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THE PERNICIOUS WEED: ANTI-TOBACCO SENTIMENTS IN PERIODICAL LITERATURE, 1800–1870

SHANE A. SMITH

“[S]hew me one blackleg, from Dan to Beersheba, who does not use the weed, and I will shew you a sea serpent.”¹

—Reverend George Trask

Offered a good cigar, [Horace Greeley] waved it away with: “No, I thank you. I haven’t got so low down as that yet. I only drink and swear.”²

—Horace Greeley

THE ANTI-TOBACCO MOVEMENT in the United States did not suddenly spring into existence after the US Surgeon General’s Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health issued its January 1964 report. Concerns about tobacco’s harmful effects began emerging soon after Christopher Columbus received its dried leaves from the Arawaks in October 1492 and its use began to spread.³ Although their actions are largely unacknowledged in the contemporary era, the late-twentieth-century movement had its foundations in the first organized actions of activists against “the filthy weed” in the nineteenth century.

Anti-tobacconists in that latter period were familiar with the history and literature of those who had assailed the plant before them. In addition to speeches,

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1. George Trask, *Thoughts and Stories on Tobacco for American Lads; or Uncle Toby’s Anti-Tobacco Advice to His Nephew Billy Bruce*, Boston, MA: Cornhill, 1852, 85.
2. Don C. Seitz, *Horace Greeley: Founder of the New York Tribune*, Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1926, 11.
3. Allan Brandt, *The Cigarette Century: The Rise, Fall, and Deadly Persistence of the Product that Defined America*, New York: Basic Books, 2007, 7.

sermons, books, and tracts, reformers utilized the era's periodical literature to spread their crusade. This literature provides an excellent lens for examining their arguments against tobacco's use. Agitators assaulted it as an agricultural, social, physical (or health), and moral evil. Herein rests a chief difference between the early-nineteenth-century movement and those that came later. Anti-tobacco reformers of this earlier period sought voluntary abstinence through moral persuasion, while the Progressive-Era and late-twentieth-century movements pursued legal prohibition, in addition to voluntary measures. Even though they lacked the benefits of modern science on the topic, nineteenth-century writers presented many arguments similar to those of their modern counterparts, as well as some quite exaggerated ideas.

The anti-tobaccoists acted in a time filled with Second-Great-Awakening-inspired movements. This Christian revival gave groups a sense of mission to maximize the value of each individual in God's eyes. Activists sought improvements in education, medical care, treatment for the mentally ill, and in women's rights, in addition to temperance and abolition.⁴ However, this era's anti-tobacco efforts lost momentum in the 1850s, when abolition increasingly overwhelmed other social issues in the public discourse. It largely ceased with the Civil War's outbreak.

Scholarship specifically related to anti-tobacco efforts in the United States is almost exclusively focused on either the Progressive-Era or late-twentieth-century movements. For instance, in his book *Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence*, Jordan Goodman states,

To speak of an early movement in the United States would be an exaggeration since the movement was perhaps no more than the publication, at irregular times, of the *Anti-Tobacco Journal* between 1857 and 1872. The main object of the attack was chewing tobacco and the main thrust was its uncleanness.⁵

4. Douglas W. Carlson, "'Drinks He to His Own Undoing': Temperance Ideology in the Deep South," *Journal of the Early Republic* 4, 1998, 659–91: 660, 690; Alice Felt Tyler, "Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," *The American Historical Review* 2, 1958, 438–40: 439; Charles J.G. Griffin, "The 'Washingtonian Revival': Narrative and the Moral Transformation of Temperance Reform in Antebellum America," *Southern Communication Journal* 1, 2000, 67–78: 68, 70, 73.
5. Jordan Goodman, *Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence*, New York: Routledge, 1993, 118.

Mark Wolfson's and Ronald Troyer's publications also support the stance that there have only been two waves of tobacco control activism in American history, the Progressive Era and the one emerging in the 1960s.⁶

As revealed by these representative examples, this school of thought sees the first true anti-tobacco movement forming in response to the cigarette's proliferation in the last two decades on the nineteenth century. This phase produced anti-tobacco legislation in 15 states, while 22 others considered it. Lucy Page Gaston (1860–1924), founder of the Anti-Cigarette League of America, is highlighted as the primary activist with support from leading lights like Henry Ford, Frances Willard, and Thomas Edison.⁷ Another war, this time the First World War helped deflate the movement: Almost all legislation was repealed by 1930. Prohibitions on the sale of tobacco products to minors were this period's legacy.

A few authors recognize that anti-tobacco actions took place during the early-to-mid 1800s. For example, while reviewing Cassandra Tate's *Cigarette Wars*, James Kirby Martin posits the existence of an Antebellum movement, even as he mischaracterized her argument. Martin challenges Tate's assertion that the US's first anti-smoking crusade had its origins in the late nineteenth century when, in reality, she claimed that the first anti-cigarette movement occurred during that time frame, not the first anti-smoking or anti-tobacco campaign. Others like Susan Wagner, Gordon Dillow, Gaines Foster, and Richard Tennant briefly acknowledge the efforts of the earlier activists—with “briefly” being the key word.⁸ These

6. Mark Wolfson, *The Fight Against Big Tobacco: The Movement, the State, and the Public's Health*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2001, 19–20; Ronald J. Troyer, “From Prohibition to Regulation: Comparing Two Anti-Smoking Movements,” in Louis Kriesberg, ed., *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, vol. 7, Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1984, 53–69: 53.
7. Peter D. Jacobson, Jeffrey Wasserman, and John R. Anderson, “Historical Overview of Tobacco Legislation and Regulation,” *Journal of Social Issues* 1, 1997, 75–95: 76; Goodman, *Tobacco in History*, 118; Tate, *Cigarette Wars*, 4–6; William C. Lesch and Michelle Middendorf-Brand, “Cigarettes and Health: Historical Controversies and Constraints—Part I,” *Health Marketing Quarterly* 3, 1997, 69–90: 74–5; John Dinan and Jac C. Heckelman, “The Anti-Tobacco Movement in the Progressive Era: A Case Study of Direct Democracy in Oregon,” *Explorations in Economic History* 4, 2005, 529–46: 531–2; Lee J. Alston, Ruth Dupre, and Tomas Nonnenmacher, “Social Reformers and Regulation: The Prohibition of Cigarettes in the United States and Canada,” *Explorations in Economic History* 4, 2002, 425–45: 425–6.
8. James Kirby Martin, “Cigarette Wars: ‘The Triumph of the Little White Slaver’,” *Journal of Social History* 1, Fall 2000, 212–14: 213; Cassandra Tate, *Cigarette Wars: The Triumph of the Little White Slaver*, New York: Oxford UP, 1999, 5–6; Gaines Foster, *Moral Reconstruction: Christian Lobbyists and the Federal Legislation of Morality, 1865–1920*, Chapel Hill, NC: U. of North Carolina P., 2002, 147; Susan Wagner, *Cigarette Country: Tobacco in*

works contain only a few sentences or less on the subject, providing a broad acknowledgement of the movement and then proceeding on to the primary topic at hand. Joseph C. Robert's *Story of Tobacco in America* and Tate's "In the 1800s, Anti-Smoking was a Burning Issue" provide a little more detail.⁹ However, even their works are not primarily focused on this period; they only intersperse short references in the context of larger points.

Contrary to the opinion characterized by Goodman's work, this study supports the position that reformers initiated a viable anti-tobacco movement in the first half of the nineteenth century. As Tate states about the Progressive-Era campaign, which has either been unacknowledged, or dismissed, "as the work of a few crackpots firing from the lunatic fringe," early-nineteenth-century reformers are likewise largely ignored.¹⁰ Even when it is recognized, references to the anti-tobacco campaign in the first half of the nineteenth century are typically glossed over in the body of larger literature on tobacco. Furthermore, the scholarly work on anti-tobacco movements in the United States lacks a focused examination of the themes reformers conveyed to advance their cause in the periodicals published during that timeframe. With that in mind, rather than examining the main figures and overarching activities during the era in their entirety, this article concentrates expressly on these themes between 1800 and 1870 in an effort to close that gap.

