

atmosphere with tobacco-fumes, and the sanction of the medical art of the day gave a vogue to the weed which is one of the chief causes of its popularity in English-speaking countries to the present day. The supposed medicinal value of tobacco long remained a tradition in Great Britain. In Defoe's tale of *Robinson Crusoe* we are told that it is 'a cure both for soul and body,' and that 'the Brazilians take no physic but their tobacco for almost all distempers.' The *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1788, while condemning its excessive use, recommends it as a 'stimulant,' and declares it 'a valuable article in medicine.' Marryat, in his *Faithful Jacoby*, attributes the stoical indifference of Indians under torture to the soothing influence of tobacco-burning.

The fascination of what Ben Jonson calls 'the most sovereign and precious weed' is, and is likely ever to remain, a mystery to the uninitiated who, like ourselves, only retain a far-off and fading memory of a few stolen pulls of rank 'pig-tail' which, to use Dickens's words, would 'quell an elephant in six whiffs,' and which left us as if we 'lay in a ground-swell on the Bay of Biscay.' And yet the fascination is undoubtedly there. It has been celebrated a thousand times in prose and verse, but, curiously enough, it has found, thus far, none to analyse it as De Quincey analysed the lurid charm of the opium habit, or as another writer—a far-off imitator—did for hachish-eating in a bizarre little book. The *Anatomy of Tobacco* by 'Leolinus Siluriensis' is a well-meant attempt, but it does not 'fill the bill.' Charles Lamb was 'a fierce smoker of tobacco.' So was Thackeray—he calls it 'sublime' and entitles it 'the great unbosomer of secrets.' Cowper, Guizot, Victor Hugo, Thomas Buckle, Cruikshank, Byron, were all strong devotees or slaves of the weed, and all sounded its praises in vague generalities in prose or verse. Dickens toyed with it. Tennyson never sang—as Lamb did—the glories of 'Bacchus' black servant, Negro fine.' But he loved his Virginian and drew it in long, contemplative whiffs out of a 'common clay,' and once left Venice in disgust because they had no tobacco there to suit his exacting taste. So, at least, he told Earl Russell. The famous French caricaturist, Gavarni, was an inveterate smoker. When in his sixty-fifth year (in 1866) he lay on his death-bed, he is stated to have made this verbal will to an old friend: 'I leave you my wife and my pipe. Take care of my pipe.'

On the other hand, Voltaire, Rousseau, Mirabeau, all waged war on tobacco. Charles Fourier, the noted French socialist, roundly declared that 'the nation that smokes perishes.' The French writer and critic Stendhal (Marie Henri Beyle) denounced it as an enervating habit. Swinburne once 'got off' the following at the Arts Club, London:—

James the First was a knave, a tyrant, a fool, a liar, a coward. But I love him. I worship him, because he slit the throat of that blackguard Raleigh, who invented this filthy smoking.

Ruskin has unmeasured scorn for those who 'pollute the pure air of the morning with cigar-smoke.' The late Mr. Gladstone avoided the touch of the weed as he did the plague. And in his *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes gives the following bit of friendly advice to budding youths who fancy manhood is incomplete without the adornment of a pipe:—

I do not advise you, young man, to consecrate the flower of your life to painting the bowl of a pipe; for, let me assure you, the stain of a reverie-breeding narcotic may strike deeper than you think, for I have seen the green leaf of early promise grow brown before its time under such nocturnal regimen, and thought the umbered meerschaum was dearly bought at the cost of a brain enfeebled and a will enslaved.

With the Wahabee Arabs idolatry is the greatest crime. Smoking comes next in the order of enormity. So, at least, Palgrave tells us in the second volume of his *Journey through Central and Southern Arabia*. The Abyssinians gave up the smoking habit during the successful missions which were preached in that country by the Portuguese Jesuits in the seventeenth century. They have not since resumed it. And hence Menelik's adhesion to the principles of the French Anti-Tobacco Society.

