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**Concerning Smoking.**

BY ARNOLD GOLSWORTHY.

**S**MOKING tobacco is one of the finest things in the world. It is a good deal better than smoking brown paper or tea leaves. One of the most powerful arguments against smoking is that it leads to drinking; but, as a matter of fact, I have known men as first-class drunkists anywhere—who have never touched tobacco in their lives who could qualify provided the liquor held out.

Now and again, there arises in our midst the gentleman with the unexplainable combination of the blue ribbon and a red nose, who is prepared to prove that one cigar contains enough poison to kill two men. I don't remember to have ever seen two men smoking a single cigar, so I've never been able to test the theory; but I've known the time when I've sat down and smoked a whole cigar by myself without holding on to anything, and I don't think I am making too reckless an assertion when I state that I have invariably survived the operation. People who never smoke because it makes them—wish they hadn't—are generally prepared to class smoking among the mortal sins, and to assert that a man who indulges in the use of tobacco is capable of almost anything wicked, owing to the fact that smoke deadens the conscience. I have been a smoker of the most hardened kind for a long while, yet I possess a really robust and muscular conscience in good working order, and I would give a written guarantee for two years with it at any time. I don't want to brag of my virtues, but I am only speaking the plain truth when I modestly admit that I have never murdered anybody in my life. It is true that I once crept out into the front garden and stealthily approached a German band, with sinister motives and a large brick. But I am glad to say that my better self prevailed in time; and, besides, the fact that there were seven of them to only one of me was a powerful incentive to the path of virtue.

As a rule a young fellow does not derive any particularly brilliant satisfaction from his first smoke, the actual net results of which are not readily expressible on paper. Authorities are apt to differ as to the period of life when the habit may be prudently contracted; but, in my humble opinion, the best time to begin smoking is when you've got a good cigar or cigarette. I have a somewhat vivid recollection of my first smoke. I was eight years old, and I wasn't leading an unusually gay or dissipated life at the time. I didn't stay out late at night playing cards or billiards, or spend my pocket-money on diamond bracelets. But one evening I found a box of cigarettes on the table, and I took one of the things up just to see what it felt like. Then I thought I would take it out and see if it looked any different in the garden. As it seemed all right, I called Billy Davis in from next door to come and watch me do it, and promised him the reversion of the thing when I had finished with it. When it was well alight, I explained to Billy that I had a bad cold just then, and that was what made he cough a little. After a minute or two I laid the cigarette reverently on the summer-house seat, and said I thought I would come and finish it to-morrow, as I hadn't time to have any more just then. I told Billy I didn't believe the thing was quite fresh, and he said he didn't know about that; but as we were rather pressed for time, he thought the back of the summer-house would be as handy as anywhere.

The cigarette is a very popular form of smoking at the present day.

But whether he deals in cigarettes or cigars, or the more whole-

some pipe, the smoker should always remember that it is part of his stock-in-trade to carry lights. I refer to the artificial kind, of course. The notion fostered by some smokers on the railway that everybody else in the compartment is eagerly waiting for a chance to offer his match-box is simply a bewildering delusion. The man who never carries matches in the train is almost as complete an iniquity as the dastardly fiend who uses scented fuses. Ordinary vestas are the least offensive; but, at the same time, if you should find yourself, late at night wondering why on earth you can't light your cigar with a common whelk-shell, let the police understand that you'll come quietly and don't want any stretcher.

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