Although some had previously railed against smoking, anti-tobacco activism only truly arrived in the United States after the Revolutionary War. Benjamin Rush (1745–1813), the Philadelphia physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, published the first significant anti-tobacco document in America in 1798, titled *Essays, Literary, Moral, and Philosophical*. In a chapter called "Observations upon the influence of the Habitual use of Tobacco upon Health, Morals, and Property," Rush described tobacco's effects on the stomach, nervous

American History and Politics, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971, 29–31; Gordon Dillow, "Thank You for Not Smoking," *American Heritage* 2, 1981, 94–107: 96; Richard B. Tennant, *The American Cigarette Industry: A Study in Economic Analysis and Public Policy*, Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1971, 131–2.

9. Joseph C. Robert, *The Story of Tobacco in America*, New York: Knopf, 1949, 59–60, 106–7, 111–12, 168; Cassandra Tate, "In the 1800s, Anti-Smoking was a Burning Issue," *Smithsonian* 20, 1989, 107–17: 108.

10. Tate, *Cigarette Wars*, 5.

system, and oral cavity.¹¹ Following up on this work, Rush published his *Lectures on the Mind* in 1811, stating that tobacco was unhealthy, led to idleness, to neglecting cleanliness, and, since users were offensive to nonusers, to rudeness.¹² Rush's sentiments did not spread widely.

However, his arguments were utilized extensively by the anti-tobacco agitators who grew increasingly active and organized in the 1830s. Activists of this era blamed 20,000 American deaths per year on tobacco use. Their efforts coincided with the temperance campaign.¹³ For example, some temperance workers argued that smoking dried out the mouth, which created a "morbid or diseased thirst that could be satisfied only by the whiskey jug or the brandy bottle . . . [and t]he readers of one antitobacco tract were taken on a visit to the Realm of Satan, where Prime Minister Tobacco assisted King Alcohol in evil deeds."¹⁴ Tobacco use drew early health reformers' attention as well.¹⁵

Leading names in the anti-tobacco movement of this period include those of Gerrit Smith (1797–1874), Horace Mann (1796–1859), Henry Ward Beecher (1813–87), Horace Greeley (1811–72), George Trask (1798–1875), Joel Shew (1816–55), Orin Fowler (1791–1852), Russell Thatcher Trall (1812–77), and John Hartwell Cocke (1780–1866). Except for Cocke, all of these were Northerners who also participated in the anti-liquor and anti-slavery campaigns. Southern reformers largely focused on agricultural concerns and rarely linked with the Northern school, which set out to eradicate use. Authors borrowed freely from one another and presented the same sensational cases and fantastic statistics. They filled their works with stories of children dying within hours of using tobacco,

11. Benjamin Rush, *Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical*, second ed., Philadelphia, PA: Thomas and William Bradford, 1806, 261–70; Robert, *The Story of Tobacco in America*, 106–7, 110; Martha Derthick, *Up in Smoke: From Legislation to Litigation in Tobacco Politics*, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002, 8; David Freedman Hawke, *Benjamin Rush: Revolutionary Gadfly*, New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1971, 370; Carl Binger, *Revolutionary Doctor: Benjamin Rush, 1746–1813*, New York: Norton, 1966, 192–201; James T. Flexner, *Doctors on Horseback: Pioneers in American Medicine*, New York: Viking Press, 1937, 92.

12. Eric Carlson, Jeffrey Wollock, and Patricia Noel, eds, *Benjamin Rush's Lectures on the Mind*, Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1981, 556–74.

13. Cassandra Tate, "Potholes on Tobacco Road: The Anti-Cigarette Movement, 1880–1930," MA Thesis, University of Washington, Seattle, 1988, 8; Tate, "In the 1800s," 108; Robert, *The Story of Tobacco in America*, 106–7, 110.

14. Tate, "In the 1800s," 108.

15. *Ibid.*

of infants stupefied by smoke from their father's cigar, and of patients condemned to imbecility by tobacco's use as a drug.¹⁶

Anti-tobacco societies and clubs were organized to deter usage. Thus, an Anti-Tobacco Society existed in New York by 1834. George Trask, regarded as the leading agitator of the times, organized the American Anti-Tobacco Society in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in 1848 as part of his crusade. Trask also published the *Anti-Tobacco Journal*, wrote over two hundred tracts, and delivered over two thousand speeches against tobacco; his most successful work, *Thoughts and Stories on Tobacco for American Lads; or Uncle Toby's Anti-Tobacco Advice to his Nephew Billy Bruce*, was published in 1852.¹⁷ While personally focusing almost exclusively on tobacco, Trask pursued alliances with abolitionists and anti-alcohol advocates to advance his cause.

Single and multi-issue youth clubs grew in popularity starting in the 1840s, crusading against the evils of tobacco, alcohol, and profanity. Unlike typical adult-oriented reform organizations, which tended to either ignore or minimize the focus on tobacco, due to concerns that it would prove too divisive and detract from anti-alcohol efforts, youth leagues attacked tobacco just as aggressively as the other vices.¹⁸ Virtually an exclusive Northern phenomenon, the roll call of these groups included the Cadets of Temperance, the Bands of Hope, the Young Home Guards, and the Juvenile Templars. All ultimately faced similar problems—the rising dominance of abolition as an issue, absorption into adult groups, and a loss of interest in the issue during and after the Civil War.

Criticism of tobacco's agricultural, social, physical (health), and moral effects are reflected in the era's periodical literature, which contains both realistic and highly exaggerated examples. In addition to attempts to persuade through descriptive narrative, this period witnessed the birth of the extensive use of statistics (many without basis in fact) to compel change.¹⁹ Below I will explore these themes.

16. Wagner, *Cigarette Country*, 29–31; Robert, *Story of Tobacco*, 59–60, 107; Tate, “Potholes,” 24.

17. Jack J. Gottsegen, *Tobacco: A Study of Its Consumption in the United States*, New York: Pitman, 1940, 153; Trask, *Thoughts*, 179; Tennant, *American Cigarette Industry*, 131; Tate, “Potholes,” 26–7; Robert, *Story of Tobacco*, 107, 111.

18. George Faber Clark, *History of the Temperance Reform in Massachusetts, 1813–1883*, Boston, MA: Clarke and Carruth, 1888, 78–80, 102–3, 140–2.

19. Dillow, “Thank You,” 96.

Tobacco presented a large target, for, after cotton, it represented the most important staple crop in the United States. The crop's importance resulted from a growth in domestic usage as well as from export revenue. While export growth was largely stagnant in the Antebellum era, hovering at roughly 120,000 hogsheads (120 million pounds), tobacco production grew to 434 million pounds by 1860, more than double the 1850 figure, in order to meet the increase in domestic demand.²⁰

Single-crop agriculture (or monoculture), as the cultivation of tobacco did, seeks the greatest possible return of the one staple regardless of the effects on the land. The period's meager tillage methods increased the nefarious consequences of repeated cultivation on the same plot, resulting in soil erosion, plant-food material depletion, soil toxicity increases, and the growth of harmful organisms.²¹ When one piece of land was worn out, planters moved to another and crises ensued when new plots grew scarce. This cultivation method was challenged by two reform movements (in 1790–1815 and in 1830–60, respectively), which promoted crop rotation and diversification, as well as the use of fertilizers. The latter coincided with the rise of the first organized anti-tobacco efforts and continued the earlier colonial objections to tobacco's primacy and the consequent neglect of food crops.

Seizing on this theme, an unnamed anti-tobacconist in Edmund Ruffin's *Farmers Register* published a treatise on tobacco's exhausting effects.²² Although tobacco represented a great source of wealth to Virginia and the country, this writer maintained it had also done more to spoil and impoverish the area than any other crop. The first settlers had an abundant supply of land and every inducement encouraged tobacco farming, but the situation had changed. After only two generations of settlement in middle Virginia, the author called on readers to examine the soil there. He described a melancholy scene of an area that was deforested and prematurely aged by the requirements of tobacco cultivation.

20. A hogshead equals approximately 1,000 pounds during this period. "American Tobacco," *Commercial Review of the South and West*, October 1846, 248–67: 249; "The Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco," *American Review: A Whig Journal*, December 1845, 644–53: 650; "Tobacco Culture," *Debow's Review*, July 1870, 606–10: 606; "The Tobacco Trade," *Commercial Review of the South and West*, July 1846, 42–53: 47.

21. Joseph C. Robert, *The Tobacco Kingdom: Plantation, Market, and Factory in Virginia and North Carolina, 1800–1860*, Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1938 [reprint, Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1965], 23–5.

22. "On the Effects of the Tobacco Crop on the Agricultural Interests of Virginia," *Farmers Register*, March, 1835, 601–2: 601.

