

# Top25snuff

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# The Journal of health

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## A Hint to Snuff-takers.

I once attended, said the late Dr. Rush, a gentleman who had been for some time troubled with pains in his stomach, accompanied with a loss of appetite and considerable emaciation. Observing that he frequently practised the taking of snuff, to which I attributed his complaints, I advised him to suspend the use of it. This he accordingly did; and soon began to mend very fast. I was informed by him a few weeks after, that he had gained thirty weight in flesh, and was at that period in the enjoyment of perfect health.

Rush's MS. Lectures.

## TOBACCO.

It is really surprising that a single individual could be found, who, after experiencing the distressing sensations almost invariably produced by the first use of Tobacco, would be willing to risk their recurrence a second time: still more so, that any one should again and again resort to the "noxious weed," until, its immediate effects being lessened by habit, it becomes an article of luxury, from the use of which it is found difficult to refrain.

The extreme nausea—pain of the head, and vertigo—the cold death-like sweat, and general exhaustion, experienced by the novice in chewing, snuffing and smoking, we should imagine would be fully sufficient to prevent the use of tobacco from becoming a habit. Yet, such is "the folly and infatuation of the human mind," and the power of custom and example, in opposition to prudence and the dictates of nature, that one of the most disgusting productions of the vegetable kingdom, "in all

Places where it has come," to use the quaint expression of Sir Hans Sloane, "has much bewitched the inhabitants, from the polite European, to the barbarous Hottentot."

Did this "modern herb" possess a tithe of the virtues ascribed to it by Dr. Thorus in his Psetologia;\* did, in fact, the least benefit result to the system from its habitual use, there would then be some reason why, "with all its loathsomeness of smell and taste," it should have become so general a favourite. But we know, on the contrary, that all who habituate themselves to its use, sooner or later experience its noxious powers.

Tobacco is, in fact, an absolute poison. A very moderate quantity introduced into the system—even applying the moistened leaves over the stomach—has been known very suddenly to extinguish life. The Indians of our own country were well aware of its poisonous effects, and were accustomed, it is said, on certain occasions, to dip the points of their arrows in an oil obtained from the leaves, which being inserted into the flesh, occasioned sickness and fainting, or even convulsions and death.

It must be evident to every one, that the constant use of an article possessing such deleterious properties, cannot fail, at length, to influence the health of the system.

In whatever form it may be employed, a portion of the active principles of the tobacco, mixed with the saliva, invariably finds its way into the stomach, and disturbs or impairs the functions of that organ. Hence most, if not all, of those who are accustomed to the use of tobacco, labour under dyspeptic symptoms. They experience, at intervals, a want of appetite—nausea—inordinate thirst—vertigo—pains and distension of the stomach—disagreeable sensations of the head—tremors of the limbs—disturbed sleep, and are more or less emaciated.

According to Boerhaave, " when this celebrated plant was first brought into use in Europe, it was cried up for a certain antidote to hunger; but it was soon observed, that the number of hypochondriacal and consumptive people were greatly increased by its use."

Dr. Cullen informs us that he has observed "several instances" in which the excessive use of tobacco in the form of snuff, has produced effects similar to those occurring in persons from the long continued use " of wine and opium;" that is, "loss of memory, fatuity, and other symptoms of a weakened or senile state of the nervous system, induced before the usual period."

The almost constant thirst occasioned by smoking and chewing has, in numerous instances, it is to be feared, led to the intemperate use of ardent spirits.

This thirst cannot be allayed by water; for no insipid liquor will be relished after the mouth and throat have been exposed to the stimulus of the smoke or juice of the tobacco: a desire, of course, is excited for strong drinks, which soon leads to intemperance and drunkenness.

The use of snuff destroys entirely the sense of smell, and injures materially the tone of the voice; while chewing and smoking vitiate the sense of taste. Hence those who make "rise of tobacco, to any extent, have certainly one, and frequently two, of the external senses less perfect than other individuals. But this is not all. ' Polypus of the nose, and other serious affections have been traced to the use of snuff.

Sir John Pringle, whom, we are informed, was very liberal in its use, experienced in the evening of his days, a tremor of his hands and a defect of memory. Being in company with Dr. Franklin at Paris, he was requested by the Doctor to observe that the former complaint was very common to those people of fashion who were great snuffers. Sir John was led by this remark to suspect that his tremors were occasioned by his excessive use of snuff. He, therefore, immediately left it off, and soon afterwards the tremor of his hands disappeared, and at the same time he recovered the perfect exercise of his retentive faculties. Cases could be mentioned in which epilepsy, consumption, and other serious diseases have been brought on in young people by the excessive use of tobacco.

We have ourselves known individuals, in whom very severe and dangerous affections of the stomach—tremors of the limbs, and great emaciation, were referrible to excessive smoking and chewing, and which were removed only after these habits were entirely relinquished. One or two of these cases, we are sorry to say, occurred in females, from the filthy practice of chewing snuff; and in a class of society where it was to be hoped a refinement of taste and exalted notions of female delicacy, would for ever have precluded the introduction of so detestable and pernicious a habit.

## **Mentorian, or Mnetnosynean Snuff.**

The following whimsical notice of the virtues of a new kind of snuff, taken from a London periodical of 1822, has about as much reason and truth in it, as the puffs direct and by implication, whether from scholars or ignoramuses, of quack medicines, which we daily meet with in our own quarter of the world.

