

In reality, being only 45 years old, he was a wreck, physically and mentally, though he came of healthy stock. He could or would not comprehend that tobacco was gradually undermining his mind and body, although his wife and his friends knew it.

But it is not only in the young that tobacco exerts such disastrous effects. Smoking or chewing, when commenced in the period of manhood, and even at a time when it generally does least harm, after middle age, will tell on the mind, if excessively indulged in. Is it to be wondered at that a drug which, until tolerance is established, has such potent and palpable effects as to produce loss of co-ordination and unspeakable malaise, and after the organism has become used to it, is capable of setting up the well-known heart disturbances, amblyopia, and even amaurosis, which, in short, possesses the characteristic qualities of a powerful nerve poison? Is it a wonder, if such drug when, in spite of the warnings on the part of various organs, excessively and persistently indulged in, finally produces one or the other form of insanity? A drug that can, as has been demonstrated, set up organic changes of the optic nerve which, I hardly need mention, is in reality not a nerve, but a protrusion or elongation of the brain itself, must certainly be capable of injuriously influencing other, and functionally higher, parts of the organ of the mind.

Dr. Kjelberg read before the section of Neurology and Psychiatry of the last International Congress a paper in which he described a nicotine-psychosis, well marked by definite symptoms and stages. I have never seen the clinical picture as drawn by this observer, but it always seemed to me that whenever tobacco entered at all as a factor in a case of insanity, it was the immediate cause, vivifying, uniting, and condensing, as it were, the dormant morbid elements which predisposed the individual to mental disturbance. Thus, I have seen melancholia, more often mania, and very frequently general paresis hastened and precipitated by excessive use of tobacco.

That the majority of the insane smoke or chew is too well known to deserve special mention. Some alienists have been of the opinion that this habit ought not to be discouraged, that it has a calming and pacifying effect especially on the chronic insane. I believe this to be the case in some of the secondary dementis, but ordinarily though calming, it has an exciting effect later on. True, if the temporary contentment resulting from the gratification of the craving of the patient is looked upon as the action of tobacco, I agree that its effects are calming. But this quieting down, in my opinion, takes place on the same principle that a child gets quiet and stops crying when its wish, even the most unreasonable one, is gratified. The rule is, that smoking causes or prolongs ex-

citement in the insane. Many become absolutely unmanageable as soon as they touch tobacco. They get quarrelsome, tease and molest their fellow patients and render themselves obnoxious generally.

That tobacco really does cause insanity is evidenced by the magic effect seen in some cases after the discontinuance of the drug, when the patient's condition is still such that he is not wholly inaccessible to reason and has will power enough to abandon the habit. Thus I have seen that beginning melancholia with suicidal impulses, hallucinations of various kinds, forced actions, besides the precursory symptoms of insanity, such as insomnia, crying spells, præcordial anxiety, impotency, vertigo, beginning impairment of memory and judging power, and even the lowering of the moral tone, all of which, and a host of other symptoms, were attributable to tobacco-intoxication, disappeared sooner or later after freedom from the habit was established.

But whenever a case has gotten so far, that commitment to an institution has become necessary, the prospects are not so good, because such persons as a rule cannot be convinced that tobacco is or has been the cause of their mental trouble. Their argument is that almost everybody smokes, that all their friends and acquaintances chew or smoke, without showing symptoms of insanity. The alcoholic insane, when leaving the institution to enter active life again, generally knows and admits that alcohol has been the cause of his mental breakdown; the nicotine victim does not admit anything.

There has been a movement on foot in the medical press and to some extent in the daily papers, which latter chronicle the few cases that come to public knowledge under the head: "Gone insane from cigarette smoking," etc., to counteract the spread of this fatal habit, fatal to the individual himself and pernicious to the coming generation; but so far, apparently without any appreciable result.

French medical observers are of the opinion that one of the factors causing the depopulation of France is the excessive use of tobacco by its inhabitants; for the offspring of inveterate tobacco consumers is notoriously puny and stunted in stature and lacks the normal resisting power, especially on the part of the nervous system; again, in our country it is a significant fact that an alarming percentage of the candidates for admission to West Point and other military schools are rejected on account of tobacco hearts; from all countries and from all classes of society come reports in increasing numbers of the baneful effects of the tobacco habit.

But the consumption goes on and will do so until an example is set by those who, above all others, can estimate the disastrous effects of the habit.