

from Boel: N. Y. S. J. 1844 XXXI, 13-19

pain in the loins, independent of any disease of the part; half the delicate women in this town, from their habits of living, suffer from this pain, and you can never ask a hysterical young woman to relate her symptoms, but she will mention pain in the loins. With such persons, you will always find there is exquisite tenderness of the integuments over the part; but this is only so long as the patient's attention is directed to it; avoid this, and you may press it as much as you please. This is to be detected by the cold hands and feet, irregular menstruation, in some cases the existence of some other discharge, and by the sensibility of the skin when the patient's attention is directed to the part. This class of patients are not to be implicitly relied upon; as they will sometimes tell you the pain is slight, at other times severe, but most frequently they endeavor to exaggerate their symptoms; it is, therefore, necessary that you should be very careful in distinguishing between this and other affections. I need not tell you how important it is to distinguish actual disease from nervous debility.—*London Medical Times.*

EARLY NAMES AND HISTORY OF TOBACCO.

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[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

If the history of the discovery and introduction of the various articles of the *Materia Medica*, and their compounds, could be fully unfolded, it would present a series of romantic incidents that have scarcely been equalled by the fictions of poets or the tales of novelists. Were we but to personify these substances and suffer our imaginations to invest them with human attributes, we should behold a succession of pictures calculated at once to instruct and amuse. The therapeutical characters would each, like man in the melancholy Jaques's portraiture of the seven ages, "play many parts," and the events would make up one vast tragi-comedy. We should see among these personages, as among the real ones who inhabit our globe, the worthy often persecuted and oppressed, and the worthless frequently clothed with honor and preferment. We should see, too, successive changes rapidly pursuing each other, many of them depending solely upon the vagaries of unfounded hypothesis and the errors of unwarrantable deduction. We should see prejudice triumphing over reason, and ignorance vanquishing learning. Many of the articles, in turn, we should perceive arrayed in the garments of a specific, and soon again view them stripped of their robes and sinking into insignificance. Mighty castles and stupendous fabrics, erected on these claims to pre-eminence, would meet our gaze, tumbling into ruins with the destruction of the foundation upon which they were built. But the details thus desired are in a great degree beyond our reach, as a large number of the agents have an origin too remote for the contemporary cognizance of printing, and most of those discovered or introduced into the medical world since the invention of that most invaluable of arts, possess no recorded history of the peculiar circumstances which called them, if vegetables, from the common



ranks of botany into the more exalted situation of a place in the *Materia Medica*. Intent on communicating the merely therapeutical qualities of the medicines they had to introduce, physicians have generally neglected to relate the minor events of which we have spoken. This portion of medical literature is consequently enveloped in a veil of obscurity which it is now, in most cases, impossible to raise. Those articles concerning which such incidents can be written, are indebted for them more to miscellaneous writers—to voyagers and historians—than to the professional authors who describe their therapeutical powers and application. Even the edicts of monarchs and the decrees of States are archives from whence can be drawn important facts relative to medicinal history, as is fully shown by the examples of antimony, which was proscribed by the Parliament of Paris; by dissection, which was forbidden, at one time, by all governments; by venesection, which was controlled by statute in Spain; by the doctrine of contagion, which was invested with extensive and fearful influence through the quarrels of popes and kings; and by many others which might be named. Vicissitudes, to a greater or less extent, have, from these and other causes, attended nearly every article in our dispensatories, and by a very natural vacillation of the human mind, it has not unfrequently happened, that a medicine extravagantly lauded has afterwards received unjust animadversions, and been depressed as much below its proper level as it had before been raised above it. In this ebb and flow of medical opinions, few therapeutical agents have been more blest by the breezes of favor, or harder tossed by the gales of disapprobation, than TOBACCO, or, as it is officinally styled, *Nicotiana Tabacum*. It has had ardent devotees to utter its praises, and as zealous opponents to overwhelm it with denunciations. Amidst conflicting opinions, from the very outset, it has gained an ascendancy in popular predilection which seems an anomaly, when we consider the disgust it in every instance produces in those unaccustomed to its appearance, and not habituated to its use. But notwithstanding the coldness with which it is at first received, and the offence it then invariably gives, it has contrived to overcome this dislike and to instal itself in the fairest niche of all the flowers of Parnassus. Neither the rose with all its blushes, the lily with its spotless whiteness, or the loveliest plants which glow with beauty or are redolent with fragrance, have so many or such indefatigable worshippers. Little more than three centuries ago it only distributed its odors in the wigwam of the Indian, or rose in clouds at the war councils of the American aborigines: now it has entered the palace of the oriental despot, has mounted the throne of the European monarch, has become the companion of the magistrate, the relaxation of the peasant, the indulgence of the man of letters, the favorite of the lady and the chamber-maid. The snows of Lapland and the arctic ice of Siberia have not excluded it from their unfruitful clime; nor have the sands of Arabia or the burning suns of Africa hindered its introduction into those arid regions. Turk and Christian, Pagan and Jew, the civilized and the savage, are equally subjected to its potent influence, and are equally willing to suffer deprivation and exertion to procure it. The

rapidity of its spread and the universality of its reception is, perhaps, without a parallel in the annals of the history of medicine or of luxuries; and this is the more surprising, when we consider that it has been accomplished amidst the anathemas of religion and the prohibitions of law.

