

THE TOBACCO SMOKING HABIT.

GRADUALLY but surely the deleterious effects of tobacco smoking upon the human race must become clear and produce good results. The carefully recorded observations of Dr. Seaver, physician and instructor in physical culture, of Yale College, will be a great lever for those opposed to the use of tobacco; as this JOURNAL has ever been, we may add, to its use in any form.

For a number of years Dr. Seaver had been making observations respecting the physical and mental effects of tobacco-using upon students. In these statistics, recently published, Dr. Seaver shows that among the students, at Yale, smokers are found to be inferior both in mental ability and physical vigor to non-smokers. Smokers have less lung capacity and lung power than non-smokers. Their average bodily weight is less, as is also their stature. They have less endurance, both muscular and nervous, and are in every way physically inferior to non-smokers. In scholarship the smokers are far behind. Very few receive honors and among those of high standing in scholarship, only five smoked.

It will not be easy to successfully combat these facts. It will probably be said that, it is generally admitted that tobacco is injurious to the young. But anything that injures the youthful in so marked a manner can not fail to be injurious to the mature. Why the young, growing boy will withstand many things that would upset a full grown man. And in the way of digestion, for example, and of assimilation, this is the universal rule. Behold what the average growing boy can digest and assimilate, and without inconvenience. And nerve force and influence are concerned in these processes, it must be noted; as it is contended that it is chiefly upon the nervous system of the young that tobacco exerts its injurious influence.

We are told that men have been known to smoke tobacco for seventy consecutive years and "yet retain perfect physical and moral health." Have such cases ever been carefully and scientifically investigat-

ed? Was ever a scientific post mortem examination made on such a case? Such men do die, and occasionally at an advanced age. What was the cause of death? Who can say? Who can say but that they might have lived ten years longer, and happier and more useful lives, if they had not used tobacco? It is said they always enjoyed "good health." Thousand of people think they have good health who plod along through life and hardly know what good vigorous health is, and who would feel vastly better if they were to live for a time in careful accordance with well known hygienic rules.

Furthermore, although we do find people who smoke during a long life time, and there it appears many naturally of muscular, vigorous constitutions, with good ancestry, who can so smoke without appreciable injury—that is appreciable to ordinary observations,—how is it with their progeny? A leading city physician, we cannot now recall his name, has said: "I have never known a habitual tobacco user whose children, born after he had long used it, did not have a deranged nervous system, and sometimes evidently weak minds. Shattered nervous systems for generations to come may be the result of this indulgence." The evil effects upon children, of over indulgence in alcoholic beverages by the father or mother, are well known; while upon the father or mother hardly any or no injurious constitutional effects would be observable.

The very source of the tobacco smoking habit is enough to condemn it. Although a wise man once advised the sluggard to "go to the ant," civilized races in their progress would not naturally, one would suppose, go to savage races to seek for useful habits.

One good thing seems clear, that is this: While a few eminent physicians and others in Europe, such as Charcot, of Paris, and Spurgeon, advocate the use of tobacco, it is not easy to find one on this continent who can say much in defence of it, or more than that it is a useless, idle habit.