The crop's effects were so paralyzing that inhabitants required an extended period to alter their mindset and energetically pursue positive change. Every intelligent planter's duty was to abandon present gain and do all in his power to diminish tobacco's production in order to renovate the abused soil and achieve a sustainable, profitable future. According to the article, it did not require a prophetic spirit to determine that the time was near when planters would be driven by necessity to quit the crop, or forsake the area.²³

Continuing in this vein, Dickie Dodger, undoubtedly a pseudonym, called for the end of this deadly enemy to the Old Dominion's prosperity in the *Southern Planter*, while an unnamed author in the *American Review* called Virginia's exhausted lands the tobacco demon's trophy.²⁴ Even the richest highlands were said to be unable to stand a third crop in succession. Tobacco removed mineral matter so rapidly that the worn-out lands could only support scrub pine. John Dumpling, another pseudonym, described how counties had numerous worn out tracts with good houses on them, which sat unsold by their titleholders, since the owners had moved to the west with their slaves: "[T]obacco, the great mother of ill thrift" was the main cause.²⁵

John Hartwell Cocke, in a series of *Southern Planter* articles, which were later published in 1860 in one volume called *Tobacco, the Bane of Virginia Husbandry*, supported Dumpling's assertions.²⁶ Cocke wrote that every homestead from Virginia's Atlantic seaboard to the head of the Tidewater represented a monument to tobacco's destructive powers. This area once produced the majority of the tobacco grown in the state, but the soil was now so impoverished that, according to him, it had not produced as much as a hogshhead for market in years.

Periodicals detailed how tobacco exhausted the virtue of manures, it promoted erosion, and it consumed the best fuel wood in the preparation of

23. Ibid.

24. Dickie Dodger, "Dumpling on the Tobacco Crop," *Southern Planter*, December 1848, 377; "The Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco," 649; John Dumpling, "Dumpling on the Tobacco Crop," *Southern Planter*, September 1848, 258–60: 259; John Dumpling, "Dumpling on the Tobacco Crop," *Southern Planter*, September 1857, 533–35: 535; "American Tobacco," 251.

25. Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1848, 259.

26. John Hartwell Cocke, "Tobacco the Bane of Virginia Husbandry, no. 3," *Southern Planter*, May 1859, 246–66: 265; John Hartwell Cocke, *Tobacco, The Bane of Virginia Husbandry*, Richmond: McFarlane and Fergusson, 1860, 4, 18–20, 22.

plant beds.²⁷ Three times as much forest were said to be cleared for each unit of plant patch for burning, fencing, and sun exposure, resulting in a waste of timber, a vital rural commodity. Additionally, the lessons of good husbandry were violated in a course of cultivation that did not maximize the soil's productive powers for an indefinite time period. To continue this crop's production was a road to ultimate sterility.

Asa Smith added the negative ramifications tobacco had on the family, due to its agricultural effects.²⁸ Smith stated that in eastern Virginia the old Virginia gentleman had disappeared, having been pushed out by the rapid increase of his "old fields."²⁹ Hearth and home were uprooted in the pursuit of better soil. What is more, growing up in affluence, cultivators' children contracted expensive habits which made them unfit for life's hardships, when adversity inevitably appeared. After the head of the household died, his holdings were divided among the children and after them another split took place. The soil during this time became poorer and each subdivision caused the remaining good land to be split and used up faster. Eventually, a general exhaustion occurred and the family was scattered across the country; the women socially unfit for contact with the world and the men branded as spendthrifts, because they could not make a living on the land as their fathers had. John Taylor echoed this, stating that "it starves the earth by producing but little litter and it starves its cultivators by producing nothing to eat [, while t]he soil it feeds on must necessary become cadaverous, and its cultivators squalid."³⁰

The amount of labor it required was also raised. Highlighting his categorization of tobacco as the most laborious crop in all agriculture, Cocke lamented that the vigilance required "to keep down the suckers and destroy the tobacco-worms . . . is unparalleled in the history of any other crop."³¹ Tobacco required eighteen months to get to market, whereas wheat and corn needed ten and eight,

27. A. Gleaner, "A Glance at the Farming of Albemarle," *Farmers Register*, September 1834, 235–36: 235; Asa Smith, "The Enemy of Virginia," *International Magazine*, 1 March 1852, 312–14: 312; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 5, 19; Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1848, 259; John Hartwell Cocke, "Tobacco the Bane of Virginia Husbandry, no. 2," *Southern Planter*, March 1859, 129–133: 130.

28. Smith, "The Enemy of Virginia," 312, 314.

29. *Ibid.*

30. John Taylor, "Arator," *Farmers Register*, December 31, 1840, 755, 755.

31. Cocke, "No. 2," 131.

respectively.³² This year-and-a-half of work was required to buy bread and meat for only one year, while one year's labor could produce more than enough of the grains and save six months work. It was further asserted that grain cultivation represented a less arduous and more pleasant type of work than tobacco planting. Also, for six months the old and new crops were simultaneously tended, which created a drain on available labor. Cocke referred to this as "a conjunction of double trouble, incident to no other crop but tobacco."³³

Overall, anti-tobacconists argued tobacco monopolized a planter's attention and was a constant source of anxiety. Dumpling described the process:

The months from March to January are spent preparing and nursing plant beds, hoeing and hilling tobacco ground, planting and replanting, suckering, priming, weeding, worming, cutting, scaffolding, housing, firing, striping, tying, and prizing. With constant watchfulness all the time to profit by or guard against accidents by the weather.³⁴

During these activities, the next crop's preparation began and the old crop eventually went to market. Taylor's "Arator," originally circulated as newspaper articles and subsequently as a single bound volume in 1813, was republished in the *Farmers Register* in 1840.³⁵ He emphasized the labor involved above everything else, declaring that it would surprise even old planters to see the exact amount required per acre—especially when this effort, plus the destructive effects on the soil, was compared to corn or wheat. Other commentators also maintained that the unremitting attention required throughout the year left no time or labor for the improvement of the soil. It was the "leisure time" of the farmer judiciously used that is most profitable to his land and his income and of leisure time tobacco permits none at all.³⁶

32. "Tobacco," *Southern Planter*, December 1858, 715–19: 716–17; "The Tobacco Trade," 49; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 3; Cocke, "No. 2," 129, 131–133.

33. Cocke, "No. 2," 129.

34. Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1848, 258–9.

35. Taylor, "Arator," 755; Edmund Ruffin, "Report to the State Board of Agriculture," *Farmers Register*, 30 June 1842, 257–66: 257–8; Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1848, 258–259; Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1857, 533; Gleaner, "Glance at the Farming," 235–6; "On the Effects of the Tobacco Crop," 601.

36. Gleaner, "Glance at the Farming," 235–6.

Additionally, writers claimed that the value of a tobacco plantation grew less every year.³⁷ The planter continually turned his capital into income, and the tobacco market was the object of speculation and whim. Its ups and downs were so uncertain that no one could get a consistent price, which led reformers to refer to the market as a lottery. When the planter achieved the largest crops, he gained the least profit. Abundance reduced the price, consequently not paying the planter for the increased wear and tear on his land, or the extra expense of cultivation. So planters grew poorer, irrespective of whether high or low prices materialized. Low prices only served to speed the descent toward poverty. Authors expounded that if planters would cut production in half they would realize more profit, live in greater plenty, and have the opportunity to improve their land. This would also free time to make many items needed on the plantation rather than having to buy them. Dumpling further accused tobacco planters of numerous slovenly farming practices.³⁸ Examples included no clover, plaster, lime, or compost heaps, bad fences, shabby comfortless dwellings, and rickety barns and stables.

Taylor described that, while tobacco's profit was small or nonexistent, its ability to starve everything else exceeded that of any other crop.³⁹ In support, Cocke exclaimed that "tobacco is the idol god of the plantation, before which everything else is thrown down and trodden under foot."⁴⁰ To meet tobacco's requirements everything else received short shrift.⁴¹ Tobacco monopolized a plantation's resources to such a degree that little time was left for a garden, for corn, or for oat crops, which led to haste and neglect in working on them. They were hurried out of the way to get back to tobacco. Tobacco and grass crops were called irreconcilable enemies, which led Southern planters to require a large amount of Northern hay.

