

The Deadly Cigarette

The Worst Form

The worst form of tobacco using is the cigarette. By smoking cigarettes thousands of boys have been mentally and morally ruined. A distinguished French physician investigated the effect of cigarette smoking in thirty-eight boys between the ages of nine and fifteen. Twenty-seven had distinct symptoms of nicotine poisoning. Twenty-two had serious disorders, and a marked appetite for strong drink. Three had heart affection. Eight had very impure blood. Twelve were subject to bleeding of the nose. Ten had disturbed sleep, and four had ulceration of the mouth.

My boy, let tobacco alone in any form. It is a dirty, dangerous, expensive habit. Figures cannot enumerate nor scales estimate the evil that it produces.

The Influence of Fashion

In these days one of the most insidious temptations which assail the small boy is the cigarette. It is safe to say that there is scarcely a boy in five hundred who has not tried to smoke a cigarette, "just to see what it is like," before he is twelve years old. If the father smokes, it is almost inevitable that by the time the boy has attained college age, he will be a confirmed smoker. The fashion seems to possess a fascination that is irresistible to the average boy. It seems to impart that smartness and distinction to a boy, in his own eyes, that a corset, that greatest modern engine for the deterioration of woman, imparts to a girl. The hold of fashion, in spite of the ridicule we feel in our increasing civilization, seems to grow tighter and tighter every year. It binds our children, in their smaller sphere, even more cruelly than it binds their fathers and mothers. It is a torture to a sensitive boy or girl to be obliged to wear a hat or coat which is not like those that "the rest" are wearing. They want to do the same things that their mates do, and to lead approximately the same kind of life.

The hold of the smoking habit upon our people is simply appalling, especially in the face of the fact that it has absolutely nothing in its favor, except that it affords a fleeting satisfaction so soon gone that the craving for more becomes constantly greater.—Kate Upson Clark.

How It Works

Judge Stubbs, of the Juvenile Court, Indianapolis, Indiana, was asked by the Teachers' Association of that State to go to their Annual Convention, lately, and answer this question for them, and this is what he told them: When the cigarette fiend draws the smoke down into his lungs, the poison from it gets into his blood. In youth, the bones are soft and the nerves and muscles weak; therefore this poison acts on them quickly and takes away the strength of both mind and body. If the boy is going to school, he finds it difficult to fix his thoughts on the lessons, and if he keeps on smoking he soon arrives at the place where he cannot study at all. He leaves school before he ought and begins work. But work, too, is hard for him. His limp muscles and soft bones and diseased nerves make any exertion a weariness, and long before the day is over he is tired out.

The judge continues:

"Such a boy in time becomes a loafer. Our experience has been that such a boy learns to drink and swear and steal. He won't go to school, and he can't work. He loafs in alleys, and often sleeps in sheds and outbuildings in summer, and in basements where there are furnaces, attached to shops and factories, in winter. Last winter more than fifty boys were brought into my court who had been taken by police officers out of a hot air shaft under one of our large hotels, which they had found a way to enter from the outside. Their clothes were masses of filth and vermin. They had breathed the foul air and poisonous gases that are always to be found in such places, until they were pale, emaciated, and scarcely able to stand. Every one of them looked like he might have been pulled out of a garbage barrel. Of course, it goes without saying that they were all cigarette fiends."

Universal Testimony

His Honor, Recorder Weir, of Montreal, Que.: "I have remarked the fact that cigarette smoking is usually one of the accomplishments of the young vagrant, and of those youths who give evidence of moral decadence."

Swift & Co., and other Chicago business houses, employing hundreds of boys, have issued this announcement, or a similar one: "So impressed are we with the danger of cigarette using that we will not employ a cigarette user."

Mr. C. Ferrier, principal of Victoria Industrial School, Mimico: "Boys are not admitted here over fourteen years of age. The average age is twelve years. Fully seventy-five per cent. of all youths committed to my care are cigarette users."

The Japanese strictly enforce a law forbidding boys under twenty years of age to use tobacco. Americans should not be behind Japan. Every state should enact laws prohibiting the sale of cigarettes and tobacco as well as of liquor to minors.

Last summer Rodolfe Paquet, of Montreal, died after a week's intense suffering. The doctor pronounced the cause of death as nicotine poisoning. It was learned that the boy (he was only twenty-one years old) sometimes smoked six packages of cigarettes daily.

Dr. Hammond says: "I saw in Washington a wretched-looking child, scarcely five years old, smoking a cigarette and blowing the smoke from his nostrils. His pale, pinched face was twitching convulsively, his little shoulders were bent, and his whole appearance was that of an old man."

In the Chicago Examiner of November 27th, 1903, appeared the following piece of advice given by Mrs. Marx, the mother of one of the notorious "car-barn murderers." "Tell all the boys of Chicago to beware of dime novels; to not smoke cigarettes; to abstain from drink; to avoid bad company. These vices caused the downfall of my son Gustave. And tell all the fathers who have growing sons, to keep company with them, and set them a good example. The lack of a father's counsel was a sad misfortune to my boy."

The principal of a leading Business College in Montreal states that in the many applications he receives for young men to fill important business positions, there are always inquiries about the personal habits of the young men, and almost every one stipulates—"He must not be a cigarette smoker."

The assistant general manager of the Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph Company has issued the following order: "You are directed to serve notice that the use of cigarettes after August 1 will be prohibited; and you are further instructed to, in the future, refuse to employ any one who is addicted to the habit."

The cigarette fellow is being gradually driven into a corner. The area in which he may operate is being steadily curtailed. The latest drive at him is made by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, which has issued an order that nobody who has accumulated the cigarette habit will henceforth be eligible to get his name on the company's pay roll. Several cigarette smokers employed by the corporation have been dismissed.

The Boys' Cigarette Habit

Various devices have been proposed for inducing boys to leave off the smoking of cigarettes. Clubs, the members of which are pledged not to smoke them, school prizes for those who do not smoke, chewing-gum warranted to destroy the desire for the cigarette, even laws against the making and selling of cigarettes—all these have testified to the effort on the part of parents and teachers to reduce the evil effects of smoking when practised by young boys.

None of these devices succeeds so well as the school prize to succeed. The boys' club, the school prize, making the state law reach a certain number of offenders, but the worst cases remain, and go on destroying themselves and corrupting others.

The truth probably is that the old-fashioned appeal to the will of the boy himself is the only efficient cure of the cigarette habit. He must be told plainly that he is sacrificing his health, his brain, and his future to his bad habit. The facts are clear and forcible enough to convince his reason, if he will once listen to them. Then must follow the plain, bald statement: "Nobody can help you but you yourself. It is doubtful if you have even now enough will left to stop smoking. If you haven't enough to-day, you will have less next week, and still less next month. Unless you break off the habit you are in danger of becoming a burden to everybody—especially to your friends, to yourself most of all. If you want to stop smoking, the way to do it is to stop smoking!"

Many a boy who would sneer at milder methods will rise in response to this heroic one. The brutal truth carries a weight far beyond that of the comfortable half-truths with which we often try to rouse a sleeping conscience. All substitutes for conscience and will are doomed to failure. The boy who cannot kill off a bad habit must live with it till it kills him.—Youth's Companion.

How Tobacco Injures

A young man asked Wendell Phillips if he should smoke, and the statesman answered: "Certainly not. It is liable to injure the sight, to render the nerves unsteady, to enfeeble the will, and enslave the nature to an imperious habit likely to stand in the way of duty to be performed." Many professors of leading colleges have asserted, with figures to prove, that boys who begin the tobacco habit are stunted physically, and never reach normal bodily development.