Its estimation in the *Materia Medica* was once likewise very high, and physicians thought as much of it in a professional point of view as they did as a gratification. But the dyspepsias and nervous complaints, which they have since traced to its use, have led many of them to wish its rejection from the pharmacopœias, and to deny it any useful properties whatever; as we have seen many members of the profession, on account of the evils of intemperance, declare alcohol destitute of any beneficial remediate powers, and even unnecessary as a menstruum upon any occasion. The evils produced by both articles are not to be denied, but were those medicines prescribed by practitioners to be all set aside whose abuse has occasioned mischief, not one would be left. Tobacco having committed more offences, from its great popular consumption, is, for that very reason, more liable to be too severely condemned by the physicians who sit in judgment upon it.

There being so many considerations connected with tobacco, I propose to present a few articles on its history, cultivation and therapeutics, and I shall enter more minutely into the first part of the subject in consideration of the curious circumstances with which it abounds, and the very diverse quarters in which they are scattered. So rich is its history in singular details, that with more leisure and opportunity for the requisite research, I might largely increase the incidents collated, and make still further additions to the romantic chapter in the *Materia Medica* for which this plant affords the materials. For almost every fact mentioned, it will be seen, I give my authority—as some may think with unnecessary particularity, though I shall be more precise from the rarity of many of the works, and because they are most of them of such a multifarious character that they would not come under the observation of a strictly professional reader. The first time an authority is cited, it will be perceived, I shall have generally given the date and locality of the edition used, unless it was a common and well-known production; but the references afterwards will be more brief. I shall also have occasion to refer to several treatises which I inadvertently omitted to include in the “*Bibliography of Tobacco*,” published in the seventh No. of the last (30th) volume of this Journal. For a number of years I have been occasionally engaged, when convenience and opportunity allowed, in these investigations, and since their commencement having had free access to the public, and to many private libraries in Boston, Cambridge, New York, and several other cities and towns, I discovered that the facts which elucidate the history of the “*Virginia weed*” were scattered incidentally in nearly all the accounts of the earlier voyages to America, and in the first notices of this Continent. The examination, though perhaps only prosecuted from capricious curiosity in the beginning, became finally an interesting inquiry for various leisure hours, and led me, when graduating at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York city, to write my thesis

upon *Nicotiana Tabacum*. The few communications I shall here contribute will be mainly extracts from this monograph, now augmented and re-written, and which, it is possible, may be presented in full to the profession, at some future day, in a volume by itself.

Europeans were unacquainted with tobacco till after the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. Seeking to find a new passage to a supposed portion of the old world—more particularly “to the golden coast of rich Cathay,” to borrow an expression from Thomson’s *Seasons*, this celebrated navigator brought to light a vast continent unknown before to the civilized nations of his time, and upon it he met new men, new animals and new vegetables. Among the latter, without enumerating the many that might be named, were cinchona, ipecacuanha, jalapa, the potatoe, and tobacco. It is with the last we have to do. The Spaniards having witnessed smoking in the island of Cuba, during Columbus’s first voyage, as I have already related,* at length became addicted themselves to the habit, and introduced the use of the new luxury to their own father land. But many a lustrum of years elapsed before a custom, at first so repulsive to the senses, attracted much attention or favor in Europe. It is impossible that the early voyagers from *all* the countries of the Old World should not have been surprised at a habit so novel, but the notices of the expeditions are often imperfect, and the historiographers frequently do not record the impressions. Still we find some such accounts, and they legitimately belong to the history of tobacco.

In 1535 Captain Jaques Cartier, a French navigator, the records of whose voyages give us the first and most accurate description of the *scurvy* as it broke out among his crew, explored the more northern portions of North America, and an old narrative of the expedition tells us of the Canadas, that “There groweth here a certaine kinde of herbe, whereof in summer they make great provision for all the yeere, and onlie the men vse of it; and first they cause it to be dried in the sunne; then weare it about their neckes, wrapped in a litle beaste’s skinn like a little bagge with a hollow peece of stone or of wood like a pipe; that when they please they make powder of it, and then put in one of the ends of the said cornet or pipe, and laying a coal of fire upon it at the other end, sucke so long that they fill their bodies full of smoak till that it cometh out of their mouth and nostrils even as out of the tunnell of a chimney. They say that this keeps them warm and in health, and never go without some of it about them.”† Such is the “laboriously minute description” of perhaps the first acquaintance on record which the French made, in the words of Professor Tytler, “with the salubrious and far-famed plant tobacco.”‡

According to Professor Beckmann’s *Anleitung zur Technologie*, a work full of labor, learning and research, and where he considers the chronology of tobacco at considerable length, it was during the year 1535

* Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, vol. xxx., p. 396.

