

Woman's Work :- Fashions :- Health Hints :- Household Topics

Why Do We Smoke At All?

By MARCEL PREVOST.

Why do we smoke? What mysterious and irresistible attraction does this strange pleasure exert? It is indeed a strange pleasure, for you cannot in this case, as you can in regard to other human pleasures and the vices that result from excesses, point out that it responds to a certain organic craving. The nature which has gradually become excessive and tyrannical. In more or less perfect forms all our modern enjoyments have been practiced at all times, but this particular enjoyment was unknown to the ancient civilizations and became known in Europe only at the time of Catherine of Medicis.

Those of our senses which seem to crave for it today are really not tickled by it. If it were the smell we enjoyed, we should really smoke through the nose, while we do with our palate that is nearly unable to appreciate odors. It has been proved that when you blindfold a smoker and compress his nostrils he is unable to tell whether the cigar he is smoking is lighted or not. Everything in the act of smoking is, therefore, abnormal.

A smoker forces the mucous membranes of his mouth and throat to perform a work which they do not crave for, and wanting to inhale an aroma he inhales it through the mouth, which is almost as strange as if you would put a straw in your nostrils to appreciate the flavor of a glass of fine Bordeaux.

Let us admit, however, that the sense of smell comes into play in this strange act. There are aromatic odors that please everybody, but the odor of tobacco is distinctly disagreeable, and the proof is that nobody likes to smell the smoke of another. Every one tolerates only the taste and the odor of his own smoke. To counteract the unpleasant sensation produced by the smoking of others we men may at least smoke ourselves, but what about our women, whom we force to inhale these poisonous fumes without permitting them to participate in the enjoyment? If a woman did not possess a less developed sense of smell than men, a fact that has been proved, they would surely have revolted a long time ago. Though only half sensitive to odors as they are, they will not hesitate to tell you what they think. If you insist on knowing, after assuring you that they just love the smell of a good cigar, they will end by telling you that they detect this fouling of the air and that they always advise a man who abstains from smoking, at least in their presence.

I admit, a smoker will say, "that the odor of another man's tobacco smoke is unpleasant, but you surely will not deny that to a man who smokes a choice Havana, possesses an exquisite taste and a delicious aroma."

Yes, my smoking friend, a choice Havana does really contain a perfume in its smoke, or rather a subtle taste, which may even be compared with the taste of the best Burgundy. But do you always smoke choice Havanas? And, if you do, how many smokers are able to do the same? Before the recent added tax was put on tobacco in France connoisseurs agree that a good cigar could not be bought here for less than 80 centimes, and if you wanted to get a really good cigar you would have to pay 1 franc and 50 centimes. Then you may easily figure out what you must pay today not to smoke.

Refuse is just what cheap tobacco is in France as well as other places. It is equivalent to fifth class meat, to wine at two sous the liter, to the kind of food you get in the poor houses. Remember that the French government makes 500 per cent on a package of tobacco on other things almost in proportion. When you pay 4 sous for a cigar, it has not cost but a fraction of 1 sou to produce.

The result is you smoke only refuse, and, if you are quite honest, you will admit that you know it. The taste of your cigar is almost disagreeable to you. If it does not taste bad all the way through it does so at least when you have smoked half of it. It irritates the air, it is bitter and nauseating. It is no more tobacco than the workman's "pout verve" is choice liquor.

Why do we smoke then? Not because we love the taste of tobacco which it is next to impossible to get pure and unadulterated in cigars or for the pipe.

Why do we smoke? Because smoking is a pastime, because of the intoxication which the poison produces for the same reason that makes the laborer gulp down his glass of exorbitantly poisonous brandy. It is a series of pleasant gestures to walk into the bar room to treat and be treated, to raise the glasses and bend the elbow, and then follows ultimately the temporary stupor which most people like. Every human being loves sleep, which is the suspension of animation, and everyone tries when awake to enter into states of torpor that resemble the precious sleep. That is why people drink to feel their ideas and thoughts grow confused, the sense of reality disappear. In the same way people smoke to feel their brain grow heavy, to confuse their thoughts, to localize all the activity of their head in the mucous membrane of nose and palate.

Tobacco, like alcohol, is nothing but an occidental form of opium, and that is why the quality of tobacco and alcohol, after all, matter very little to the consumer, who is only looking for the pleasure of certain gestures and various degrees of intoxication.

Dancing and Health :: What a World-Famous Artist Has to Say ::

By JANE McLEAN.

One hears so much of dancing in this America that we all admire so greatly," said Mademoiselle Maclezoza, world-famous premiere danseuse of the Ballets Russes, flashing a brilliant smile across the lights of her dressing table, at the Century opera house. "And people talk of the benefits to be derived from bringing the muscles into play. But to tell the truth no one knows to how great an extent this is true who has not adopted the foreign method of grace as a means to health.

"From the time when we are little children we think of grace as a natural means to an end. We do not take up dancing as a fad or just because we happen to like it for the time being; we make it a matter of natural development.