We may appropriately conclude this random bit of tobacco-talk with the following quaint moral lyric on the weed. It was written by Thomas Jenner—a friend, by the way, of Samuel Pepys—and was published in 1631 in one of Jenner's works, entitled the *Soules Solace*:—

This Indian weed—now wither'd quite,  
Though green at noon—cut down at night,  
Shows thy decay,  
All flesh is hay—  
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

The pipe so lily white and weak  
Doth thus thy mortal state bespeak,  
Thou art e'en such  
Gone with a touch—  
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

And when the smoke ascends on high  
Then dost thou see the vanity  
Of worldly stuff  
Gone with a puff!—  
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

And when the pipe grows foul within,  
Think of thy soul begrimed with sin;  
For then the fire  
It does require!—  
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

And seest thou the ashes cast away,  
Then to thyself thou mayest say  
That to the dust  
Return thou must:—  
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

## THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

### ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR CATHOLIC READERS.

#### INDEPENDENT TESTIMONY.

Bishop Gaughran, O.M.I., of Kimberley, in a letter to a member of the *Boston Herald* staff, says he is not an Englishman nor are his sympathies in general with England, but he could safely say that very seldom had England a more just cause for war than in the present case.

#### THE LATE CAPTAIN CONNOR.

In the roll of the heroic dead of Glencoe no officer will be more generally missed (says an exchange) than Captain F. H. B. Connor, adjutant of the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers. He was an ideal adjutant, adored by his comrades, and worshipped by his men; a typical Irishman of the grand, breezy order, genial under every circumstance, and generous to a fault. He stood some 6 feet 1 inch; was of herculean proportions; and resembled in his simplicity of heart, kindly nature, high courage, and splendid qualities no one so much as Porthos, of immortal memory.

#### IRISH OFFICERS AT THE FRONT.

Amongst the Irish officers who have been ordered to the Cape are the following from King's County:—Lord Oxmantown, Coldstream Guards, elder son of the Earl of Rosse, K.P.; Captain Jennings Bramley, A.P.D., Birr Barracks; Lieut. H. Coram Wright, 2nd battalion Royal Irish Rifles; Captain A. A. Weldon, A.D.C., 4th Leinsters, son and heir of Sir A. Weldon, Bart, Lillmorony; Lieutenant John Hardress Lloyd, 4th Dragoon Guards, of Gloster Mansion, Birr; Surgeon-Lieutenant Delap, brother of Mrs. Doctor Hemphill, Birr Rectory; Surgeon Michael Corcoran, son of Mr. James Corcoran, J.P., of Oakleigh Park, Birr, and brother of two other young surgeons who succumbed to malaria in Africa; Captain A. J. W. Mawhinney; and Lieut. T. W. Butler-Kearney, R.A.M.C. Depot, Leinsters, Birr.

#### THE IRISH REGIMENTS.

Prior to his departure from England to take command of the Third Division of the South African forces Major-General Gatacre said at a valedictory public meeting that 'he was lucky in having out of his eight regiments five Irish ones, and the knot that five Irish regiments could not untie must be a difficult one. If a commanding officer in charge of five Irish regiments failed, he must be a bad specimen.'

#### THE POPE AND THE SISTERS OF NAZARETH.

The Holy Father has sent his special blessing and an assurance of sympathy to the Sisters of Nazareth and their charges in South Africa through the Right Rev. Monsignor James Lennon, Protonotary-Apostolic. Cardinal Ledochowski, Prefect of the Propaganda, has sent a similar message.

#### CATHOLIC NEWSPAPERS FOR THE TROOPS.

The troopships leaving Liverpool for South Africa have been supplied with Catholic papers by the proprietors of the *Catholic Times*.

#### CAPTAIN KENNA, V.C.

Captain Kenna, who belongs to one of the Lancer regiments now engaged in the war in South Africa, is a near relative of his Eminence Cardinal Moran. He is a brave soldier, and a devout Catholic. At the battle of Omdurman he won distinction by his singular courage and great deeds, and was awarded the Victoria Cross. His Eminence, speaking to a *Catholic Press* representative recently, said that if Captain Kenna comes out of the war alive, he will invite him to Australia. 'And,' he added, laughing, 'I will keep him here if I can to thrash those warriors who are so fond of attacking me. I am sure there is nothing he would like better.'

#### BRITISH TROOPS AT PIETERMARITZBURG.

In a letter written by an Irish officer in Pietermaritzburg two days before the war began, that is on October 9, and received by one of the Oblate Missionary Fathers, London, the writer says: 'Father Murray was giving the Dublins a retreat when they were taken away; he went with them. We had the Mancheters here on Sunday—about 250 Catholics in church. They left yesterday with a convoy for the front. Father O'Donnell is going up from here with Father Murray. There is a Catholic chaplain coming out with Buller. Father Delalle called on me to-day. Father Barrett preached at the soldiers' Mass on Sunday. The Bishop is here; all well here. What a rush there was sending up the Indian contingent, train after train. It seems to me the largest percentage of them are Irish.'