† Seconda Relatione di Jacques Cartier, in Ramusio’s *Raccolto delle Navigazioni e Viaggi*, tom. iij., p. 449. Venet, 1558, fol.

‡ Historical View of the Progress of Discovery on the more Northern Coasts of America, &c., chap. i., p. 47. New York, 1833.

the negroes in the West Indies began to use this herb throughout all the plantations.*

In 1559, according to Don Jose Ximenes, it was sent into Spain and Portugal by Hernandez de Toledo,† but he does not appear to have transmitted it to any one who either used it or brought it into public notice. That same year, however, Jean Nicot, lord of Villemain, and master of requests in the household of Francis II., of France, was ambassador from that monarch at the court of Lisbon.‡ From a Dutch trader just returned from the "long voyage," who was introduced to him by the keeper of the monuments at Lisbon, he received some seeds of the precious plant. A part of these he presented to Catherine de Medicis, and a part to a grand prior of the house of Lorraine. Catherine used the pulverized seeds as a medicine, and the French called the plant by several names, as *herbe à la reine*, *herbe à l'ambassadeur*, *herbe au grand prieur*, &c.§ This was its first recorded use among that people, so famous for their politeness and—snuff-taking! To this fact Nicot probably owes the celebrity his name has acquired, for although he compiled a Latin and French dictionary, and wrote a treatise on navigation,|| these works have long since sunk into obscurity, and would never have saved the notary of Nismes from oblivion: but Linnaeus has done so by bestowing the title of *Nicotiana* upon the genus to which tobacco belongs.¶ So singularly does the course of events play with human calculations and defy human foresight. For a whole life was the French master of requests struggling for eminence, and probably toiling for immortality—delving in lexicography and laboring in science—labors all unproductive of their aim; while an unconsidered presentation of a few tobacco seeds to the mother of a king, a civility from which nothing farther was expected than a courtly smile or some royal condescension, carried his name to posterity and will always preserve it. This little episode was indeed one of his last acts, for he died in Paris, May 10th, 1600, and was buried in the Eglise de St. Paul, where his epitaph is yet to be seen. Having been sent to a personage in so conspicuous a station as the celebrated, or rather notorious, Catherine de Medicis, and having received favor from her, the reputation of tobacco began to be diffused in Europe, and was ere long styled, among other names, "The Cure of all Ills;" "The Sacred Herb;" "The Holy Plant;" "The Antarctic Panacea."***

In the voyages of John Hawkins, made after the death of Nicot, we are presented with notices of the herb. In the year 1564, during his second voyage of discovery, he visited Florida, and the account given in Hakluyt††

* Agricultural Letters from the British Possessions in America, by G. Watson, p. 513. Glasgow, 1790.

† Des Efficaces Virtudes neuvramente descubiertas en varias Plantas que se traen de neustras Indias Occidentales, tom. iij., p. 315. Coimbra, 1578, 8vo.

‡ Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique, &c., par M. Louis Moreri, tom. vi., p. 89. Amst., 1740, fol.

§ Le Récaeil touchant l'Histoire des Maitres des Requêtes, par M. Guignard Montserat, tom. iv., p. 329. Marselles, 1774.

|| Bibliothèques Françaises, tom. v., p. 367. Paris, 1773.

¶ Genera Plantarum eorumque Characteres Naturales, n. 248. Lugd. Bat., 1737, 8vo.

** Anleitung zur Krauterkenntniss, u. s. f., band ii. seite 192. Berlin, 1813, 4to.

†† Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation, vol. iii. p. 615.

tells us, "The Floridians when they trauell haue a kind of herbe dried, who with a cane and an earthen cup in the end, with the fire and the dried herbs put together, doe sucke thorow the cane the smoke thereof." On their return to England, Hawkins and his crew had no success in introducing tobacco among their countrymen, if indeed they made the attempt. It was shown, however, but with no other result than that "all men wondered what it meant."^{*} It was not till twenty years afterwards that smoking began to gain popular favor in England, though it was already partially known in some other parts of Europe.