Tobacco's starvation tactics did not cease with other crops, but extended to people and animals. Cocke saw it as no surprise that "itself being neither meat, drink, or clothing for man or provender for stock, [tobacco] should also starve (or stint at least) both man and beast."⁴² It was said to be a common condition

37. "On the Effects of the Tobacco Crop," 601; Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1848, 258-9; Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1857, 533-4; Taylor, "Arator," 755.

38. Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1848, 258-9; Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1857, 533-4;

39. Taylor, "Arator," 755.

40. Cocke, *Tobacco*, 4.

41. *Ibid.*, 4, 7-8, 11; "Tobacco," *Southern Planter*, 719; Cocke, "No. 2," 130; Cocke, "No. 3," 264-5; Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1857, 534; Taylor, "Arator," 755.

42. Cocke, "No. 2," 130.

of tobacco plantations that after they had used a half acre or less patch of turnips to be without any vegetables or greens for many weeks in the spring until the season for wild poke weed sallet arrived.⁴³ The deprivation inflicted on man, however, paled in comparison to what it did to domestic animals. Tobacco provided no provender for domestic animals, which reduced the stock of a plantation to consuming a scanty corn crop. It was posited that man was such a creature of habit that he came to view starved cattle as natural in the spring and to put up with diminished household comforts to the degree of taking his coffee without milk for many weeks in the winter because the cows had gone dry. This resulted from having no hay and feeding cattle chaff and dry straw after frosts killed the natural grasses. Moreover, no shucks could be spared from the work oxen, which deprived the pigs of their traditional food. This resulted in purchasing much of the pork used. The corn crib was starved to such a degree that a large portion of tobacco proceeds went to buy it. Essentially, due to a lack of corn the planter bought his meat and bread, while a lack of grass to raise them on caused the planter to buy his mules and work horses. Taylor exclaimed that “changing from tobacco to other crops would insure a return to profit and a return of comfort, far exceeding that to which the tobacco district has been accustomed.”⁴⁴

Agricultural issues were not the only items to draw reformers' ire. Assaults on tobacco based on social factors abounded as well. One unnamed writer maintained that everything “eatable and drinkable, all that can be seen, heard, felt, or understood is saturated with tobacco . . . [t]he very air we breathe is but a conveyance of this poison into the lungs.”⁴⁵ Tobacco use was compared to the Egyptian plague of frogs because it existed everywhere and in everything. The *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* and *American Quarterly Review* both called tobacco nature's most remarkable product.⁴⁶ Although unsightly and offensive, it had in the short period of about three hundred years placed the entire world in bondage.

43. Cocke, *Tobacco*, 11; Cocke, “No. 3,” 264–5.

44. Taylor, “Arator,” 755.

45. “The Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco,” 648.

46. J. Emory and B. Waugh, eds, “Tobacco,” *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review*, July 1831, 273–92: 274, 283; D.W. Cheever, “Tobacco,” *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1860,

Voicing his disgust at tobacco's proliferation, the Reverend S. Wesley stated, "To such height with some is fashion grown, They fed their very nostrils with a spoon, One, and but one degree is wanting yet, To make their senseless luxury complete; Some choice regale, useless as snuff and dear, To feed the mazy windings of the ear."⁴⁷

Robert describes Thomas Wentworth Higginson's December 1861 *Atlantic Monthly* article "A New Counterblast" as the "last important antitobacco essay in the pre-Civil War period . . . the article was a foretaste of a new type of attack, cautious and well-mannered."⁴⁸ In it, Higginson called tobacco and America "twin-sisters, born to the globe in a day" and stated that America was particularly responsible to the whole world for tobacco use.⁴⁹ News of the new discoveries traveled fast, but according to Higginson, the smoke moved quickest. Many races had yet to hear of America, but few had not used tobacco. Higginson declared that it was hardly possible for him to believe that the present generation surpassed the past in the use of tobacco when the formidable attacks posed against it were considered. Tobacco's use served as a marker of civilization's vulgar and childish course. Even the world's best nations had made it a necessity. In line with this argument, Dumpling called the prevalence of the "unwholesome weed" one of the strangest customs in history.⁵⁰

The *Commercial Review of the South and West* stated how nowhere in the world the taste for tobacco was so licentiously indulged in as in the United States, adding that no plant had ever attracted as much notice or generated as much excitement as "this disgusting some would say fascinating weed."⁵¹ Tobacco possessed a serpent-like power to charm away the disgust it should stimulate. Like other narcotic poisons, it cut through its enemies and became "dear and indispensable."⁵²

187–202: 187; "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, March 1831, 136–63: 138–9; "The Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco," 648; "Tobacco," *Scientific American*, 10 January 1863, 21, 21.

47. Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 291.

48. Robert, *Story of Tobacco*, 111–12; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "A New Counterblast," *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1861, 696–705.

49. Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 696–7, 700.

50. Dumpling, "Dumpling," 1848, 260.

51. "Tobacco," *Commercial Review of the South and West*, March 1848, 282–5: 282–3.

52. *Ibid.*

While one publication dismissed man's connection to tobacco as ludicrous, Alphonse Karr argued that no useful plant could have withstood the assaults launched against it.⁵³ Karr and the unnamed author of "A Paper of Tobacco" both recounted a story, which detailed that, if a man had suggested before its establishment the use of something with tobacco's description to sell and fill the tax coffers, he would have been ridiculed with taunts such as, "You might as well open a shop and write on it: Kicks sold here; or Such-a-one sells blows, wholesale and retail."⁵⁴ The *Methodist Magazine* continued that if a person from Earth could go to another planet and describe tobacco and the role it plays, the concept would be thought incredible.⁵⁵ The *American Quarterly Review* thundered that tobacco was "a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, and health, hellish, devilish, and damned."⁵⁶

Some emphasized the loss of money and property to discourage use. Tobacco was a luxury with no practical purpose. An unnamed clergyman wrote that young men defied natural self-defense instincts by participating in a hurtful and expensive habit, which would cost a death struggle to stop at a later date.⁵⁷ William Hammond declared that with a total disregard for his pocket, body, morals, and salvation the tobacco user persevered in smoking, chewing, or snuffing.⁵⁸ Reformers blamed tobacco for promoting poverty, as well as creating paupers, criminals, and lunatics. The outlay of time and money on this habit was almost beyond belief, when lost productivity was added to purchases of pipes, snuff, spitting boxes, injuries to clothing, snuff-boxes, and handkerchiefs. Higginson said tobacco led men to forget all economy and needlessly squander their resources.⁵⁹ He knew many men who smoked four twelve-cent cigars or twelve four-cent cigars in a day, equaling one-half dollar per day and two hundred dollars a year. Since an industrious mechanic earned \$2.50 per day and a clerk about \$800 per

53. Alphonse Karr, "Alphonse Karr on Tobacco," *Southern Planter*, December 1860, 710–12: 711; Emory and Waugh, "Tobacco," eds, 274, 283–4.

54. "A Paper of Tobacco," *International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science, and Art*, 1 June 1851, 311–12: 312; Karr, "Alphonse Karr," 711.

55. Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 274, 283–4.

56. "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 139–40.

57. Reverend D.D., "Confessions of a Tobacco Chewer," *Congressional Quarterly* 2, January 1860, 49–53: 53.

58. William Hammond, "The Sanitary and Physiological Relations of Tobacco," *North American Review*, April 1869, 499–516: 499.

59. Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 699.

year, these individuals spent about one-quarter of their earnings to satisfy this habit. In his view, its expense was a good argument against use, because the only counter was proving that the enormous outlay constituted a wise act. The *New Eclectic Magazine* called on clergymen to abstain because cigars presented to them as gifts often represented monetary outlays they could not afford themselves, while an unidentified writer in the *New Orleans Miscellany* advised individuals who had quit to congratulate their purse because a serious leak had been plugged.⁶⁰ These individuals' purses now had a better chance to fill up and "maybe the widow and fatherless may get a crumb or two more now that the waste has stopped."⁶¹

Cleanliness issues promoted many complaints. Tobacco was said to contaminate the streets, clubs, coffeehouses, furniture, and carriages, while activists were repulsed by the constant smoking in court, stages, railroad cars, and houses. Dumpling lambasted household use, highlighting his wife's revulsion at the spitting on her floor and carpet along with the stink of tobacco in her dining room.⁶² When use in the home was banned, the wife should be congratulated because she could now manage domestic affairs serenely since she was "no longer vexed by filthy spittoons, bespattered andirons, and offensive blemishes on the carpet and floors."⁶³ Church pews should also be congratulated when use ceased there. According to "I've Done with Tobacco," one would have thought that there was enough room in Creation without contaminating the house of prayer with tobacco practices.⁶⁴

As well as making public places and private residences harder to inhabit, tobacco was condemned for its effects on individuals. *Every Saturday* magazine wrote how, while tobacco possessed nothing to please the eye, it offended the senses of taste and smell.⁶⁵ Reformers decried the practice's crudeness and nauseousness—it made the breath, clothing, hair, and entire body offensive.

