

confinements; her children at the breast are liable to erysipelous and other skin diseases.

In Scotland, in addition to the effects of tobacco, may be added those of its adulterations—viz., copperas, salt of tartar, saltpetre, and sand. The salts cause the tobacco to feel intensely hot and acrid, irritating mostly all the mucous membranes. These adulterations are added to give colour, and, by retaining a large amount of water, to cheat both revenue and consumer. It gives rise to that form of caries of the teeth which commences by internal decay. The tooth being unduly stimulated by the oft-applied heat, a bony deposit takes place on the fangs, the canals are partially or wholly obliterated, and, the supply of nourishment being cut off, some day, while perhaps eating a piece of soft bread, the crown gives way, and the tooth rapidly crumbles down. Sand is used to a very great extent, finely sifted; it perhaps is harmless, but affords a good illustration of how openly adulteration can be carried on in our free country.

In conclusion, I may state that the germs of premature decay, which abuse of tobacco is spreading through the country, will ultimately, in my opinion, prove more overwhelming than even the serious abuse of intoxicating liquors.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Feb. 17th, 1857.

WM. M'DONALD.

ANALYSIS OF TOBACCO.

[LETTER FROM F. B. THOMPSON, ESQ.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—With reference to the proportions of nicotina existing in tobacco, Dr. Hassall states (vide THE LANCET, Feb. 21st) that "1000 grains of tobacco yield, according to the kind used, from 3·86 to 11·28 grains of nicotina." The following are the results of M. Schloesing's analyses, published in the "Comptes Rendus," Dec. 1846:—

	Per Cent. of Nicotina in the Dry Tobacco.
"Lot	7·96
Lot Garrone	7·34
Nord	6·58
Ile de Vilaine	6·29
Pas de Calais	4·94
Alsatia	3·21
Virginia	6·87
Kentucky	6·09
Maryland	2·29
Havanna, less than	2·00"

I beg also to call attention to M. Schloesing's remark, that "tobacco containing a large per-centage of nicotina seems to be that generally preferred for the manufacture of snuff. *The snuff itself contains but about one-third of this nicotina, the remainder having been destroyed by the fermentation.*" The titillatory action of the snuff is ascribed to the quantity of ammonia generated by the fermentative process.

As M. Schloesing's experiments were made on the exact method, of which he is the well-known inventor, I trust that this matter-of-fact contribution may be serviceable in the discussion to which you have thrown open your columns.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Andover-place, Kilburn, Feb. 1857.

F. B. THOMPSON.

SMOKING A BLESSING!

[LETTER FROM W. SUMPTER, ESQ.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You will perhaps allow me the privilege of further contending for the moderate use of tobacco. Believing as I firmly do that in the chain of creation no link is deficient in its allotted use, I would ask the question of the infidels in the tobacco-blessing, Why was the tobacco-plant created?—what is its use? Shall we, arrogating to ourselves a greater power of reason than the Author of creation, deny ourselves one of the greatest blessings, which, in the present age of over-excitement of the nervous system, is peculiarly indicated as a counteracting sedative? A man who is obliged, of necessity, to overtax his brain in order to obtain a livelihood, requires a sedative, and the best sedative he can use is tobacco. Because we abuse almost every blessing which is given to us, are we to designate them (as some of your correspondents have done) as *curses*? I believe tobacco, diminishing as it does overaction of the heart, would be especially useful in violent mania; in

soothing and in inducing sleep in delirium tremens; in allaying fits of mental excitement from whatever cause produced, and as an anæsthetic in painful diseases.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

Horncastle, Feb. 20th, 1857.

W. SUMPTER.

CLERICAL SMOKERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In reply to "Clericus Anglicanus," I must refer him to a correspondence, within the last eight or ten years, on the subject of smoking, between a bishop and a curate, in which the former distinctly *refused* the indulgence to any clergyman belonging to his diocese. The entire correspondence was reported in the daily papers at the time. Perhaps "Clericus Anglicanus" was not then initiated in the art of smoking. My memory is rather treacherous as to the names and dates &c., but I hope shortly to be able to lay a copy of the correspondence (with your permission) before him and your readers.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Feb. 21st, 1857.

J. B. NEIL.

MR. THOMAS WAKLEY'S TUBULAR TREATMENT OF STRICTURES OF THE URETHRA.

[NOTE FROM MR. W. SETH GILL.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In common fairness, and as one convinced of the great practical utility and infallible certainty of one of the most useful and effective discoveries of modern science, I cannot withhold offering *another* proof to those already published, through the wide-spread pages of THE LANCET, as additional testimony of the value of Mr. Thomas Wakley's tubular instruments for the *rapid* treatment of strictures of the urethra. This case of stricture was of *twenty years'* standing, and had been treated by surgeons of distinction in this country and in America. It had also been relieved by me occasionally, under complete retention, by the introduction of the smallest-sized catheter *with very great difficulty*, and after many fruitless attempts, with the employment of the usual accessories. My patient became so incapacitated at last by continued pain and inconvenience, and the frequent necessity of instrumental aid, that I determined on consulting Mr. T. Wakley. The patient was temperate in his habits, with a countenance indicating *extreme* suffering; restless nights and failing health rendered him incapable of attending to business, which he relinquished, despairing of relief. In this condition he was seen by Mr. Wakley, who has restored him to comparative health and happiness. He has resumed his usual avocations, was at my surgery this morning, and speaks in rhapsody of the treatment which has conferred so great a blessing. This, Sir, has been accomplished in the short space of *three weeks*, without pain, and without the appearance of blood, which is remarkable, as my own efforts gave rise to extensive hæmorrhage.

In five other cases in my own practice (two of them complicated with urinary fistulæ), treated by Mr. Wakley, I have witnessed a similar amount of success, and with very little suffering. Two of these were under treatment two years ago, and have had no return; the others are of a more recent date, but doing well. With these demonstrative proofs, how can I but estimate these simple but effectual instruments! I am persuaded that the *direct case* of urethral stricture is amenable to this *painless* and *bloodless* operation and invention. This system of curing stricture of the urethra is indeed worthy to rank amongst the most valuable discoveries of the age.

The neglect of the *primary* symptoms of stricture, from either delicacy or ignorance, too often involves the victim in all the sufferings experienced in the more advanced stage, which the use of these instruments would entirely prevent. So satisfied am I on this point, that I cannot pass over so important an observation, seeing, as I have done, the fearful false passages, extravasations, &c. &c., caused by the efforts to relieve this most distressing disease under the old plan of treatment.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

W. SETH GILL, M.R.C.S.

White Lion-street, Pentonville, Jan. 1857.

NEW SLIDING STAFF FOR PERINEAL SECTION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Amongst the "Hospital Notes," in your last week's number, the attention of the profession is drawn to a new sliding staff for perineal section. An instrument very similar