GIVING UP SMOKING.

Thank heaven, I have given up smoking again!

This is the morning of the second day and the thing is now fixed. You can scarcely imagine the relief of it. How well I feel! What vitality and vigour! I could bite through the leg of that chair, kick a hole through that table or run about knocking everybody's heads together. In fact, I have felt like doing these things since just after lunch yesterday.

Gosh! I feel fit, homedale, but fit. A different man. Irritable, moody, depressed, rude, morose, perhaps; but the lungs are fine. And if I do bash somebody over the head it will at least be said in my defence that I had the strength of mind to give up smoking.

And then the mental difference! The mind more active, the imagination less sluggish. True, at the moment I can think of nothing but pipes and cigars; but the mind is busy. True, I am now travelling through the Red Sea and the pipe is never allowed in the tropics. True also, I have a crusty sore throat. But these little accidents have really nothing to do with it. I have always meant to give up smoking for good, and now it just happens that I have.

What a filthy foolish habit it was! Have you ever examined the interior of a pipe just after a smoke—a good old long service, "favourite," disgusting pipe? Incredible! One might as well put a straw in the gutter and have a suck at that. Better, indeed, for the gutter as a rule contains no nicotine.

And what sentimental twaddle we used to talk about it all this Baldwin and his pipe stuff, for example. Mr. Baldwin ought to be ashamed of himself. Observe how he oversmokes; and that explains why—I mean I know myself exactly the effect it has on the brain. People say it's so "English," and even women will say that they like to see their husbands smoking a pipe. Silly fools! They cannot know what they mean. The writer too, with their "Odes to Tobacco," "My Lady Nicotine" and so forth, "My Lady Tannin" or "My Lady Lipstick." "English," indeed! Bah!

Is it really characteristic of our race to burn a vegetable substance in a small bowl just in front of the eyes and nose and then suck the residuary juice (which are toxic) into the mouth? Is this really a distinguishing mark of the nations of civilization? Again "Bah!"

Gosh, I feel fit! And gosh, what a temper I'm in! Gosh, what an appetite! I could bite that little busy through.

It pleases me to think of the time, trouble and transport (cosy nothing of cash) which I shall save—am saving already. The stuff one carried about! Every time one dressed, every time one went out, every time one changed one's clothes there was the same trouble: Have I got everything? One pipe (generally two), one tobacco-
pouch (and is it full?) and, if not, where's the tan? the matches, the pipe-cleavers, the knife or Smoker's Companion for poking or cleaning. And some poor slaves, of course, carry cigarettes as well. What a lot of trash! Burying out the pockets, spooling the figure! Here I sit in my tropical suit, with empty pockets at last, a flat surface and the right shape.

And free of that endless match-trouble. He does not notice it, maybe, but life for the pipe-smoker is really coloured by the number of matches in his box. He acquires a full box—plastic, someone removes it—agency; it dwindles towards emptiness—growing anxiety; the last match flickers out—despair; no matches to be had anywhere—madness, murder, anything.

And then the labour of pipe-smoking...

In the bad old days when I smoked, that is to say the day before yesterday, I used to sit in this same corner at the after end of B deck and write—and smoke. Naturally, in the Red Sea one sits in a breeze if possible, and, when the mind is being used, the pipe goes out, I find, or used to find, about once in every two minutes; and one then ceased thinking and lit a match, and it was instantly extinguished by the breeze; and one lit two more and tried again; and then, one got up, went round the corner and lit the pipe in the lee of the smoking-room; and then one returned, collected the faculties and begun again.

Well, you will understand that on a morning, where's the tan? the match box was fresh and the concentration of mind strong, the pipe-lighting intervals amounted to a considerable period. You may say, of course, "Well, if the mind is concentrating to that extent, why smoke at all?" But it is quite useless to ask silly questions of that kind. The answer is, "One does." Or rather, "One did."

All that, however, is now dead and done with. To-day, a non-smoker, I sit here working away steadily without interruption, unless it might be to look at a passing flying-fish or porpoise or, if I get a little tired, to put into the smoking-room to read the wireless news or some poor devil the first drink of the day. No pipe-trouble, no breeze-trouble, no match-trouble.

No dead match-trouble, for instance. What a problem—what to do with dead matches when sitting on deck? Being a tidy person and attached to the Chief Officer, I have never cared to drop them on deck, for this maidservant. Sometimes I thrust them tidily back into my matchbox, and then lady's come along, borrowed my matches, extras perhaps, in succession and revived me. Nor was it any use to remind them that the match-box was mine, and that people who could not keep matches of their own deserve what they got. So I invented a third plan. I allowed the dead ones to accumulate in a little pile till they numbered six or seven, and I would then make a special expedition to the side of the ship and throw them overboard. But these little walks took time, you know; and what with walks to the saloon and walks round the corner, lighting matches and lending matches, filling the pipe, cleaning the pipe, pricking the pipe and knocking out the pipe, slipping down to the cabin for more tobacco, slipping into the smoking-room for more matches, I really shudder to think how much of the working morning was occupied with smoking or trying to smoke.

"Well,"—mark you. For all that is a thing of the past. Never again.

Still, it would be interesting, in a morbid sort of way, to know exactly what was the loss of efficiency, reckoned in minutes or output units, of those bad old days. Some things one can measure fairly accurately—the time taken, for example, in filling and lighting a pipe. Let us see. (I will just slip down to the cabin and get the things.)

Filling the pipe, I find, done leisurely and meditatively, takes forty-five seconds at least. But the tobacco-pouch was then on hand; allow fifteen seconds for routing about under tables and chairs and papers (it is generally more) and it works out at a minute, or about three or four full minutes every morning. Then there was finding the matches and lighting the four or five abortive matches—say ten seconds each or a minute altogether. Two minutes gone, you see; before we got to the actual business of lighting the pipe at all. First there is the little walk round the corner, then comes the lighting of the pipe. Now how long did that take? Let us see.

A-a-l-l! . . .

About a minute.

And how long did it take to smoke a whole pipe through?

Let us see . . . . . . .

A. P. H.

Tactless Commentary.

"Accompanied by her father and carrying a sheaf of pink roses, the bride entered the Church to the strains of the hymn, 'How welcome was the call.'"—Welsh Paper.


Was this quite fair?

"Motor-car manufacturers have made a large number of saloons. One firm specializing in fittings have disposed of 200 bathroom equipments in a single order."—Daily Paper.

The shower-bath roof of our saloon is not so old-fashioned as we thought,
Giving up Smoking.
A. P. H.

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