

THE JOURNAL
OF THE
Board of Arts and Manufactures.
FOR UPPER CANADA.

NOVEMBER, 1863.

TOBACCO SMOKING.—PRESTON'S TOBACCO MANUFACTORY.

Tobacco smoking is no doubt an American custom of great antiquity. It has always possessed particular virtues in the ancient rites and ceremonies of the primitive races who peopled the temperate, and perhaps sub-tropical parts of America. Among northern tribes, although smoking appears to have been all but universal, when Europeans first came in contact with them, yet it was not the fumes of tobacco which they inhaled, but those of the Bear Berry, Willow leaves, the inner bark of the Red Willow, the leaves of the Sumach, &c., which they dried and roasted over a fire. But they prized tobacco, after having once smoked it, above all other substitutes. The tobacco pipe and smoking weed, in some form another, entered into most of their religious ceremonies, and was intimately connected with the observance of their rites and superstitions. Pipes are found in great abundance all through the valleys of the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence; many of the relics discovered in ancient burial places are of curious workmanship, and show a considerable degree of skill in their sculpture, and ideality in their design.

Against the inordinate use of tobacco, there are many and most potent objections.

The experience of some eminent medical practitioners, tends to show, that on many constitutions, the practice of smoking or chewing, is very prejudicial.

In the competitive examinations to which young persons are submitted in the military schools of France, the smokers of tobacco occupy the lowest places. Sir Benjamin Brodie, goes so far as to state that "the effects of this habit are indeed various; the difference depending on differences of constitution, and differences in the mode of life otherwise. But from the best observations which I have been able to make on the subject, I am led to believe that there are very few, who do not suffer harm from it, to a greater or less extent. The earliest symptoms are manifested in the derangement of the nervous system."

On the other hand, it has been observed by Lane, the learned annotator of the Arabian Nights (and the observation is confirmed by the experience of Mr. Layard, M.P., the explorer of Assyria) that the growth and use of tobacco amongst oriental nations,

has gradually reduced the resort to intoxicating beverages, and Mr. Crawford, in a paper "*On the History and Consumption of Tobacco*" in the *Journal of the Statistical Society* (1853), remarks, that simultaneously with the decline in the use of spirits in Great Britain, has been a corresponding increase in the use of tobacco.* The quantity of tobacco consumed throughout the world is truly enormous. North America alone, produces about five hundred million pounds annually.

In Great Britain the quantity of tobacco consumed in 1821, was, 15,598,152 lbs., or at the rate of 11.71 oz. per head; in 1851, it had risen to 28,062,978 lbs., or 16.86 oz. per head. In 1859, the quantity reserved for Home consumption, reached the enormous figure of 34,791,261 lbs.

This is the more surprising when we reflect that tobacco was first brought to England by Sir Francis Drake, in 1586, and the colonists of Sir Walter Raleigh. In 1560 it was brought to France by Nicot, and into Turkey and Arabia it was introduced about the beginning of the 17th century, and in 1601 it is known to have been carried to Java, and yet in the short period of 256 years, its use in one form or another, has spread so rapidly and extensively, that the greatest commercial nation in the world, which does not grow one particle of tobacco, imported in 1859, more than sixty millions of pounds, and, retaining half that quantity for the consumption of her people, exported to distant countries, where tobacco will not grow, or where enough can not be cultivated, upwards of thirty-two millions of pounds weight.

The cultivation of tobacco has proceeded with very rapid strides in the United States. The crops in 1849, amounted to 199,752,655 pounds, in 1859, it reached 429,390,771 pounds.†

The superintendent of the eighth census of the United States, naively says: "It would seem surprising that a crop which is said to impoverish the soil more than any other, and to injure to some extent, every one who uses it, should be found so desirable as to increase 106 per cent. in ten years; but such is the effect of a ready market with remunerative prices."

To its excessive use in some parts of the United States, and indeed in Canada, and to the horrible habit of uncontrolled expectoration, which is so freely indulged in, the words used in King James' "*Counterblast of Tobacco*" may be applied with some degree of justice, "A custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fume thereof, nearest resembling the] horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless."

* Hunt's edition of Ure's Dictionary of Arts, &c. † Eighth Census.