

class, and all placed under similar circumstances, testifying to the innocuousness of smoking as far as they are concerned, and expressing their conviction as men who have nothing but their own experience to guide them; and though the number I have been able to quote is but small, yet the feeling here expressed affords a very good type of what I believe to be the prevalent one amongst the poor of this agricultural district. They esteem their tobacco a positive luxury; it soothes and pleases them at the time, and soon from habit, if not at first, it causes them no after-inconvenience. Without doubt, the circumstances in which the agricultural labourer is placed, of abundance of fresh air, and great development of his muscular system, are such as oppose most powerfully the action of any nervo-muscular depressant, and enable his system very speedily to establish that *tolerance* of the agent which so soon follows its habitual employment. But whatever the cause, the examples I have adduced serve to establish the fact, that the class—husbandman—does not itself consider that it sustains injury from the use of tobacco in the ordinary mode of its indulgence in it.

In other classes of life, too, I know many individuals who declare, in answer to specific questions, that they have never observed any ill effects to follow from the moderate enjoyment of their daily allowance of one, two, or three pipes; and I could quote *examples* of what would appear to be an absolutely beneficial action; to one man, as his most gentle and pleasant aperient; to another, the man of thought, as his readiest means of soothing a restless mind, and conferring the power of concentrating his ideas; to others again, as a powerful stimulator of their mental faculties. All of these state their conviction that a large consumption of tobacco does them harm; but they also express an equally strong opinion that a certain small quantity produces no appreciable injury. That tobacco-smoking in an extreme degree may produce great nervous and cardiac depression, we must allow to be proven; that many individuals exist whose systems cannot be brought to tolerate the action of the drug even in small quantity, appears equally certain; but that a very large number of persons cannot be shown to have sustained injury from a life-long but moderate enjoyment of their “weed,” inquiry amongst the general population fully convinces me. Whether a most potent argument against tobacco, on the ground of its being a social nuisance, and militating against the comfort and agreement of families, could not be brought forward, is another question, for the solution of which we must refer, not so much to the medical profession, as to the female members of households.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Norwich, March, 1857.

PETER EADE, M.D. Lond.,  
Physician to the Norwich Dispensary, &c.

#### BURTON ON TOBACCO.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Since the discovery of tobacco in Yucatan by the Spaniards, during the first voyage of Columbus, the world has been divided in opinion as to the value of the plant, either as a luxury or as a remedy in some extreme cases of disease, and also as to whether it is deleterious or otherwise in its agency on the human constitution. The case is no better now. The discussion in THE LANCET proves that the world is not much wiser at this time; and, besides, there exists, it is quite evident, a great deal of prejudice, and not much argument for and against its use as a luxury at this present moment. Then who is to decide? Each one gives his own separate views, which have been arrived at by individuals possessing all the variety of constitution and temperament it is possible to conceive; and therefore I shall not venture to decide for others that I know nothing of, but only for myself and those who may consult me specially on the subject; but since you have invited us all to speak, I will make a few general remarks to the point.

In the first place, the *instinct* of all men is against the excessive, or even the free, use of tobacco, and in reason and in conversation its use is only tolerated as an occasional habit. By tobacco I mean, not the vile stuff sold under that name, but the pure unadulterated leaf, either in the form of “baccy rare” or of the best Havannah cigars, very much out of the reach of most persons, because of their price, and recognised only by the “chosen few” when really to be obtained.

In the next place, all men of observation and experience (and who is without this last now, when all men smoke and some

women!) must be able to point to instances of disease and derangement from the abuse of this luxury, either to the common irregularity in the heart's beat, sickness and faintness, or to paralysis and atrophy of the testes, sometimes caused by excessive smoking. On the other hand, they must also have been witness to or have experienced the beneficial effects of the “weed,” where it has been used with judgment and discretion. They must also have seen that the habitual daily use thereof is for the most part injurious, and the occasional and medicinal employment of it of great and especial service; that it is either a benign sedative, an aperitive, a gentle stimulant, or a most pernicious poison, according to its method of administration. Hear the words of old Burton concerning it, which are as much to the purpose as anything that can be written:

“Tobacco, divine, rare, super-excellent tobacco! which goes far beyond all their panaceas, potable gold, and philosophers' stones, a sovereign remedy to all diseases. A good vomit, I confesse; a virtuous herb, if it be well qualified, opportunely taken, and medicinally used: but, as it is commonly *abused* by most men, which take it as tinkers do ale, 'tis a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health, divelish tobacco, the ruine and overthrow of body and soul.”—(Vol. i., 1805.)

