

He tells how, somewhere in the late seventies, there was still living at Hildhausen (Silesia) a somewhat elderly man who had seen 142 summers, and who had from his teens up to that time regularly puffed away one or two pipes of tobacco every day. A curious volume in our possession tells how one Jane Garbutt died at Well-bury in Yorkshire, at the uncomfortably old age of 110, and sucked away at a clay pipe to the end. Hobbes, Dr. Parr, Izaak Walton, and Dr. Barrow all passed three score and ten. Among the literary devotees of the weed were Milton, Lord Byron, Paley, Carlyle, Charles Lamb, Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, and Guizot. Ruskin poured forth a splendid torrent of scorn on those who 'pollute the pure air of the morning with cigar-smoke.' Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the genial 'Autocrat,' warns young men that 'the stain of a reverie-breeding narcotic may strike deeper than you think for. I have seen,' he adds, 'the green leaf of early promise grow brown before its time under such nicotian regimen, and thought the ambered meerschaum was deeply bought at the cost of a brain enfeebled and a will enslaved.'

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According to all medical testimony, the connection between tobacco-smoke and longevity is at best an occasional and accidental one. Holland holds the record for tobacco-puffing, the annual consumption of the weed exceeding 7lbs per head of the population. They are at the same time the cleanliest people in Europe—washing everything (as Tom Hood remarked) except the water. And yet the average duration of life in Holland is about the lowest in Europe. The ruinous effects of cigarette smoking have manifested themselves to such an extent in the United States that, up to about 1891, about three legislatures out of every four in the country had passed Acts making smoking by youths a punishable offence. In our own country many youths—to use the well known phrase of Charles Lamb—toil to acquire the injurious practice 'as some men t-t-toil after virtue.' A prohibitive Act on the lines of those in force in America would be a boon to New Zealand. Why was the Bill dealing with the matter abandoned during the last session?

In Lighter Vein

(By 'QUIP'.)

* * Correspondence, newspaper cuttings, etc., intended for this department should be addressed 'QUIP,' N.Z. TABLET Office, Dunedin, and should reach this office on or before Monday morning.

'THERE'S nothing like a little judicious levity.'

R. L. STEVENSON.

The Arabic Bath.

Here in White Island we escaped both the plague and the earthquake, but the canvasser for a Patent Collapsible Arabic Bath is on the rampage in our peaceful sea-girt city. He has red hair and yellow pamphlets. The other day he ran across the street to me with a joyous smile as if about to tell me that some rich uncle of mine had died, but instead, he worked off something like this:

'Good morning, sir, have you seen our Patent Collapsible Arabic Bath? Just the thing for sedentary people. Or perhaps you are a letter-carrier? Very well, our Bath was specially invented for those who have to bustle round a bit. It is an Indian-rubber blessing, sir. When folded up, it will fit into a fairish-sized envelope. Let me sell you one. It is the very best cure on this Footstool, sir, for colds, coughs, sore throats, angina, picturesque brain fever, influenza, inflammation of the phalanx, baldness, insulated stomach, rheumatics, etc. etc. Have you the plague or the leprosy, sir? Don't answer unless you like. I know there are some things we all like to keep dark, sir. But if you have, buy one of our Baths, sir, and you will become as healthy as a man with a Government pension. When our Baths become properly known, every jing-bang doctor will have to live with his wife's people, and all the universities and medical schools will be turned into Benevolent Institutions for Indigent Medicos. Say you'll take one, sir. You can fit the thing up anywhere. Fancy enjoying all the Oriental luxuriousness of the far-famed Ham-ham in the privacy of your own coal-shed. And we can supply you with drugs in threepenny packets so that you can have a sulphur bath, potash bath, mud bath, iron bath, benzine bath, or a bath with any kind of mineral water you just fancy, including Wai-rongoa, Puriri, and lemonade; and we engage to furnish one set of drugs with the Collapsible Arabic in a neat handbag for the ridiculously small sum of fifty shillings. Just imagine it, sir, Rotorua in a handbag, and all for two pun ten! Don't say you can't afford it, sir. How much will it cost you to get rid of lumbago or paralysis of the brain, or diabetes, or gout? And what do you think a fit of epidemics will cost you? And what will be the doctor's fee for yanking out a tumor or a dyspepsy? And, sir, I'll knock off the ten bob. Did you

say you are not troubled with these complaints? Listen, sir. The skin contains about 5,000,000 pores. We will not be particular for one or two. Your skin, sir, contains 5,000,000 little sewers. What would happen, sir, if you stuffed up each one of them with a wad of cotton-wool? You would die, sir—frizzle out before you would have the last one stuffed. What happens to a city when the drainage is stopped? It is decimated, sir. And that is what will happen to you. You will be decimated, sir. Think of your widow, sir, and buy one of our Patent Arabic Collapsibles. As you are a stranger I'll let you have the whole thing for seven-and-six. You don't think you will make a deal? Very well. Lovely weather for this time of the year. Good morning.'