"I believe that the preliminary dance movements, the training, rigid and hard as it is, are of the utmost importance in the grace and beauty of a woman's figure. Every woman should possess grace. The foreign woman makes a poem of her body. She does not neglect any part of it, for it must possess uniform beauty.

"The training that she undergoes from childhood is adhered to rigidly. She has exercises for her hands and arms, for her limbs so as to make them strong and supple. Toe-dancing is one of the most wonderful accomplishments in the world for the good it does the feet and the pose it gives to the body.

"My advice to the American people is to cultivate dancing from youth. There are some worthy exponents of the dance here in America who have the right idea. They take girls from children and make their bodies real things of grace. Dancing is only an after expression which comes as naturally as the desire to fly comes to a bird.

"Real grace comes through practice, the training of the body to respond to the desires of the mind and spirit. That is what real dancing is, and that is why a dancer is graceful and dances well, because her foundation has been excellent and her mind receptive.

"Children at an early age are more easily taught because their minds are fresh and young, and their youthful vigor needs the impetus of bodily exercise as an outlet. To take a child when it is young and teach it systematic, rhythmic exercise of the hands and arms and feet and limbs, swinging motions for keeping the body slim and yet muscular, means that when it grows old enough to appreciate what grace of movement and beauty of form mean, the health will result as a matter of natural consequence."



Zenia Maclezoza, the famous Russian danseuse, whose name is a synonym for artistry, as she appears in "L'Oiseau de feu."

Flirtations of Married People

That much used and frequently abused word "flirtation" has a special significance when applied to conduct of married people. In this case it may be used to represent the excessive exercise of one's personal charm, and a wife should be unable to deliberately please her husband in the way she deliberately pleased him when he was her lover is difficult to discover.

"I have fallen in love with my wife on three distinct occasions since we were married," a staid husband once confided to the writer. He went on to explain that there had been intermediate periods of boredom, distaste or chafing. He had always been happy—the fallings in love were "extras"—realizations of how happy he really was, and how attractive a woman he had married.

If a husband is capable of being attracted, surely there is nothing in being a wife which debars a woman from making the most of her attractions. Yet many women settle down into a calm disregard of their appearance and deportment when at home, and never dream of exerting themselves to talk well to their husbands. When such couples are seen at the theater, on the train, or in any other public place, lack of conversation between them will give observers a sure hint that they are married.

Wives should pay heed to the charm of variety. This does not mean that they should be cross and kind, sweet and sour by turns, but they should be charming in different ways. We all know the charm of the woman who surprises (not shocks) us in her dress, the woman who always has something about her which leads one to notice her permanent good features. She is never slovenly or dressed in bad taste; she does not relapse into matter-of-fact garments and a permanent style of hairdressing, for she knows that if she always looks the same her friends will cease to look at her at all, and simply take her appearance for granted.

It is the same with affections; they must be freshened up and have attention drawn to them by an occasional caress or compliment, or they are likely to become forgotten.

Possibly there would be more married lovers if men and women alike realized that marriage should not be a bar to friendship with the opposite sex. It is next to impossible that a wife should find in her husband, or husband find in his wife, every qualification for mental friendship, yet this does not mean that the wife may not consider her husband the only man in the world worth being married to, or the husband does not consider his wife to be the one mate he wanted.

Such friendship is good for all concerned. The man who can appreciate the charm of another woman is not likely to overlook that of his wife, while understanding other men makes a wife more sympathetic to her husband. And each is more likely to "flirt"—using the word in its best sense—with the other if that other were not overburdened with affairs of everyday friendship.

Anita Stewart's Talks to Girls-- No. 16--New Year Resolutions

By ANITA STEWART.

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What New Year's resolutions are you going to make, girls? Don't you think we might resolve:

To be better daughters, and tell our mothers every day of the year just how much we love them, and how wonderful we think they are, and how much we appreciate all that they have done for us?

To turn sunshiny faces upon the world, and to remember that there is plenty of rain without adding our tears to the deluge?

To keep our troubles to ourselves and not to add to the burdens of other people's woes by dumping our worries down on them?

To let no day go by without doing or saying something that will make someone else happier?

To do our work every day a little better than we did the day before?

To bear in mind that in our trades or professions we write our own price tag, and get just exactly what we are worth?

To spend more time in counting up our blessings and less time in envying people who have more than we have?

To spend as much time in reading some good book every night as we do in cold creaming our face?

If we are rich girls to treat the girl behind the counter with as much consideration as we would like her to show us if we had been standing on our feet for six hours, and were tired enough to drop, and nervous enough to scream?

If we are salesgirls, to treat the customer with as much politeness and patience as we would like her to show us if we were spending our own money and uncertain of what we wanted?

Not to wear our hearts on our sleeves where any sneak thief of a man can steal them?

Not to get into any compromising flirtations with married men?

Not to let any man monopolize our attention until he declares his intentions?

Not to be so anxious for a good time that we buy it at too high a price?

To remember that love and marriage are very good things if they happen to come a girl's way, but if they don't the bachelor girl has a lot of satisfactory substitutes in her life?

To save some of our salaries, no matter how little, every week, for when you get old or out of work your one best friend is your pocketbook?