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Clifton, March, 1857.

JAMES B. PROWSE, M.R.C.S.

#### EFFECTS OF TOBACCO IN AGUE, &c.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A short time since, when assistant-surgeon in the Royal Lincoln Militia, I had under my care a good many cases of ague, amongst which relapses were very prevalent; these I invariably traced to the use of tobacco, nor could any permanent cure be effected until the strictest precautions were taken to cut off the supply of that luxury. Although fully convinced of the bad effects of tobacco in any diseases of a febrile type, I think there is strong evidence to show that the habitual smoker, when suffering from wounds or other injuries of an irritating or debilitating nature, may derive considerable benefit from its use. I was led to this conclusion whilst having under my observation a number of wounded men from the Crimea, who were allowed to smoke.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

Kingswood, near Bristol,  
March, 1857.

WM. DYMCK, M.R.C.S.

#### IS SMOKING A BLESSING?

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A “Philanthropist,” in your last impression, regards my assertion, that tobacco is a blessing, as “strange;” but, I add, *true*. If tobacco prevents a too rapid oxygenation of nervous tissue; if, which in mine and many others' experience, “*emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros*,” if created things are not cursed *per se*, but only because we *abuse* them; if, according to Pereira, tobacco produces a remarkable soothing and tranquillizing effect; if “*vox populi est vox Dei*,” if things can be both strange and true;—then tobacco is a blessing. Trusting that truth, though strange, will prevail,

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Horneastle, March, 1857.

WALTER SUMPTER.

#### SMOKING AND DELIRIUM TREMENS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As no class of men smoke more than medical students, some of their experiences would help to solve the Tobacco Question. One of the “fraternity,” in THE LANCET of the 7th instant, says he smoked for two years, and always felt sick (?) after a pipe. On some it has this effect; others feel languid, others excited, and others soothed. Indeed I believe the same quantity will have all these effects on the same person at different times; at least I find it so in my own case, and that from the same kind of tobacco, and the same pipe. There can be no doubt it quiets hunger; and if one feels irritable, it puts him in a more amiable state of mind. Smoking in excess will produce delirium tremens. The following is a case in point:—An undergraduate of Oxford had a mania for colouring “clays,” and sat up at night for no other purpose than to smoke. In time he had delirium tremens. It has been asked, why do people smoke? Very few enjoy their first pipe, but in almost

every case they continue, because it is thought "the thing;" it then becomes tolerable to them, then a pleasure, then a habit, then a necessity. It was stated in one of the first letters on this subject that leeches, fleas, &c., would not bite a smoker. This I can confidently say is a mistaken idea; for the other day I put six leeches on for a friend who smokes from four to six ounces per week, and all took but one, and remained on the usual time; some of them lived a fortnight afterwards. Fleas are particularly partial to me, and I am always attacked at midwifery cases, where all students attending in London must know they are pretty abundant. I also think smoking promotes expectoration. This might be worth a trial, though it will never be given to the public as an expectorant. When a person comes into a room where there is smoking, it makes him cough; directly he takes a pipe himself he is easy. Why is this?

St. Bartholomew's Hospital, March, 1857.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

O., STUDENS.

### WHAT IS MEANT BY MODERATE SMOKING?

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—What is *moderate* smoking? I am acquainted with a baronet who consumes on an average *three* dozen cigars *daily*. The inveterate smoking sailor (in addition to chewing), as stated during this controversy, consumes sixteen ounces of tobacco in a month, and yet both of these considers themselves *moderate* smokers! In Milton's life, it is mentioned by his biographer that he only smoked the last thing before retiring to rest one small pipeful of tobacco, drinking a glass of water after so doing. Milton, therefore, must be said to be the type of moderate smokers! In Shakspeare's time, smoking was practised, and yet in none of his plays does he make mention of tobacco. But Lord Bacon, the Christison and Pereira of those days, says, "Tobacco smoking is a secret delight, serving only to steal away men's brains." It is a well-known fact that our Premier, Lord Palmerston, (who perhaps requires more soothing agents &c. than any man living,) is a bitter opponent of the weed, and on every possible occasion, when addressing his tenantry and the labouring classes, takes care to denounce it in the following words: "Avoid the public-house as much as you can, but always steer clear of the tobacco shop."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

March, 1857.

VERBUM SAT.

P.S.—As tobacco is a strong narcotic poison, the medical profession should be called on to regulate the doses or quantities to be smoked, and to determine "What is meant by moderate smoking?"