60. "Smoking and Drinking," *New Eclectic Magazine*, 1869, 365–9: 367; "I've Done With Tobacco," *New Orleans Miscellany*, February 1848, 179–80: 180.

61. "I've Done With," 180.

62. "Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco," 648; "I've Done With," 179–80; Dumpling, "Dump-ling," 1848, 259–60.

63. "I've Done With," 179–80.

64. "Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco," 648; "I've Done With," 179–80; Dumpling, "Dump-ling," 1848, 259–60.

65. "All Smoke," *Every Saturday*, 27 October 1866, 495–500: 495; Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 290; "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 137, 160; "Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco," 648.

Supporting this, John Draper stated that the “breath, perspiration, and clothing of those who use tobacco even in moderation soon become redolent of its noxious odors.”⁶⁶ The *New Orleans Miscellany* added that an individual who quit deserved commendation as he was now “a more fragrant member of the human family” and “more comfortable will be your contiguity with your species.”⁶⁷ No human could be “neat and tidy” and still use tobacco.⁶⁸

T.B. Thorpe claimed that man and the disgusting tobacco worm were the only living habitual tobacco users.⁶⁹ The *Methodist Magazine* added the African rock goat, according to it one of the wildest and filthiest of animals, which expanded the list to three.⁷⁰ Draper upheld this characterization that only three creatures were *tobaccophagoi*: a worm, the rock goat, and a featherless biped.⁷¹ According to him, the worm was so disgusting in appearance as to cause a shudder. The rock goat emitted so abominable an odor that all other animals kept away from it, while the featherless biped (man) emitted an odor which was anything but pleasant. When comparing man to the tobacco worm, reformers found the worm more selective about the parts of the plant that it chewed—man used anything that the manufacturer gave him.

Tobacco was referred to as a true leveler in the *American Quarterly Review*: “It equalizes the monarch and the hind” and “is acceptable to the sage and the sailor.”⁷² Supposed gentlemen lost that character while smoking and chewing. The breaches in politeness, especially in relation to women, were rampant and made it even more objectionable.⁷³ Even in a defense of tobacco, J.D. elaborated in the *New England Magazine* that it “should never be indulged in, at all, in public . . . [for a] gentleman should as soon be seen eating his dinner in the public street as smoking a segar[sic].”⁷⁴ The author of “Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco” concluded that “any man who will chew tobacco and spit over the floor of a

66. John C. Draper, “Tobaccophagoi and Tobaccophagism,” *Galaxy*, June 1870, 751–7: 756.

67. “I’ve Done With,” 179.

68. *Ibid.*

69. T.B. Thorpe, “The History and Mystery of Tobacco,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, June 1855, 1–18: 8.

70. Emory and Waugh, eds, “Tobacco,” 283.

71. Draper, “Tobaccophagoi,” 751.

72. “Tobacco,” *American Quarterly Review*, 161–2.

73. Dumpling, “Dumpling,” 1848, 259–260; Dumpling, “Dumpling,” 1857, 535.

74. J.D., “Smoking,” *New England Magazine*, August 1835, 132–5: 134.

church is a dirty fellow [and i]t is a wonder that he does not convert the very pulpit into a spittoon and throw his quid into the contribution box.”⁷⁵

Tobacco beguiled the imagination with delightful reveries. Because of this, the *Commercial Review of the South and West* published that southern planters provided their slaves with a regular supply in an attempt to comfort them, while the poor also used it as solace from life’s miseries.⁷⁶ Tobacco’s insidious power of fascination inebriated the mind in a different way than alcohol. Cocke stated, “Tobacco does not madden its victim at once into acts of violence and insanity, but soothes him into a state of dreamy indolence, good for air-castle building, but ending in making him good for nothing.”⁷⁷ All of society suffered from this lost productivity.

The weed led people to conclude that the speculations of a fuddled brain were really better than sober meditations. Many declared that they could optimally study and think only when they were in the “idol’s temple, with his appropriate sacrifice in their mouths and noses and his open receptacle at their feet, receiving the exacted tribute of their violated nature.”⁷⁸ An article in *Lippincott’s Magazine of Literature, Science, and Education* concluded that the mind under tobacco’s influence substituted a pleasing self-complacency for the vigorous mental energy that should characterize a human, since

[t]he pleasures it affords are essentially brutish. The mind being crippled in its active operations employs itself in reading the records of past accounts and events, which results in a pleasing reverie. The pleasures of this condition bears an analogy to those enjoyed by one of our domestic ruminants when she is bathed in the cool, shaded waters of a rippling brook and meditatively engaged in chewing her cud.⁷⁹

Every Saturday’s “All Smoke” upheld that readers of history epitomized victims of tobacco’s assault on mental development, causing them to sit happily and read about events instead of accomplishing things themselves; tobacco struck thought with atrophy and paralyzed action.⁸⁰

75. “Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco,” 646.

76. “Tobacco,” *Commercial Review of the South and West*, 283–4.

77. Cocke, *Tobacco*, 31.

78. *Ibid.*

79. “Tobacco,” *Lippincott’s Magazine of Literature, Science, and Education*, December 1869, 657–9; 658–9.

80. *Ibid.*; “All Smoke,” 497.

This state of mind made the sin of idleness seem like an innocent indulgence of profitable meditation. The whole affair was labeled a kind of delinquency. Smoking received infamous status as a waste of time and a serious inconvenience; however, many reformers considered snuff to be the greatest enemy to time of tobacco's three modes of use.⁸¹ This was due to the fact that normal work activities could be carried out while smoking or chewing, but snuffing required deliberate actions. A *Farmers Register* article decried tobacco's bad effect on the habits and morals of white inhabitants as well as agricultural profits, for whatever encouraged idleness, also increased extravagance and vice, asserting,

If not for tobacco parents would teach their children to work on farms and instead of the swarms of "professional" drones and idlers that we daily see hanging about the skirts of society, and living upon the labor of the industrious portion of the community, we would see an industrious and intelligent population, content to enjoy the profits of their own industrious labors.⁸²

Overall, according to the "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco," smoking led to weariness, indolence, apathy, egoism, and grossness, while it was also one of the greatest sources of debauchery and crime.⁸³

"Tobacco laziness" prevented individual advancement in life, a point reformers often reinforced through stories. One centered on a hardworking hod-carrier enjoying his cigar at lunch.⁸⁴ This man had no business being contented with his "sensual gratification," for he was an old man and "the hod is not for grey hairs."⁸⁵ He should have been a contractor by this point in his life and would have been if not for tobacco. Another story focused on George Law.⁸⁶ Law earned his first dollar by carrying the hod. He did not smoke at lunch and subsequently became worth millions of dollars. This demonstrated that the old hod-carrier's social mobility was retarded by tobacco, while another young hod-carrier, who read his newspaper after dinner instead of numbing his senses with a pipe, represented a George Law in the making.

81. "Smoking and Drinking," 368; "On the Effects," 601; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 32; "I've Done With," 180; Rev D.D., "Confessions," 50; Draper, "Tobaccophagoi," 754; "All Smoke," 499.

82. "On the Effects," 601.

83. "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco," *Every Saturday*, 28 November 1868, 679–84: 680.

84. Quotes from "Smoking and Drinking," 366–7.

85. *Ibid.*

86. "On Smoking and Drinking," *Every Saturday*, 22 May 1869, 669–70: 670.

For reformers, tobacco merely represented another form of intemperance. “A Paper of Tobacco” drew the connection, stating that “we gave the Indians brandy, they gave us tobacco, an amiable interchange of poisons.”⁸⁷ Tobacco and alcohol were called twin-demons. Tobacco was sarcastically said to have a fuller flavor in a pub than in a respectable house.⁸⁸ Its use rendered water and simple liquors uninteresting to the taste, which disposed people to the stronger ardent spirits. Activists wrote that alcoholics had an inordinate liking for all forms of tobacco and in the early stages of inebriety almost all desired a pinch of snuff.

