

tional disease, manifesting itself locally, just as much as small-pox, measles, and scarlet fever are, characterizing themselves on the cutaneous surface.

Correspondence.

THE EFFECT OF SMOKING.

To the Editor of the CANADA LANCET.

SIR,—

Your valuable Journal for February has just reached me, and I have pleasure in complimenting you on its improved appearance. In glancing over its "contents," I was attracted by your article on the "effect of smoking," and having been a smoker and chewer of the "weed" for the past thirty-five years, I felt personally as well as professionally interested. I do not wish in any way to advocate its general use, as it is, at *least*, an unpleasant habit, and its excessive use, or rather abuse, I believe to be very injurious, and am prepared to admit that the abuse is as widespread as civilization, but I think many use it in moderation without any evil result, either mentally, morally, or physically. I have tried its effects on myself, by quitting it entirely for intervals of a year and longer, at three different times, with an effect so slight, if any, that I have not been able to notice any difference in my feelings. My limited experience, however, is not the point I wish to bring out prominently, but the fact that, in my opinion, writers who oppose the use of tobacco (if it have any), generally assail the habit too strongly, often dwarfing greater evils by unjust comparisons with it, and while your article does not directly do so, pardon me for saying I think it does by implication, from the quotations you use so approvingly. Having for some time wielded an editorial quill, I am quite aware of the disadvantage of discussing any subject with an editor in his own paper; but as my object is not discussion, being simply a desire to contribute my mite to assist in placing the subject in the grade to which it properly belongs, I thought you might possibly give me space for an article, written on the unpopular side of an unpopular subject.

You quote from Dr. Paddock, "In no instance is the sin of the father more strikingly visited upon the children, than the sin of tobacco smoking." Now is not this begging the question? because it

would be highly proper first to prove that smoking *per se*, is a sin at all. In an excellent compend of theology I find sin to be defined as "Any want of conformity to, or violation of the law of God." Taking this definition then as a standard of judgment, and I cannot think of a better, I must emphatically deny that smoking *is* a sin, and I certainly do not see any evidence of moral obliquity, in the smoke from my cigar, which occasionally obscures the page on which I am writing, nor do I think the quotation any nearer to the truth, physiologically than morally, as I purpose showing in another part of this paper. Mr. Solly says, "I know of no single vice which does so much harm as smoking. I *suspect* smoking tobacco to be one of the causes of that increase," (of paralysis). The first part is similar to that which I have just criticised; the latter part can scarcely be said to be a model of strong reasoning or proof, as his only conclusion is, "I *suspect*" it to be "one of the causes." Dr. Munroe says, "Cancerous sores of the lips, syphilitic affections of the throat and lips, ——— are results only met with but too frequently," from the use of tobacco; I presume by its connection. I find I am quite behind the age, as I was of opinion, until a few minutes ago, that the disease cancer was an aggregation, or deposit, and development of a certain cell, known as cancer cell, origin of which is unknown, except as hereditary, and that syphilis was a specific poison in the system obtained either hereditarily, or by actual contact with a person infected. Am I now to believe that the use or abuse of tobacco will create either or both of these specific causes? If such faith shall be required of me, I shall need more proof than the *ipse dixit* of Dr. Munroe, else I fear I will still retain the old theories.

Your allusion to John Lizar's work I entirely endorse, and regard as excellent many of his statements, and admire his style of writing; yet I think the work was intended to be a *popular* treatise, not *sufficiently exact* to be considered a strictly scientific work, as a careful perusal will, I think, convince anyone that many of his conclusions must be taken *cum grano salis*, as a few excerpts will prove. (I use Lindsay & Blakiston's reprint from the 8th Edinburgh edition, 1873). On page 17 he says, "We have thus in tobacco two poisons, rather a remarkable fact in organic chemistry, when we find, generally, only one." Did he forget opium,