

"But my father wouldn't allow it if he knew," objected Lorin.

"Pooh! Don't be such a baby! Do you suppose anybody would ever learn to use tobacco if he waited for the old folks to say he might? Come, be a man, and let's see how it tastes."

A good deal of argument and persuasion were necessary to overcome Lorin's scruples, but the example of the "fine gentlemen" at the hotel was too strong to be resisted. Smoking and chewing made them look so wise and important, and Lorin thought he would be happy if he could be like them. So he and Fred each took a small pinch of the tobacco and began to chew it.

"My! how sharp it is!" exclaimed Lorin, spitting profusely.

"We won't like it at first, I guess, but we'll soon learn to like it if we keep on," Fred suggested, making a wry face.

When Lorin reached home, he felt light-headed, and looked a little pale, but he carefully kept his secret from his parents.

"It does make one feel like a sneak and a coward to do something you can't tell your father and mother," he admitted to himself, as he crept into bed that evening. He did not feel that he was acting honestly or bravely.

Still, the passion for being a "fine gentleman" had got him in its grip, and so, next day, he and Fred took a second chew of tobacco. They had met secretly in the woods. After that, Lorin concealed a pouch of tobacco in his father's barn, and whenever he could do so without danger of discovery, he kept a small quid in his mouth. Soon he began to like the narcotic, and in a few months he really felt the need of it. But it was difficult to keep his secret from his parents, and, worst of all, one act of deception made many others necessary.

Six months had gone since he took his first chew. One day he and his father and a neighbor went to the woods to hunt squirrels. It was at this time that the laughable occurrence referred to in the beginning of our story took place. You see, Lorin supposed he could chew his tobacco in the woods without being found out, especially if he kept at some distance from his fellow hunters. Being hidden behind a clump of bushes, he thrust a good sized quid into his mouth, and began to chew it with relish.

But an accident soon happened to prove that he was not yet an adept tobacco chewer. What was it? Why, simply this: A few minutes later, while he was standing and looking intently up into a tall oak-tree, and

sorted in sighting a squirrel that was partly screened amid the leaves, what should that quid of tobacco do but slip from between his teeth and glide down his throat. He coughed violently, but the tobacco had gone too far; he could not cough it up.

What should he do? He remained silent for awhile, but soon grew deathly sick, and fairly staggered with faintness. At length, he was compelled to call for help, for he felt that he must die if not relieved.

"Father, father!" he called. "Come quick!"

"What is the matter, Lorin?" cried his father, running toward the boy. "Why, you're as white as a pillow!"

"O, I'm so sick, father," Lorin moaned. "Can't you—take me—ho—home?"

Mr. Haley called his neighbor, and together they carried the limp boy home, where he lay on the lounge in great distress until he vomited up the poisonous quid of tobacco. His parents were greatly frightened and sent post-haste for a doctor.

"What can be the matter with you, Lorin?" asked his mother. "Did you eat something that made you sick?"

Lorin was feeling miserable. Ill as he was, he felt especially disgusted with himself for having indulged in such a habit as tobacco chewing, and thereby deceiving his parents. As he lay there suffering from that sickening feeling in his stomach, he saw just how unmanly his conduct had been; and now there was only one right and honorable thing to do, and that was to confess. He fought a mental battle for a few minutes, and then said:

"I'll tell you what it was. It was that miserable tobacco that I swallowed!"

"Tobacco! tobacco!" exclaimed both his father and mother in the same breath.

"Yes, tobacco—the ugly, poison stuff! I'll never touch it again!"

And then, with tears and sobs, he told the whole story of his six months' secret use of the pernicious weed. He did not spare himself, but made a full and honest confession, humiliating as it was, and could not rest satisfied until he was sure that his father and mother had taken him back into their confidence.

And now, long years afterwards, whenever he tells the story to the boys whom he meets, he always closes by saying:

"That experience cured me completely. I have never put tobacco to my lips since that day. But let me tell you one thing, boys. Never begin, and you will never need a cure."—*Sci.*