed* the light of his existence out. Dr. Twichel believed that tobacco was the cause, not unfrequently, of sudden deaths. Bocame, of Belgium, was murdered in two minutes and a half by the use of nicotine or alkali of tobacco. Three young men formed a smoking club and they all died within two years from the time they had instituted it. A doctor gave it as his opinion that they fumigated themselves to death; this worthy must have been akin to Dr. Aiken, who declared that if he wished to make a sacrifice to the devil, he would take a pig and stuff it with tobacco. A boy of eighteen fell dead in a dramshop with a cigar in his mouth; the verdict on this feat was that he died by the mysterious visitation of God; physicians said it was the heart disease, but a person knowing the youth's habits said it was tobacco that killed him. It deranged the action of his heart, which, ceasing to beat, caused him to fall. Still another shining light of science says of the weed in question, that it is an acid narcotic, a few grains of which cause death; that it is a source of intemperance, induces drinking, brings on jaundice, and, closing all, death.

These are, doubtless, learned opinions and reliable ones, but some of them bear traces of intolerance and bigotry. It is comparatively easy for one having an antipathy against a certain article to search the cyclopedias and bring ponderous bolts to bear upon it, and so endeavor to batter it out of existence. In this case, unfortunately, tobacco, the object of all the disquisition of which the opinions above quoted are extracts, refuses to be abolished; and people smoke, chew and snuff with, as the novelists say, a perseverance worthy of a better cause. It may be indeed that the philosophers before-mentioned have at one time been made deadly sick by too ardent an application to their idol, and conceiving therefore, an intense dislike for it, have resolved upon its ruin. We cannot think that their wishes will be realized; the effects of tobacco are undoubtedly bad, as is, in fact, water or anything harmless *per se*; taken in excess it gives distress and all the symptoms of sudden death so feelingly alluded to heretofore. Of the large majority of deaths in the country it is saying a great deal to assert that twenty thousand of them are caused by narcotics in the shape of tobacco. We are not of those, therefore, who make a hue and cry

against customs and habits without a surer basis than mere hearsay evidence, and we cannot expect that any one will throw away his cigar on the instant because we have printed Dr. Dryasdust's opinion. Our mission is fulfilled when we point out the results likely to ensue from the abuse of it. Neither do we advocate or decry its use, conceiving it to be for the interest as it is the solemn duty of all men to inquire into their habits so far as they bear upon the preservation of health; not present comfort more than the welfare of future generations depends on their practices.

The Turks undoubtedly understand how to smoke better than any other nation. They do not seem to be harmed by it, since they live to healthy old age in the constant use of the weed; but whether harmed or not, they evidently excel all other people in the luxury. The Turk smokes a clean clay pipe. He also uses a long wooden stem. This is the important characteristic of the chibouk, and the theory of the thing is this:—All woody fibers in burning are decomposed, giving off quantities of water or of oxygen and hydrogen, which compose water. This water passes off in steam or vapor, having in solution the nicotine and other component parts of the tobacco. What is commonly called the "oil" in a pipe is ninety-nine hundredth parts water. It cannot but be evident that this hot water or steam, passing as it does directly from the fire to the mouth when one smokes a short pipe or a cigar, is uncomfortable, if not unwholesome. A long wooden stem, three to five feet in length, with a large bore, is therefore advantageous in this respect, that it permits the smoke to rest in the tube some time before it is taken into the mouth. It deposits its steam and a large part of the nicotine in the wooden tube, and the smoker takes into his lips a dry smoke. The Turks clean these stems daily with strong coffee. They prefer the wood of the jessamine or the wild cherry to all others, although they make pipe stems of every kind. Indeed it is not uncommon for a luxurious Turk to send out for the branch of a large rose-bush, have his servant bore the stem with the ever-ready gimlet and string, and then hand the pipe to his guest blooming with fragrant roses. Jessamine and cherry stems cost in the Turkish bazaars from one to ten and even fifteen dollars each. It is on the stem and the mouthpiece that the expense is wanted. The amber mouthpiece is in itself costly—choice amber, milky and delicate in color, being worth almost its weight in gold in Oriental countries. The mouthpiece is ornamented with jewels, according to the wealth of the proprietor. Thus, a mouthpiece worth ten or twenty thousand dollars may be frequently seen, while the bowl of the pipe is worth but a tenth of a cent.

These "habits and properties," as the theatrical men say, may be very well for Turks, but at the present state of prices such luxury could hardly be supported. A paragraph in a late paper says that a gentleman in this State has recently built a three-thousand-dollar "smoke-house." Or more properly, perhaps, he has just converted the cash, which would otherwise have been blown to the winds, into a substantial dwelling. Finding that the habit was injuring his health he discontinued the practice. He was encouraged by the pecuniary saving it was constantly effecting. By an accurate arithmetical calculation he ascertained that the daily cost of cigars, with annual and compound interest, would amount to over three thousand dollars in twenty years. Having already effected this saving he concluded to build a handsome dwelling. We should regard this as a most precarious investment. The fear would be always recurring that at some day fire and smoke would claim their own, and that the house would vanish from the earth as swiftly as the blue rings from the cigar, at whose expense it was erected. Finally, we may assert without the fear of doctors before our eyes, that the use of tobacco like every other indulgence is injurious to some while it is innoxious to others. Practiced to excess the habit will lead to serious evils, but a very temperate use of this celebrated vegetable will not be attended with any worse results than a gradual but steady diminution of its devotees' loose change.

A LIVE gorilla has lately arrived in Liverpool from Africa, and is the first living animal of the species that has been brought to Europe.