

The Economics of Tobacco – Period Quotes

Excerpts “A Counterblaste to Tobacco” by King James I

And now good Countrey men let us (I pray you) consider, what honour or policie can moove us to imitate the barbarous and beastly maners of the wilde, godlesse, and slavish *Indians*, especially in so vile and stinking a custome? ...Why doe we not as well imitate them in walking naked as they doe? in preferring glasses, feathers, and such toyes, to golde and precious stones, as they do? yea why do we not denie God and adore the Devill, as they doe?

Now to the corrupted basenesse of the first use of this *Tobacco*, doeth very well agree the foolish and groundlesse first entry thereof into this Kingdome. It is not so long since the first entry of this abuse amongst us here, as this present age cannot yet very well remember, both the first Author, and the forme of the first introduction of it amongst us. It was neither brought in by King, great Conquerour, nor learned Doctor of Phisicke.

I am now therefore heartily to pray you to consider, first upon what false and erroneous grounds you have first built the generall good liking thereof; and next, what sinnes towards God, and foolish vanities before the world you commit, in the detestable use of it.

And what greater absurditie can there bee, then to say that one cure shall serve for divers, nay, contrarious sortes of diseases? It is all undoubted ground among all Phisicians, that there is almost no sort either of nourishment or medicine, that hath not some thing in it disagreeable to some part of mans bodie...

And for the vanities committed in this filthie custome, is it not both great vanitie and uncleanenesse, that at the table, a place of respect, of cleanlinesse, of modestie, men should not be ashamed, to sit tossing of *Tobacco pipes*, and puffing of the smoke of *Tobacco* one to another, making the filthy smoke and stinke thereof, to exhale athwart the dishes, and infect the aire, when very often, men that abhorre it are at their repast?

A custome lothsome to the eye, hatefull to the Nose, harmefull to the braine, dangerous to the Lungs, and in the blacke stinking fume thereof, nearest resembling the horrible Stigian smoke of the pit that is bottomelesse.