### TOBACCO QUERIES—WHEN TO BEGIN SMOKING?

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Our facetious friend, *Punch*, makes Mrs. Blue Stocken (Minerva Hall, Bath) to ask, "If smoking is not injurious, perhaps you will have the kindness to inform me why *we* ladies are not allowed to smoke?" This leads me to ask, if smoking is ever prescribed for *females* in lunatic asylums? Dr. Conolly, in his recently published work on the "Treatment of the Insane," says: "In very few instances do I allow a very small quantity of tobacco, but only occasionally." This, no doubt, is on the *similia similibus* plan. Knowing the effects of the *first* pipe or cigar on the constitution, I take it for granted that Dr. Conolly would only order it to those patients, of *either* sex, who had been smokers *previous* to their admission. Dr. Webster insists that smoking causes insanity, and supports his dictum by *statistics*.

I can confidently assure "A Philanthropist," that crime keeps pace with the *increased* consumption of tobacco! ("Smoking leads to Drinking.") Statistics will bear me out in this assertion. Witness the necessity of providing "reformatory schools" for juvenile delinquents—the *inveterate smokers* of the present day. Our medical brethren having charge of those valuable institutions, no doubt, will favour us with the results of their experience in the columns of THE LANCET. Smoking, by no means, should ever be attempted before the twenty-fifth year, or before the human frame is fully developed.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

March, 1857.

"AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM."

### CAUTION TO SMOKERS!

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The nicotine and empyreumatic oils coming in contact with "the *spurious* gold mountings of artificial teeth, and very many of the mineral stoppings\* for decayed teeth," produces *verdigris*, as all chemists are aware; consequently much of this last must find its way into the stomach! Many of the cheap pipes are provided with tin, Britannia metal, and German silver tubes, all of which are highly dangerous to use. It follows that only pure leaf-gold should be used for stopping teeth, and that none but respectable dentists should be employed.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

March, 1857.

PHILANTHROPUS SECUNDUS.

### ARE OUR PRESENT GREAT STATESMEN SMOKERS?

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It would be most interesting to ascertain whether the "leading men" in the House of Commons are smokers. Many of your thousands of readers must be in a position to supply this information.

I am, Sir, yours &c.

March, 1857.

E. M.

### DISEASED MEAT IN LONDON AND THE CATTLE EPIDEMIC.

#### DANGER TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Last evening I made a communication to the Pathological Society of London, on the subject of cattle epidemics and diseased meat, in relation to the public health. The President and members expressed a general and very decided opinion, by the manner in which they received my statement, that I had not over-rated its importance, and if you, Sir, entertain the same belief, I trust to your bringing the following facts before the public.

The statement I am about to make is substantially the same as I made to the Pathological Society last night. My note-books contain many more facts of a similar nature, and they shall, with the least possible delay, be published, with the results of the inquiries I am personally conducting. I pledge myself to make no statement without the fullest and most strictly accurate evidence.

On Monday morning last, the 16th inst., I proceeded to the New Cattle-market in Copenhagen-fields, to inspect the live and slaughtered cattle. The live beasts were generally extremely well-conditioned and thoroughly sound; but standing amongst them were *three diseased beasts*. One of these was emaciated and hidebound with *abscesses* in various parts of the body, particularly over the region of the head and neck. From the clinical observations I made on diseased cattle nine years ago, I believe this case was most probably one of pyæmia following typhoid fever. A second beast was in ill-health—viz., thin and feverish, but I could not make a precise diagnosis. The third diseased beast was a fat one: it was lying down, moaning, looking round anxiously at its flanks; pulse 110; respiration 45; pleuro-pneumonia.

I now proceeded to the slaughter-house of the market. In that slaughter-house I saw five carcasses, three of oxen, two of sheep. One of the latter was of magnificent shape and condition, so far as fat was concerned, but the whole carcass had a uniform dusky-red colour, evidently the result of general infiltration with bloody serosity. The carcass having been trimmed and completely dressed for the butcher, I had no means of inspecting the viscera. Two of the oxen were much emaciated, and had apparently died from typhus or typhoid fever; they presented numerous bloody extravasations in the sub-cutaneous, inter-muscular, and sub-pleural cellular tissues. I should have required to see the intestines, in order to state accurately the nature of the disease, but those viscera had been removed. The third ox was large, moderately fat; pleuro-

\* Quicksilver, tin, zinc, lead, and different metallic compounds, &c.