For the “tobacco drunkard,” the *Scientific American* stated that “cotton is not King [, for a] man may go without a shirt gladly, but deprive him of his tobacco and there will be a hiatus in his nature, which when he is under the influence of tobacco, nothing can supply.”⁸⁹ Corn, wheat, or any cereal product held no value for a man deprived of the instrument used to “titillate his throat and nostrils.”⁹⁰ The votary divested himself of anything to satisfy his craving for the weed.⁹¹

* * *

Anti-tobacconists of this period did not confine themselves to tobacco’s agricultural and social evils, but delved into the physical issues its use posed as well. Tobacco was called a narcotic from a family of poisonous plants. Numerous stories about the effects of tobacco’s empyreumatic oil were published. Abraham Rees’s *The Cyclopaedia* argued that a drop of the oil placed on a cat’s tongue caused convulsions and death in a minute.⁹² Higginson added that the mere application to human skin produced uncontrollable nausea and prostration, while soldiers had emulated sickness by placing tobacco beneath the armpits.⁹³ Nicotine was an energetic poison, while nicotianine, a volatile oil obtained from distillation

87. “A Paper of Tobacco,” 311.

88. “On Smoking and Drinking,” 699; “Tobacco,” *American Quarterly Review*, 139; Emory and Waugh, eds, “Tobacco,” 286–7; “Tobacco,” *Scientific American*, 21; “A Paper of Tobacco,” 311; “All Smoke,” 497; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 26–7.

89. “Tobacco,” *Scientific American*, 21.

90. *Ibid.*

91. *Ibid.*

92. Draper, “Tobaccophagoi,” 752–3; Emory and Waugh, eds, “Tobacco,” 284; “Tobacco,” *American Quarterly Review*, 153; Karr, “Alphonse Karr on Tobacco,” 710; “A Paper of Tobacco,” 311; “Tobacco,” *Scientific American*, 21; “Dangers and Delights of Tobacco,” 679.

93. Higginson, “A New Counterblast,” 703.

of the leaves, was almost as deadly when applied externally as nicotine was internally. Nicotine produced most of the physical effects when chewing, while nicotianine generated the bulk of effects when smoking.

Reformers claimed tobacco possessed a narcotic property similar to opium, but less powerful.⁹⁴ As such, it could not be used daily without eventual injury. The initial exhilaration was followed by depression and enervation, while the brain and nervous centers deteriorated in the long run because of the artificial stimulation. Tobacco did not permanently calm the nerves, soften the temper, or enlighten the brain. In the end, it did the opposite. Writers further asserted that one effect of a narcotic appeared to be the desire for another narcotic. If the birds and bees maintained healthy systems without it, humans could as well.

While some individuals believed that tobacco possessed medicinal value, activists viewed these claims with suspicion, countering that its use was deleterious and ruinous. Stories circulated of physicians blaming thousands of annual deaths on tobacco. Even advocates of medical use admitted it was a dangerous remedy, which only the most skillful management could render beneficial. In a case attributed to a Dr. Murray, the liniment of tobacco caused the deaths of three children, who died in convulsions within twenty-four hours of its application for scald head.⁹⁵ As such, reformers upheld that it was an uncertain and violent drug, whose pharmaceutical use was inadvisable. Additionally, any potential medical benefit was lost to habitual users, because their systems became less sensitive to its influence.

Higginson supported this concept even as he doubted any medical value.⁹⁶ A noxious drug's use should be exceptional not habitual, not for the preservation of a normal state, but the correction of an abnormal one. Tobacco's worth, if any, lay in the rarity of its application. "To apply a powerful drug at a certain hour every day is like a schoolmaster's whipping his pupil at a certain hour every day, [since t]he victim may become inured, but undoubtedly the specific value of the remedy must be lost."⁹⁷

Anti-tobacconists identified nature's attempts to warn of tobacco's characteristics at first use, but devotees ignored the warning. The warning consisted of

94. "Tobacco," *Lippincott's Magazine*, 658; "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco," 680, 682; Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 699, 705.

95. Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 282, 284-5; "Tobacco," *Scientific American*, 21; "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 150.

96. Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 703.

97. *Ibid.*

causing the individual to suffer sea-sickness and shudder with chilly ague fits. Initial attempts to smoke also brought on chest pains, nausea, swimming in the head, colic, giddiness, and cold perspiration.⁹⁸ By undergoing this ordeal, an individual earned the right to smell offensively. These eventually went away, but recurred if the individual got tobacco that was bad or too strong. This was nature's way to warn a man that he was dealing with a poison—one that may not immediately kill, but its effects existed none the less.

Long-term users could expect even worse physical problems to manifest themselves. The "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco" argued that habitual use was "an evil, shortening our already brief existence and darkening it with many maladies."⁹⁹ Tobacco attacked the intellectual functions of the cerebrum first. From there, it extended to the seats of sensation at the base of the brain, which was proven by the tobacco drunkard's tottering gait and imperfect vision. The nerves were next, leading to the disruption of the body's physical functions. Habitual consumption was simply incompatible with mental energy.¹⁰⁰ Tobacco use impeded active work and over time it induced a condition called hypernutrition, which slowed the brain's response to stimuli. Draper wrote that the "use of the prepared leaves slowly but surely exhausts the nervous energy in man until it saps the strongest constitution and often either smites the robust, vigorous man with an incurable palsy or so dulls his memory and blunts his other mental faculties as to reduce him to a condition that is little better than an imbecile."¹⁰¹ The author of the "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco" concurred, adding that "the attention and memory become weakened, and finally destroyed, the judgment is progressively altered, vague images and extravagant conceptions traverse the troubled mind, and the disease advances till it reaches the state of helpless stupidity."¹⁰²

Other health issues were posited. Tobacco's "food action" affected the body's tissues, which resulted in an increase in bulk, while, irrespective of age or gender, users acquired "the complexion of a par-boiled chicken" due to the loss of secretions associated with a normal skin hue.¹⁰³ The spinal marrow softened, as

98. "All Smoke," 496–7; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 28; "A Paper of Tobacco," 311; Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 703.

99. "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco," 679.

100. *Ibid.*, 679–81; "Tobacco," *Lippincott's Magazine*, 658; Draper, "Tobaccophagoi," 753–4; "All Smoke," 497.

101. Draper, "Tobaccophagoi," 753–4.

102. "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco," 681.

103. "Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco," 648.

did the teeth and gums. The teeth wore down and decayed, while the gums receded. Tobacco caused an irregular heartbeat, resembling digitalis, and also produced delirium tremens in sober people. The laundry list of ailments in habitual users included paleness, pains in the stomach and chest, vertigo, cold sweats, colic, spitting blood, nausea, indigestion, jaundice, and death.¹⁰⁴

Snuff especially preyed on the nose.¹⁰⁵ It thickened the schneiderian membrane and dried up the mucus, resulting in a calloused nasal area and the loss of the sense of smell. A perpetual blister was created in the nose, while snuff allegedly penetrated the sinuses and caused abscesses. Snuff also affected saliva, blunting the sense of taste. Users were often unable to speak with distinctiveness. They could be distinguished by a nasal twang, an asthmatic wheezing, and a disagreeable respiratory noise. Fluids believed to preserve the eye disappeared with use, resulting in the sense of sight aging prematurely and occasional blindness.

The drain of snuff juices injured the facial muscles.¹⁰⁶ It rendered them flaccid and furrowed, as it gave a gaunt, withered, and jaundiced appearance to the face. Some snuff particles made it to the stomach where they caused nausea, vomiting, appetite loss, impaired digestion, and dyspeptic symptoms, which were accompanied by pain and a twisting sensation in the bowels. The stomach developed a yellow hue which ultimately helped turn the skin brown. Authors highlighted how snuff blackened and dried up the brain, leading to giddiness, confusion, impaired memory, debilitated intellectual powers, and apoplexy. It also promoted consumption, convulsions, and bad breath. Users also risked amaurosis, softening of the brain, and paralysis, according to agitators.

