

[COMMUNICATED.]

ABSTINENCE AND REFORM.

It was said by an old writer that "man is a bundle of habits;" and the experience of most persons would confirm this expression after a little consideration. Men do a great many things, good and bad things, not primarily because they are evil or good, but in an unconscious way, from use and custom, and if a reason were asked it would be hard to supply. They have become mechanical as it were, asking a blessing at meals, having family prayers, uttering mentally supplication in all duty from sheer force of habit. There is an uncomfortable feeling if these usages are neglected or overlooked, even if there is but little warmth in the performance thereof. Appetite is indulged on the same basis. Persons may not care for or baulk after tea or coffee, but they would miss the warm drink wonderfully, and if visiting where these beverages were unprovided, there might be submission without thought or comment, and yet all through the day there would be a feeling as of something lacking, which might (or might not) gradually die away. This is evidence of the power of habit and its tenacious hold upon humanity.

If this "bundle of habits" were mainly of an unwise or evil character, each one would have to be broken singly, apparently, or the change would be beyond individual efforts. By taking one at a time, whatever the fault or habit, it seems much easier to overcome; save in the case of spiritual regeneration, where, after resolve and obedience to prescribed law, man is assured of Divine aid in the labor for salvation. Many men are in slavery to habits which (from a lack of will power) hold complete mastery over them. But compulsory restraint does not seem so much or so trying as they or others might imagine. Once under the discipline of a prison, for instance, the use of liquor is suddenly cut off, and no serious inconvenience results, while other vicious features of unreachable character may (as we know) continue in unrestrained activity. Men of years, where habit has become "second nature," are at times to be pitied quite as much as blamed, and probably some of these characteristics partake some way of heredity. But young men can be found without number who have thoughtlessly or deliberately acquired habits which are not only offensive, but absolutely injurious in their effects. The use of liquor and tobacco have this feature. First indulged in as a matter of bravado, to wile away a few idle moments, from imitation, or a mistaken idea that it was manly to drink or smoke—without special proclivity they have formed habits which in their gratification have dragged them down to death!

The strange and increasing use of cigarettes is a case in point. Contrary to older example, against general counsel, and even with some distaste this habit grows apace; until all self-

respect is lost, all shame at using, all regard for those to whom it is obnoxious; at unseemly times, and in or near places where it is most of all a nuisance, long suffering people wish that it could be abated, or prevented. Somewhere into the billions of cigarettes are made and sold annually in these United States, and many eminent men of observation declare that this habit is more fatal than even the use of alcohol; and liquors cost the nation ten times more than all that is spent on education! It is claimed that the saloon keepers are as four to one in comparison with ministers and clergy of all denominations combined, and the startling assertion is made, that while sixty thousand of our population die annually of drunkenness, there is more demoralization from cigarette smoking than even those appalling figures may imply!

Leading newspapers have been investigating the composition of this popular and apparently insignificant thing, and chemical analysis has determined that they are all made of tobacco imperfectly fermented, and that consequently nicotine, one of the most deadly poisons, is naturally in superabundance, as a rule. Then in addition to this inherent quality, nearly all brands bear evidence of having been steeped to impart one flavor or another. Salt peter is generally used; some are impregnated with belladonna or extract of Jimson weed, both dangerous narcotics, and stupefying to the nerves. Other brands are mixed with opium, and each brand analyzed contained more or less sand, dirt and sweepings.

Need the world be surprised that the result of smoking these articles is deleterious? that there is unnatural thirst and consequent catarrh? that the users thereof are morbid in their feelings and irritable in temper? that their complexion becomes sallow, and their countenance gradually acquires that drawn and anxious look noted from time to time among cigarette smokers? Is it a wonder that dyspepsia seizes hold of the victim of such a habit? that there is capricious appetite and unsteadiness of the hands? that there is an increasing aversion to advice and a preference given to a lower grade of companionship? and that after the nerve centers become demoralized from adulterated circulation, the action of the heart becomes flut, until sudden suspension fits the suicide for a lamented grave? All these features are common among cigarette smokers, and it is lamentable that boys and young men in large numbers exhibit all the premonitory symptoms of wasting vitality and early death. Hence there are laws in some places against selling tobacco or cigarettes to minors, albeit they—like some other regulations—are not enforced. In fact legislation is powerless, however well meant, unless there is vigilant home training and supervision. Parental and public school effort should go hand in hand in preventing or mitigating this growing evil.

It may be said that Utah need not be under any concern in regard to this feature in the habits of boys and young men. Probably, however, there is ignorance in regard to the extent of this practice and the money

spent to sustain it. There are several million cigarettes used annually in Utah, and certainly not less than a quarter of a million pounds of cut tobacco of various grades for smoking purposes as well. To be sure, this is not nearly all consumed by the Mormon youth of our Territory, but too much of it is. The great congregation of the Tabernacle in this city every Sabbath has to pass through long lines of smokers to their homes, particularly if there is an evening meeting. Then, along the Temple block itself as well as for blocks outside, everybody's nostrils are saluted with the odor of pure (?) or adulterated tobacco, and the sparkshine out as thick as flies in their favorite haunts. Every evening ward meeting, Sabbath or otherwise, seems to provide for a thoughtless crowd the opportunity of exhibiting their uncultured manhood and offensive as well as aggressive disregard for persons, and times, and places; and the young daughters and sisters in Israel too often link arms with the users of the filthy weed, as if in acquiescence or significant approbation.

Nor is this deleterious habit confined to this city. Imitation of this Babylonish drift extends into the outer settlements more or less. A friend handed the writer a clipping from a Brigham City paper in which some proprietor of a store claimed that he alone disposed of 5000 cigarettes a month, or 60,000 a year; and it was further claimed as among the probabilities that the combined stores of that little model burg (as we have esteemed it) can claim an annual consumption of 300,000 cigarettes, which at five cents a package amounts to the rather startling sum of fifteen hundred dollars every year, all spent in the gratification of an abnormal habit in many cases thoughtlessly acquired. The old men (Mormon or otherwise) ought to be ashamed if they have or still set the example, and the younger victims to a dirty and injurious practice should command the thought and counsel of the wiser and better elements of society. Nor should this frown come from the low place of expense, though that is a weighty consideration. Morality, virtue, purity and religion are each violated when disobedience to righteous law prevails. Every man in authority should set his face as a flint against the spread of so pernicious a practice. Fathers and mothers should discourage the very beginning of it. All a boy's clothing should be publicly freshened or fumigated so that the odor may not pervade the house and bedrooms thereof. Every sweet, pure girl should protest against the practice, and should give preference in society, in the dance, in all social entertainments to those whose breath and persons are clean from this or any other vicious habit.

This general frown would surely reduce to a minimum an evil which thoughtful men are everywhere deplored. The words of inspiration and the counsel of the Elders would be honored through obedience, and legislation, deemed necessary elsewhere, would be superfluous and uncalled-for in the homes and by the saved or redeemed of the youth of our long-looked-for and assuredly coming Zion!