To spread no gossip and pass on no story that injures another?

To be of some actual use in the world, and so have an excuse for living?

To remember that our duty is to do the work at hand the best we know how, and our mission is to the people about us, and that we are failures in the world unless we thank God every day that we are living?

These are the resolutions I am going to try to keep. What do you say to them, girls?

Water and Its Qualities

Water is very slightly compressible. H₂O is the chemical formula of water. The water wheel was used by the ancients. Water covers 72 per cent of the surface of the earth.

"Nothing for Nothing" is Nature's Inexorable Rule

By BEATRICE FAIRFAX.

"Nothing for nothing" is not a cruel law of selfish individuals; it is nature's own rule.

"If only I had some one influential to help me I might get up in the world," says Ellen. The only person whose influence is going to take Ellen safely and securely up in the world without any back-sliding or side-tracking or unpleasant tumbles, is Ellen's own.

For all that we get in life we pay. That is nature's own law of balance. But just what the price is going to be none of us know in advance.

Nature does not ticket things with price tags. She simply exacts compensation—and generally on particular terms that human beings would have chosen to avoid.

Suppose Lucy meets an influential man in business. She is heavily indebted to Jane, and while she will ask no favor for herself from the great man, it occurs to her that it would be well to introduce Jane and let her reap the benefit of the acquaintance. Why should Lucy be surprised if the great man is clever enough to figure out her mental process and to expect her to repay him for any favor he does Jane?

The books of life are balanced, but according to a system of double entry none of us can forecast.

Suppose you go out on a rainy day with neither rubbers nor umbrella. You are in ruddy good health and don't catch cold. In fact, as you proudly boast, "your constitution is so good that you never have to take precautions against the weather." Perhaps not.

But nature marks down against you a debt for which some day she is going to exact payment. It may be that your weakened constitution will be a series of debts and one day you find yourself "down with pneumonia," or perhaps your powers of resistance are gradually lowered and you become an easy prey to some epidemic which passes by the people who have obeyed nature's laws and who owe no debt of lessened vitality.

Not only in matters of health, but in matters of moral stamina, all of us pay our debts.

"Just one cocktail"—and there is created the knowledge of how a cocktail tastes, the awareness of the stimulation it produces, even a serene feeling of superiority to any craving for the form of dissipation. Perhaps a habit is formed—in any event an inhibition is broken down.

The point of view becomes, "Having taken one cocktail with no evil results, I may risk another," and so reckless drinking may evolve from a chance "social glass," and in due time nature demands compensation for the weakened will and broken down body.

Deny yourself sleep for a while; perhaps you may manage very well on five hours of slumber a night, but in the end you find yourself either falling asleep over your work or you are forced to take one night off and "sleep the clock around" or an absolute physical breakdown occurs.

Nature exacts her price—but she, not you, names that price.

So far every tampering with or infringement of nature's laws! The stout woman diets strenuously and cuts off certain food values to which she is accustomed. She loses flesh—which is her purpose; but she loses also nervous energy, which is nature's way of balancing intake and output.

Why, then, is it surprising that human beings should conduct themselves on an absolutely natural principle? When a man does you a favor and exacts one in return, you have absolutely no cause to be surprised; nor have you a right to be gratified if the favor asked of you represents the particular thing you do not want to do.

The may you call exacting and selfish or cold-bloodedly mercenary is simply conducting himself in accordance with nature. He is balancing accounts.

Nature insists on equity. She keeps an absolute balance. Demand certain things of her and you pay for them in terms of health and nervous vitality.

Remember that the next time you are tempted to ask a favor of an influential friend. In the natural course of events you will have to pay—and will probably not like the price.

The only safe way to get on in the world is to play the game of life for yourself, asking no aid of individuals and demanding no overdraughts of vitality from nature.

WOMAN SO WEAK COULD NOT SLEEP

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Advice to Lovelorn

By Beatrice Fairfax

Marrying a Widow.

Dear Miss Fairfax: Is it proper for a young man to marry a widow with two children? My family and friends condemn such a marriage. A. A.

I see nothing to prevent a man's marrying a widow with two children, and finding great happiness with her if other circumstances are suitable. You do not state whether this woman is a great deal older than you or whether there is a legitimate impediment to your marriage. The mere fact that you state does not seem to me sufficient reason for giving her up if you love her.

You May Try to Win Her.

Dear Miss Fairfax: I am deeply in love with a girl I have met twice. I have never seen her all summer and I think she has no use for me. Do you think I should try to find her or leave her alone?

If you feel that you care seriously for this girl you have seen but twice there is no reason why you should not set quietly about trying to locate her and then to win her. But don't make her conspicuous or discuss your feelings for her with a number of people.

Household Suggestions

Steel fire-irons, when not in use, should be rubbed with oil and wrapped in brown paper. When taken out again, rub them well with fine ashes or soft powder; fine emery powder answers extremely well.

To take grime out of leather apply white of egg to the spot and dry it in the sun. Repeat the application until all marks have disappeared.

An old sun-bonnet will be found useful for protecting the hair from dust when sweeping, black-leading grates, and doing other dirty housework.

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