The Young Man.

I couldn't help remarking the number of single young men who entered the White Island Church, last Sunday, who ought to be married. They ought to start a monastery. They are all good-looking and good-looking young men, and I am sure the sight of them makes the hearts of all the unattached young ladies in our congregation play leap-frog with their lungs. And these same maidens (in the words said by Artemus Ward concerning those of New England) 'air as snug-bilt peaces of Calliker as I ever saw.' But some men, like Estremadura corks, take a lot of drawing to make them 'pop.' I don't know what they are afraid of. It is only the young man in the novel, whose name is Algernon or Gustavus or Adolphus that has to make himself ridiculous by going on his knees to propose. And all that talk about the stern parient keeping a dog to scare off eligible parties is sheer rubbish. In nine cases out of ten he doesn't keep a dog for any purpose under the sun; and in the tenth case you would be able to give the corpulent lazy, toothless old brute 40 yards in a hundred and beat him by 25. The coy maidens on White Island—and elsewhere, I suppose, too—do all they can in a sweet and reasonable way to draw the Estremaduras to the popping point. They even set at defiance the old law still unrepealed which provides that 'all women, of whatever age, rank, profession, or degree, whether maids or widows, who shall, after this Act, impose upon or betray into matrimony any of His Majesty's subjects by virtue of scents, cosmetics, washes, paints, artificial teeth, false hair, or high-heeled shoes, shall incur the penalty now in force against witchcraft and like misdemeanors.'

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Some time ago at Canvastown, Mrs. J. K. Hart, replying to the toast of 'The Ladies,' twitted the Hon. Mr. McGowan with being a bachelor, and said it seemed a wonder to her that such a miserable creature as a bachelor should ever be allowed to sit in Parliament. 'He shouldn't be allowed to sit anywhere,' said this uncompromising foe of bachelorhood, and plainly indicated that he should be compelled either to 'enter the bonds' or to step off the earth. Well, something must be done, and done without delay. And I hereby notify the White Island bachelors that if a reasonable percentage of them do not enter what my friend Bartle terms the 'bands of padlock' after Easter, I will join all the Debating Societies in the Colony and get them to resolve once more that bachelors should be taxed. Perhaps our esteemed pastor will follow the example of the Rev. Thos. Scully, of St. Mary's, Cambridge, who lately declared his intention to tax all unmarried men in his parish over 25 years of age 25dol a year until they reach the age of 35, when they will be taxed 50dol. 'After that age (said his reverence) they will be exempt from the tax, as no woman would care to marry them then.'

Summer Passing.

We are approaching the time

'When summer gathers up her robes of glory,
And like a dream of beauty glids away';

and the women-folk of our homes are making the annual raid on the corner grocery store for their supply of black lacquer. This is a concoction used for cleaning fenders, and metamorphosing a 'gem' or a 'sailor' into a piece of head-gear, good enough for the 'vapors and clouds and storms' of winter. There will be a slight difficulty this year, because this season's hats are built chiefly of chiffon or window-curtain lace, and resemble in appearance drunk and disorderly lamp-shades. The only solid thing in the whole make-up—and the only thing that will take the paint—is the piece of jewellery that holds the wobbly brim up in front, and which looks like an overgrown and corpulent harness-buckle. Nevertheless, let the lacquer be applied. True, some poet wrote:

'This world

Is full of change, change, change—nothing but change!'

But by 'change' he did not mean current cash. So, if a 'leghorn' (or, for that matter, a cochiu-china, or a bantam) can be turned into a presentable and decent-looking hat with only a 'shilling' bottle of lacquer, why should we, men, grumble? Anyway, let us be chivalrous, and remember the words of Mr. Dooley: 'A lady's a