In addition to those found in the nose, snuff use generated throat tumors that obstructed deglutition and killed, while the presence of lead compounds in the

104. Cocke, *Tobacco*, 34; "All Smoke," 497; Rev D.D., "Confessions of a Tobacco Chewer," 51; Draper, "Tobaccophagoi," 753; Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 288, 290; "Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco," 648; Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 701; Karr, "Alphonse Karr," 711; "A Paper of Tobacco," 311; "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 160; "Tobacco," *Lippincott's Magazine*, 658; "Tobacco," *Scientific American*, 21.
105. "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 156–158; Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 287–8; Karr, "Alphonse Karr," 711; Draper, "Tobaccophagoi," 754; "A Paper of Tobacco," 311; "All Smoke," 496; "Figuratives and Figuratives of Tobacco," 647.
106. A.H. Thomson, "Notices Relative to Tobacco," *Debow's Southern and Western Review*, June 1852, 656–663: 661–2; "All Smoke," 496–7; "Figuratives and Figuratives of Tobacco," 647–8; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 32; Hammond, "Sanitary and Physiological Relations," 500; "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco," 679; "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 157–158; Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 701; Draper, "Tobaccophagoi," 752, 755; Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 287–288, 290; "Tobacco," *Scientific American*, 21.

snuff produced palsy. Lip and tongue cancer were risks.¹⁰⁷ “Individuals often have a predisposition to cancer in little scirrous intumescences, which if kept easy and free from everything of an irritating character, will continue harmless, but which the use of snuff sometimes frets into incurable ulcers and cancers.”¹⁰⁸ Draper stated that the sufferer usually died in agony after enduring great torment as the tissues deteriorated, which sometimes saw the tongue eaten away.¹⁰⁹

Smoking and chewing gained their own catalog of evils. Asa Smith, a physician, called smoking an enervating habit, while Higginson observed that it made for a vulnerable nervous system, a tremulous hand, and an irritable temper.¹¹⁰ A.H. Thomson added that, while the new smoker first felt an elevation in spirits with an accelerated pulse rate, these were transient feelings followed by vertigo, sickness, fainting, and a weak pulse.¹¹¹ Continued smoke inhalation caused consumption (tuberculosis) due to the movement of carbon to the lungs and its acidity. Men converted the mouth into a chimney—every corner of the palate was lined with nicotine soot. Demonstrating the negative ramifications, an account in *Scientific American* described how an eighteen-year-old male fell dead in a dram shop while smoking a cigar.¹¹² Doctors concluded that tobacco had deranged his heart, which stopped beating. Another story in the same magazine described how three men formed a smoking club and all died within two years. The reported medical determination was that they had smoked themselves to death. To describe just how thoroughly tobacco residue saturated the body, Draper reported that cannibals, who had experienced the nauseating effects produced by the flesh of tobacco using victims, avoided such fare with disgust.¹¹³

Second-hand smoke was identified as more harmful to the innocent recipient than to the smoker himself. Thus, a wife’s health was undermined by a smoking

107. “Dangers and Delights of Tobacco,” 679; “Tobacco,” *Scientific American*, 21; Emory and Waugh, “Tobacco,” 287; Draper, “Tobaccophagoi and Tobaccophagism,” 752, 755; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 32; Hammond, “The Sanitary and Physiological Relations of Tobacco,” 500; “All Smoke,” 497; “Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco,” 648; Higginson, “A New Counterblast,” 701.

108. Emory and Waugh, eds, “Tobacco,” 287.

109. Draper, “Tobaccophagoi,” 752, 755.

110. Smith, “The Enemy of Virginia,” 314; Higginson, “A New Counterblast,” 699.

111. Thomson, “Notices Relative to Tobacco,” 660.

112. “Tobacco,” *Scientific American*, 21.

113. Draper, “Tobaccophagoi,” 755–7.

husband.¹¹⁴ A smoker not only poisoned himself and his wife, but also his future progeny. Children were supposedly born with the appetite, resulting in a rapidly deteriorating American physique. Coroner's verdicts reportedly highlighted that many youths died from their early smoking.

All of smoking and snuffing's worst effects were said to be magnified when chewing. This resulted from the length of chewing, as well as the direct contact of the juice and its involuntary passage to the stomach.¹¹⁵ It greatly increased salivation, which diminished the amount available for digestion, causing frequent indigestion.

Accusations that tobacco produced insanity circulated. "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco" quoted a French study from 1842 to 1862 to prove the point.¹¹⁶ In 1842, it was reported that France had 15,000 lunatics and 80 million francs entered the tax coffers from tobacco, while in 1852 the numbers grew to 22,000 lunatics and 120 million francs. By 1862, the quoted figures reached 44,000 lunatics and 180 million francs from the tobacco tax. Thus, the claim was that as tobacco use climbed so did the number of mentally ill patients. Draper cited similar statistics from another French study and stated that the great extent to which patients in insane asylums were addicted to tobacco proved its guilt.¹¹⁷ Higginson postulated that where weak persons were made insane, there was suspicion that the strong suffered unconsciously.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, physical training and tobacco were incompatible. One author added that, while the two largest users of tobacco were college students and city roughs, both ceased when they reached their highest physical level.¹¹⁹ For the former that was as an oarsman, while for the latter it was as a prize fighter. By quitting, they admitted to being in better physical shape without tobacco. No regatta or prize fight existed where the betting was not skewed when it was known that one of the parties used tobacco. Higginson questioned whether or not

114. Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 291; "All Smoke," 496-7; "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 161; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 33; Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 702, 704; Hammond, "The Sanitary and Physiological Relations," 499, 516.

115. "Tobacco," *Scientific American*, 21; Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 291; "All Smoke," 496-7; "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 161; Smith, "The Enemy of Virginia," 314; Thomson, "Notices Relative to Tobacco," 660; Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 699; Draper, "Tobaccophagoi," 755-7.

116. "Dangers and Delights of Tobacco," 681.

117. Draper, "Tobaccophagoi," 755-6.

118. Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 701.

119. Hammond, "Sanitary and Physiological Relations," 499, 516; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 33.

everyone was in such good shape and health in “high pressure America” that they could risk tobacco use.¹²⁰ If a man needed steady nerves at play, he also required them in earnest pursuits.

Nineteenth-century reformers also recognized tobacco’s addictive nature, highlighting that, once contracted, the habit became almost impossible to get rid of. Tobacco transformed into an indispensable want and as necessary for life as food. Reverend D.D. wrote that trying to stop use caused a desperate desire that only those addicted to alcohol or opium could understand.¹²¹ He compared attempting to quit to the fight of Christian and Apollyon described by John Bunyan. Thorpe claimed that the feelings that overwhelmed a person long addicted to tobacco when deprived of it were far more painful than the positive effects when first taken.¹²² According to him, many never overcame a nervous tremor brought on by the scent of tobacco—some even fainted at the merest whiff of it. In 1845, former President John Quincy Adams added his voice.¹²³ In a letter to Reverend Samuel Cox reprinted by anti-tobacconists, Adams confessed his early addiction to smoking and chewing. Warned by a medical friend, Adams quit and never used tobacco again. He stressed that quitting had been a struggle, but in four months he had freed himself from the bondage. Adams wished that every individual afflicted with this artificial passion could try for three months to abstain. He was sure this would turn every acre of tobacco land into a wheat field and add five years to the average life span.

Activists also took aim at product manufacturing facilities. They condemned the effects of production on both the individual and the neighborhood that housed the building.¹²⁴ Workmen developed meager, jaundiced, emaciated, and asthmatic appearances. They suffered from colic, diarrhea, vertigo, violent headaches, and muscular twitches. Narcotism and various lung diseases were more prevalent in this group. Incidents of these also increased in family members located nearby. The *American Quarterly Review* summed this up, stating that “the manufactory

120. Higginson, “A New Counterblast,” 702, 704.

121. Rev D.D., “Confessions of a Tobacco Chewer,” 50, 52.

122. Thorpe, “History and Mystery,” 14–16.

123. “The Mysteries of Tobacco,” *Journal of the American Temperance Union* 9, no. 12, 1845, 182; Emory and Waugh, eds, “Tobacco,” 288; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 28; “Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco,” 649.

