

How the

cigarette

And the fortunes that came from it

by **CHESTER JEROME**

A BOMB flung from the Turkish lines shattered the tobacco pipes of an Egyptian gun crew.

It was a trifling incident in a trifling campaign way back in 1832, but it started a habit that enslaved the world and made more millionaires than any other human idea.

It also started a British dynasty whose names are on your lips every day—"W. D. and H. O. Wills."

The two brothers who first owned these names never even heard of the Turkish bomb affair.

The pipeless Egyptian gunners devised a makeshift smoke.

They emptied the gunpowder out of the thin paper cartridges used for firing their cannon, and replaced it with tobacco—then lit the first of all cigarettes.

The Turkish enemy got hold of the idea, and English soldiers picked it up in the Crimean War.

You enjoy the idea now, but not nearly so much as the Wills family. Their fortunes literally went up in smoke.

Shy folk

LAST week the light of news turned on them again with the publication of the will of Mrs. Kathleen Mary Christian Hamilton Rees-Mogg, of Stratford-on-Avon.

Daughter of the late Sir Frederick Wills, she left £1,787,399.

There are hundreds more of the Wills family scattered around England. Millionaires are fairly spattered through them.

In the past 40 years some dozen of the leading members have left over £40,000,000.

But they are a shy dynasty. You'll find few of their names in Who's Who or the newspapers, but you'll find them in lists of donors to charity.

They still follow the traditions of old W. D. and H. O. Many of them still have an interest in the firm—several are on the present board—but in private life they become squires and churchwardens.

The family comes from Bristol, and Bristol has had cause to thank them for their generosity.

Habit caught on

FIRST of the Wills in tobacco was Henry Overton Wills. He was born in Bristol in 1761 and died there in 1826, and never even heard of a cigarette. He dealt in cigars and snuff and pipe tobacco, and his two sons, W. D. and H. O., carried on.

They expanded and became the richest people in Bristol, founders of the real fortune, and the dynasty, too, really, because H. O. (Henry Overton II.) had 18 children, and they all bore faithfully the stamp of the Wills—blue eyes, blond hair, high, wide heads, and rather round faces.

In the 1880's the slightly scorned habit of cigarette smoking caught on.

At the head of the firm then were three of W. D.'s and H. O.'s sons, Frederick, Ernest, and William.

An indication of their growing influence is that they all got knighthoods, and Sir William notched a new peak in the family fortunes by becoming Lord Winterstoke.

War opens

IN 1901 a great crisis entered their lives, the Anglo-American tobacco war.

James "Buck" Duke, the American tobacco king, had steam-rolled his way to virtual monopoly of the trade in the U.S. with his Tobacco Trust.

Seeking new fields to conquer, Duke invaded the British market with the intention of doing the same as in America.

The battle lasted 18 months.

with so much money that couldn't count it—even though he'd given away a cool £16,000 to universities and charities.

Once he gave away £8,000 in one sum. It is his daughter, Doris who has been tagged "Richest girl in the world."

There was one British firm that stayed out of the Imperial Tobacco merger.

It was led by a man called Bernhard Baron, a rough diamond with a generous and happy heart who was born in Russia of French and Jewish parents in 1850.

He'd emigrated to New York, where he'd worked for 16s. a week in a tobacco factory and saved 10s. out of every pay.

One night he got an idea for a cigarette-making machine. So far cigarettes had been made by hand.

He took his idea—and a prototype machine—round the American tobacco manufacturers, and one after another, with heart-breaking unanimity, they turned it down. Even the astute Duke.

Many rebuffs

BARON emigrated again—this time to England. He struggled to get someone interested, and the rebuffs came just as regularly.

And then in Wardour-street he found an elegant young man called William Yapp who had a tobacco emporium so snootily exclusive they wouldn't even sell the new-fangled cigarettes.

It was called Carreras, after its original Spanish owner, and sold its own mixture—Craven, so called after Lord Craven who had first smoked it.

Yapp was mildly intrigued with Baron's machine and decided to risk £1,000 to try it out. It was the wisest thing he ever did. Baron turned it into millions for him.

Soon he was turning out cigarettes at five a penny!! Shortly they were selling 20,000,000 a day.

Player and Wills were soon right on their heels using cigarette-making machines.

£2,000,000 gift

GOOD natured and unpretentious, Baron became a naturalised Briton in 1907, and his firm Carreras, grew to a £23,000,000 concern.

Baron gave away £2,000,000, but it kept rolling in faster than he could dispose of it, and he still had £5,000,000 in assets when he died in 1929, aged 78.

The elegant Yapp died only three years ago, aged 84. He, too, had given a million away, and still had £4,500,000 left.

The two Churchman brothers who threw in their lots with Wills into Imperial Tobacco prospered likewise.

Sir William Churchman, Bt died only last year, leaving over £1,000,000, and three months later his brother, Lord Woodbridge, died leaving £1,300,000.

World beaters

OVER the past 40 years alone £17,800,000 has been left by four or five of the major tobacco people.

But the Wills are the world beaters when it comes to finding the gold flakes in tobacco.

Leaving out the scores of minor family members who have passed on, leaving their few score thousand or few hundred thousand pounds, here is a table of the estates left over the past 40 years by a few major members of the dynasty:—

Sir Frederick Wills	1909	£3,050,500
Sir E. Payson Wills	1910	£2,635,100
Mr. H. O. Wills ...	1911	£5,214,800
Lord Winterstoke	1911	£2,548,200
Sir Edward Canning Wills	1921	£947,700
Mr. H. H. Wills ...	1922	£2,750,000
Mrs. Hamilton Fellowes ...	1926	£1,965,100
Frederick N. H. Wills	1927	£5,053,300
Mrs. E. A. Douglas-Hamilton	1927	£1,755,700
Sir George A. Wills	1928	£10,000,000
Sir George V. A. Wills	1931	£2,100,000
Dame Mary Monica Wills	1931	£204,000
Captain Ronald D. Wills	1937	£631,000
Miss Mary Vera Wills	1940	