

the hospitable hearth within But, in lieu of this he notes a more perplexing smoke which "proceeds from nostrils and from throats of ladies, lords, and silly grooms," and exclaims astonished :—

"Great Belzabub ! can all spit fire as well as thine ?"

But his fellow Incubus allays his fears by telling him that this novelty :—

"Was an Indian weed,
That fumed away more wealth than would a many thousands feed."

Tobacco, therefore, was not only in use, but already indulged in to an extravagant excess, in Shakespeare's later years. Though unnamed in his works, it repeatedly occurs in those of Decker, Middleton, and others of the early minor dramatists ; and still more familiarly in those of Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and others of later date. In Middleton's "Roaring Girl," produced in 1611, five years before the death of Shakespeare, and peculiarly valuable from the lively, though sufficiently coarse picture it furnishes of London manners in his day, we learn that "a pipe of smoak" was to be purchased for sixpence. In Ben Jonson's "Alchemist," of the same date, "Drugger, the tobacco man," plays a part ; and a similar character figures among the *dramatis personæ* of Beaumont and Fletcher's "Scornful Lady." Moreover, the earliest of these notices not only refers to the costliness of the luxurious weed, with a pipe of which Drugger bribes the Alchemist ; but the allusions are no less distinct to the adulterations practised even at so early a date, and which were no doubt hinted at by Jonson in the name of his tobaccoist. "Doctor" exclaims Face, the servitor, to Subtle the Alchemist, when introducing Abel Drugger to his favourable notice, (Act. I., Scene I.) :—

"Doctor, do you hear !

This is my friend Abel, an honest fellow ;
He lets me have good tobacco, and he does not
Sophisticate it with sack-lees or oil,
Nor washes it in muscadell and grains,
Nor buries it in gravel under ground,
Wrapp'd up in greasy leather, or piss'd clouts,
But keeps it in fine lily pots, that open'd
Smell like conserves of roses, or French beans."

It is obvious here that, even thus early, Ben Jonson's allusions to the favourite "weed" are not to an unfamiliar novelty ; though both with him, and in the later works of Beaumont and Fletcher, it is referred to invariably as a costly luxury. "Tis' good tobacco, this !" exclaims Subtle, "what is't an ounce?" and Savil, the steward, in