In 1565 Conrad Gessner says† tobacco was found in many gardens of Germany, and in the same work he details some experiments he had made on the herb, and adds that it was called *Nicotiana* from the name of the ambassador who introduced it into France—"A Gallis *Nicotianam* vocari audio, nomine legati cujusdam qui Gallie intulerit, ab aliis *Pontianam*." Mathias de l'Obel, or Lobelius, who published his *Sirpium Adversaria Novum*, &c., in London in 1571, and in honor of whom Linnaeus named a genus of syngenisian plants *Lobelia*, informs us the *Nicotiana Fruticosa* was cultivated—doubtless as a rare exotic—in 1570, by the Duchess of Beaufort. In 1575 André Thevet published at Lyons his *Cosmographie de Levant*, containing a figure of the tobacco plant, and in the work he claims to have introduced the herb into France before any seeds had been sent from Portugal to Catherine de Medicis, or, as Citoyen Lamarck expresses it, he contested with M. Nicot the glory of giving tobacco to France.‡

Tobacco is mentioned a number of times in the narratives of the voyages of Sir Francis Drake, and in one place where the relater is doubtless mistaken as to the native name in California, though the extract shows that so early as June 17th, 1579, the English observed tobacco in that peninsula. "The basket brought by the Indian ambassador, or orator," we are told in a British work,§ "was filled with an herb which, in some of the original relations of the voyage is called *tabah*, the native name, and in others tobacco."

There is a general agreement among historians, and other writers, that it was during the year 1586 that tobacco began to be an article of popular consumption in England. There is a slight discrepancy as to the individual who is said to have brought it: some attribute it to Sir Francis Drake himself; others, as Heylin and Hume, to his mariners and fleet; others, as Bancroft and Robertson, to Lane and his fellow colonists; but these apparently conflicting statements are reconciled by an examination of the facts. In 1584 Queen Elizabeth gave Sir Walter Raleigh a patent, entitling him to the possession of such countries as he might chance to find. He immediately fitted out a small fleet, and his mariners discovered the territory of *Virginia*, which was so called upon the return of the expedition, in honor of Elizabeth,|| who was unmarried, and

* This sentence is quoted, without reference, by Joel Maunsell, in an article entitled *Chronology and Statistics of Tobacco*, published in the *Northern Light*, vol. i., p. 110, Albany, Oct. 1841.

† *Epistolæ Medicinæ*, fol. 79. Nov. 5, 1565.

‡ *Dictionnaire de Botanique*, tom. iv., p. 477. "Thevet a disputé à Nicot le gloire d'avoir donné le tabac à la France."

§ *Lives and Voyages of Drake, Cavendish, and Dampier*, &c., p. 93.

|| *Hakluyt's Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, vol. iii., p. 246.

therefore, by etiquette at least, a *virgin queen*. It was herself, in fact, who bestowed the name, after becoming acquainted with the accounts of Amidas and Barlow, now preserved in Hakluyt's valuable collection. On the 9th of April, 1585, Raleigh despatched another fleet, consisting of seven vessels, and carrying 108 emigrants, under the command of Sir Richard Greenville. A small colony was formed, and Ralph Lane was constituted its Governor. During the winter of 1585 and 1586 the colony suffered very much, and, chief magistrate and all, were anxious to return to England, which they did with Sir Francis Drake.* This commander touched at Virginia, June 18, 1586, and arrived with the returning emigrants in England, July 28th of the same year. Tobacco, and the habit of smoking it, were brought by both Lane and his companions.† The farther early history of the plant, its introduction at the British court, its adoption by royalty, nobility, ladies, and gentry, its advent in Italy, and other European countries, some of the literary notices respecting it, and many curious particulars besides, will be hereafter noted in three or four additional articles in continuation of the present.

LAWS RELATING TO MEDICAL PRACTICE.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR.—In a recent number of your Journal there is a note of your own, on the subject of a late resolution of thanks to the legislature by the BOTANIC PHYSICIANS of Rochester, N. Y., *renouncing* connection and declining to consult with us. You say, also, that this must have appeared absurd to themselves, and seem to imply that for the especial mark of favor the legislature were not actuated by "a conviction of the importance and value of the reformed medical practice," &c. Now, Sir, though not accustomed to differ from your judgment, I cannot agree with you here; for I do not only believe that it did not seem absurd to them to propose the resolution, but that the legislature were actually convinced of the "value of their practice." Sir, I might here ask the trite question, and why should they not be convinced—for what do they know of medicine? Is it not conceded that none can know but the patient investigator, the accomplished student of her mysteries? No, Sir, it is not so. In some observations of my own, written years ago, I find these words—"Most patients look to the specific power of the drug; they swallow to add what is needful, or to subtract what is redundant, in their bodies." Experience has added to my conviction of the utter impossibility of communicating the rationale of medicine to the people, and I do solemnly believe that the above quotation would express the impressions of two thirds of the legislature who passed that very law. If I am right, is it not rather surprising that the law was not long since passed? For myself, I do not regret the passage of the law, but believe it may be, like a pestilence, secondarily beneficial, for attention must be arrested ere an

* Hakluyt, vol. iv., p. 26.

† Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. xvii. p. 628.