

SMOKING IN AUSTRIA.

GROWTH OF THE CIGARETTE HABIT—
PIPES AND SNUFF TAKING.

Vienna Dispatch to the London Daily Telegraph.

According to statistics just issued, the number of cigars smoked in Austria during the past year was 1,085,000,000, showing a reduction of 72,000,000 on the previous year's returns. On the other hand the *Régie* sold 895,000,000 of cigarettes, which is 174,000,000 more than during the year before. The quantity of tobacco sold by the Government has neither increased nor diminished, though the consumption of snuff is steadily declining. Cigarette smokers in Austria prefer the ready-made article, whereas in France and Spain smokers make their own cigarettes. The Austrian *Régie* cigarette is scarcely of a quality to satisfy the average foreign palate. The tobacco may be sound and the paper free from injurious ingredients, but the whole lacks fragrance and flavor. At a time when I was a smoker myself I could never get through a *Régie* cigarette.

It is surprising how the habit of this kind of smoking has spread in this country, where but fifteen or twenty years ago the pipe and cigar were indulged in almost exclusively. An increase of over 24 per cent. in the *Régie* sales tells its own tale. You now see boys of ten and twelve at every street corner, whiffing their paper cigar unrebuked, taking it as a matter of course that their pocket money should be spent in tobacco. In former years it was not usual for ladies to smoke in restaurants and places of public resort. The *grandes dames* of society are not all smokers, but many of those who are think nothing of lighting a cigarette after dinner at any of the fashionable eating houses. Some of them smoke cigars, though they seldom venture to do so in public.

Most young men have abandoned cigars altogether, and keep up cigarette smoking from early morning till bedtime. It would be idle to deny that the abuse of cigarettes is working havoc among the Austrian youth. Here, as elsewhere, it has a disastrous effect on the eyes, throat, and stomach. Dust is one of the great drawbacks of the Vienna atmosphere, and when that is coupled with the smoke of indifferent tobacco and paper, the effect on the respiratory organs is necessarily most injurious. Then in Austria smoking is allowed everywhere, excepting at church and the theatres. There are railway carriages labeled for non-smokers, but on a recent journey I got into one of these and was not a little dismayed to find each side of the compartment provided with an ash tray. The Vienna cafés are renowned for the delicious *café-au-lait* they give at early breakfast, but go at whatever hour you will, from 6 in the morning, and you will find the air poisoned with foul cigarette smoke, while the bread and the "milk-coffee" itself are also slightly impregnated with the flavor of tobacco.

The old-fashioned Viennese, who can no longer enjoy his pipe outside his own house, has taken to the "Virginia," or rat-tailed cigar, with the straw mouthpiece, a single one of which is sufficient to fill the Albert Hall with a vague odor of burned seaweed. This atrocious cheroot is a mere apology for smoking. Not one in a thousand tastes of tobacco, yet the "Virginia" seems to have the fatal fascination of the cigarette. It is making the same ravages among the lower classes as is the cigarette among their betters. Almost every workingman carries four or five "Virginias" in his breast pocket when he goes to his work in the morning, and in many cases they do not last him the day through. His clothes are saturated with the abominable smell of "Virginia" smoke. It makes him offensive even at a distance, and renders the closed premises which he frequents simply intolerable. "Virginia" smoking is a decidedly greater nuisance than snuff-taking.

It is only in the Tyrol and Galicia that the habit of taking snuff still exists, though the quality of the Austrian *Régie* snuff is excellent. It is exported far and wide, and is high in favor with amateurs of all nations. It has been predicted, on good authority, that the difficulty of obtaining good tobacco to smoke will revive the custom of taking snuff. In Austria, however, it is not the case. Even among the clergy it is not as prevalent as in other Catholic countries; here the priests smoke. In a place where it may be said that everybody puffs the "Indian weed" it is sometimes a drawback to be a non-smoker. When you pay a call, on business or otherwise, you are at once offered a cigarette, which, even if you only take a couple of whiffs, you are expected to light. If you do not do so, in many cases it throws a chili on the conversation to come.

In the East it is considered hardly good manners to refuse a cigarette, just as in America it is unfriendly to decline "a drink." An illustrious Pasha, who, after being a Turkish Ambassador in Vienna, governed one of the Sultan's fairest provinces, once met my objection to smoke with him by the following characteristic remark: "Rappelez vous, cher ami, que causer et ne pas fumer n'est pas Oriental."

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