124. “Tobacco,” *American Quarterly Review*, 150.

is a charnel house or Pandora's Box where wretched beings are doomed to work or dwell within its pestilential precincts."¹²⁵

To compound its other deficiencies, tobacco was condemned for the moral harm it caused. A persistence in doing wrong put the tobacco user's eternal destiny in danger. As such, it was called the ruin of both body and soul. Activists saw something evil in human nature constantly demanding an item unnecessary for health or existence.¹²⁶ "All Smoke" stated that "nature had done her best to deter the use of this weed, but as happened long ago men cannot resist the temptation of forbidden fruit."¹²⁷ The *American Quarterly Review* added that "it would not appear for a moment extravagant . . . to assert that tobacco was the tree of Paradise, 'whose mortal taste brought death into the world' . . . it appears very clear, that Satan has had too much to do with tobacco. If it be verily the tree of knowledge, it must be admitted that he has preserved it with infinite care, as if grateful for the mighty mischief which was wrought in Eden."¹²⁸

Reverend D.D. supported this, highlighting that he felt the need to hide his transgression like Adam had, while a Dr. Aiken added that if he ever desired a sacrifice for the Devil, he would take a pig and stuff it with tobacco.¹²⁹

Religious leaders were entreated to have nothing to do with the weed. To see a priest, exclaimed Higginson, during the "momentous ceremonial of High Mass, enliven the occasion by a voluptuous pinch, is a sight even more astonishing, though perhaps less disagreeable, than the well-used spittoon which decorates so many Protestant pulpits."¹³⁰ Clergymen had supposedly injured the best causes by indulgences like the one described by Higginson.¹³¹ Dumpling upheld this view, voicing the opinion that the soul of an old farmer and his wife are trifles to a preacher, compared with his quid or cigar. A people among whom such a folly

125. Ibid.

126. Hammond, "Sanitary and Physiological Relations," 499; Thorpe, "History and Mystery," 2; "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 139, 158; Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 274, 288.

127. "All Smoke," 496.

128. "Tobacco," *American Quarterly Review*, 145.

129. Rev D.D., "Confessions of a Tobacco Chewer," 49; "Tobacco," *Scientific American*, 21.

130. Higginson, "A New Counterblast," 698, 702, 704.

131. Emory and Waugh, eds, "Tobacco," 285–286; "Figures and Figuratives of Tobacco," 646.

prevails have no right to laugh at Mormonism, Romanism, Buddhism, Paganism, or any other “ism,” no matter how ridiculous.¹³²

William B. Dana added that tobacco had all races, creeds, and climates under control. Worshipers of all religions were only identical in their faith in tobacco.¹³³ “From monk to Mormon, papist to pagan, Episcopalian Bishop to the Jew, Sinecure to Synagogue, Delhi to Dublin, Rome to Plymouth Rock,” all professed their tobacco faith, while he concluded that “smoke is the atmosphere for the millennium.”¹³⁴ The use was unevangelical, and, in its present state of tobacco sin, the world could not be evangelized.¹³⁵

The *Methodist Magazine* alleged that the devout, who claimed to renounce the lusts of the flesh, daily “rolled this sin as a sweet morsel under the tongue.”¹³⁶ The habit’s anti-Christian nature was explored with a story that asked what kind of reception would the apostles have received if they had carried snuff-boxes, pipes, cigars, bundles of cut, or rolls of hog and pigtail tobacco into the houses and cities they visited.¹³⁷

Cocke, in addition to his other invectives, launched a stinging attack on tobacco’s moral implications.¹³⁸ Tobacco’s history, he argued, was replete with the practice of planting on Sunday after a Saturday night rain rather than risk losing the season. Also, if threatened by an early frost on Monday, planters cut the crop on Sunday to save it. Thus, the Sabbath was violated. Furthermore, tobacco made a prostitute of agriculture to produce a damaging drug. Tobacco had become an idol god more all-encompassing, diverse, and destructive in its influence than any other in Christendom. The idol’s symbol, the porcelain spittoon, was crowding the family Bible and its stand out of the house. Millions of men worldwide worshipped at tobacco’s temple and millions of dollars were spent to produce the incense offered at this god’s altars. The weed was blamed with

132. Dumpling, “Dumpling,” 1857, 535.

133. William B. Dana, “Tobacco: Historical, Statistical, Diplomatic, and Literary—Part I,” *Merchants Magazine and Commercial Review*, June 1862, 513–26: 513–14.

134. *Ibid.*

135. John Hartwell Cocke, “Tobacco the Bane of Virginia Husbandry, Continuation of no. 5,” *Southern Planter*, January 1860, 22–4: 22–3; Emory and Waugh, eds, “Tobacco,” 285–6; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 8, 13, 28–30.

136. Emory and Waugh, eds, “Tobacco,” 285–6.

137. *Ibid.*

138. Cocke, “Continuation of no. 5,” 22–3; Cocke, *Tobacco*, 8, 13, 28–30.

consuming more of the world's treasure for its support than all the money spent for Christian, benevolent, and educational institutions.

This "master vice of a sin-ruined world" led people to become its votaries by fiendish seductiveness.¹³⁹ Cocke asked if there could not be found amongst the millions of professing Christians a host of God's elect to rally against this evil. He called on scriptures such as "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" and "Ye shall not follow a multitude to do evil" to support his position.¹⁴⁰ Tobacco also marred the image of God in man. It created an unnatural and deforming appetite, which pervaded man's entire structure. Demanding an ever-increasing devotion, it became the first thing thought of in the morning, occupied every hour until bedtime, and then was taken in bed.

The tumult surrounding tobacco's damaging effects did not spontaneously arise in twentieth-century America. Contrary to the opinion of some, an anti-tobacco movement existed during the period of 1800 to 1870, with the first organized actions beginning in the 1830s, during a time of heightened reform activism in the United States. Periodical literature in that era contained numerous attacks on the pernicious weed. These reformers believed that there were agricultural, social, physical (health), and moral evils inherent in its production and use.

Writers blasted tobacco's soil depleting aspects, which did not allow planters to achieve a sustainable, profitable future. The amount of labor required was said to be out of proportion to any gain it provided, which led to poorly maintained farms and little food crop production, starving the grower and his livestock. Furthermore, authors detailed the weed's social hazards. Ruined carpets and clothes, dirty church floors, smoke-filled public spaces, and poor manners, as well as offenses to women, followed in its wake. Tobacco was an expensive luxury with no practical purpose. The laziness it generated ultimately stunted the social mobility of its users, leading many to risk poverty. Activists also identified numerous health hazards associated with tobacco use. These included the dangers of second hand smoke, cancer, and tuberculosis, in addition to its addictiveness. No part of the body appeared immune to tobacco's poisonous qualities and it received blame for numerous annual deaths. Finally, reformers highlighted the moral risks the weed posed. Tobacco was a forbidden fruit that led users to risk their very souls.

139. Cocke, *Tobacco*, 28–9, 31, 33; Cocke, "Continuation of no. 5," 23–4.

140. *Ibid.*

Given these concerns, activists called on the intelligent and righteous elements of the population to realize the troubles that tobacco posed and join them in a movement to rid the country of a loathsome and dangerous element. These often unnamed, or pseudonymously titled, authors tried to promote this crusade in the era's popular literature. They sought to advance their cause via moral persuasion, not with laws like later activists.

Despite anti-tobacconists' labors, "smoking remained a minor cause in an era filled with great ones, and by the beginning of the Civil War, antismoking 'agitations' . . . had all but died out."¹⁴¹ The anti-tobacco campaign specifically lost momentum in the 1850s when the growing conflict over slavery overshadowed other social issues. The outbreak of war saw the crusade fade from view as tobacco eventually became a ration item for both parties to the conflict.¹⁴²

Cigarettes gave tobacco its booming life after the Civil War. Soon reformers referred to this item as the Coffin Nail, the Little White Slaver, or the Little White Hearse Plume. Cigarettes were taxed for the first time in 1864. While these taxes stunted use, the cigarette was not to be stopped: By 1880, over 500 million were produced, up from 20 million in 1865. Overshadowed early by chewing and pipe tobacco, cigarettes eventually took the lead in popularity. It was in this environment that the anti-tobacconists attempted to rebuild their efforts. The movement had attempted to sputter back to life after the war, but experienced little, if any, success for the remainder of the 1860s. The cigarette eventually emerged as their main target, particularly as the next major anti-tobacco crusade emerged in the 1880s. However, Progressive-Era reformers did not have to start their campaign from scratch. They built on a foundation established by their earlier nineteenth-century forebears.¹⁴³

141. Dillow, "Thank You for Not Smoking," 96.

142. Tate, "In the 1800s," 110; Tate, "Potholes on Tobacco Road," 30; Robert, *Story of Tobacco*, 112.

143. Tennant, *American Cigarette Industry*, 15–16; Tate, "In the 1880s," 110; Tate, "Potholes on Tobacco Road," 31; Dillow, "Thank You for Not Smoking," 96; Wolfson, *Fight Against Big Tobacco*, 19–20.