" Dr. Dunderhead declares he has not any connexion with the Irish Blackguard, or Lord Sham Peter's English Gentleman, nor has he the honour to be acquainted with either the Prince or his mixtures ; indeed the Doctor is not ashamed to proclaim his ignorance of all mixtures whatever, not even excepting his own Mnemosynean Snuff, though he pledges himself it possesses the following extraordinary properties.

—The human skull being as it were the wit-chest of man, a single pinch of this valuable article thrown into it through the nasal duct, acts on the brain, which it instantly purges of all folly, expels delirium and phrenzy, dislodges melancholy, discharges grief, and improves and assists cogitation ; a second pinch illumines the imagination, sharpens the wit, collects and associates all stragglng ideas, and matures the judgment; a third spurs the fancy, but at the same time curbs its exuberance, and methodizes thought. In short, *Cautions to*

*Mothers.—Pulmonary Consumption.* 63

such are its curative and prophylactic virtues, that it banishes or extirpates all mental errors. " Poets, musicians, painters, and sculptors, will find good account by applying to Addle-street. As the first, with a few pinches, will terse and tag his verse with precision and rhyme ; the second will, with a like quantity, be relieved from the fatigues of beating time, and readily make concord and discord accord. The snuff will be sure also to correct the painter's design, soften his distances, and harmonize his tones; whilst the sculptor, with a few pinches, will excel his models, and steal a march'on nature."

—Mnemosynean Emporium.

## **SNUFF-TAKING.**

We have already pointed out, in the third number of this work, the more prominent evils attending the use of tobacco, by chewing, smoking, and snuffing. Our purpose on the present occasion,

is to place in contrasted pictures,—first, the happy effects of an abandonment of the last mentioned of these practices, in the words of the reformer himself; and then the miseries from its indulgence. We derive the following extract, by permission, from a respected friend to whom it was addressed in a letter, and who is himself an instance of amended health and pleasanter feelings, by leaving off, at first chewing, and afterward smoking, which last he had taken to as a substitute for the former:—

" I would return you my thanks for urging me so successfully to abandon the taking of snuff. Although I knew every truth you stated, and had weighed its detrimental effects on my health and personal cleanliness ; yet I viewed myself as doomed to suffer all the bad consequences without any prospect of conquering its baleful influence; as I had made frequent attempts, but always failed. But I am happy to say, from the afternoon we had the long conversation on the subject, I have not taken one pinch of snuff, or used tobacco in any way. The consequence is, I enjoy better health than I have had for many years ; I am sure I have increased in weight 12 or 14 pounds. I have no violent nervous affections since; and my appetite scarcely ever better. I have not had a single attack, since the morning I quitted the snuff, of unpleasant pains running out to the ends of my fingers and toes ; and which I cannot represent more aptly, than the rolling of agitated water against the shore, and as often receding and returning. These affections I am well aware, are dyspeptic; and those afflicted with the disease well know what I mean. In short I feel gratitude to God for strength to overcome so pernicious a habit, and which, I trust, I shall never return to again."

Few persons, even on the score of economy, can afford to lose one of their senses; and yet the habitual snuff-taker consents to have greatly impaired, if not destroyed the senses of smell and taste; for both, together with the voice, suffer by this vile practice—as repugnant to true fashion and politeness, as it is injurious to health. At first had recourse to, by some, for the relief of headache, or disordered eyes—snuff, when long continued, brings on those very evils it was intended to remove. Even when it does not escape into the throat and pass thence into the stomach, its repeated application to the sentient surface constituting the sense of smell, affects by sympathy the stomach, and gives rise to indigestion and a host of nervous disorders, such as tremors, palsy, and even epilepsy, and sudden death. With an enfeebled state of the brain and nervous system come loss of memory, and great inequalities of temper and manner. The pernicious effects of the tobacco, are not unfrequently heightened by the addition of other noxious or poisonous ingredients, mixed with the powder, in order to add to the weight of the snuff, or to make it more stimulating. To accomplish the first intention, salt or red lead, which last also im, Female Surgeons. 155 proves its colour; and for the second purpose, powdered glass, sal ammoniac, Cayenne pepper, and even more offensive articles, are added.

No person can be ignorant, that snuff possesses all the powers of tobacco.—The celebrated Santeuil, experienced vomiting and horrible pains, amidst which he expired, in consequence of having drunk a glass of wine, into which had been put some Spanish snuff. A woman applied to three children afflicted with scald head, a liniment, consisting of powdered tobacco and butter, soon after which, they experienced vertigo, violent vomiting and fainting. One of the most virulent and deadly poisons, the oil of tobacco, is obtained by distilling the leaves of the plant. An ingenious medical gentleman has suggested as very probable, the idea that the 'cursed hebenon,' which he presumes was originally written henebon, and by which Shakspeare describes the king of Denmark to have been poisoned, was no other than the essential oil of tobacco.

It is in vain that the advocates of snuff-taking allege that they become accustomed to its use, and do not experience those unpleasant symptoms, such as giddiness, and sickness of the stomach, and great languor, and prostration, under which beginners at times suffer. These old snuffers, when ruffled or disturbed from any cause, consume a much larger quantity than usual of their powder, and suffer accordingly. The laws of habit are to them no security, since they can give no pledge of their not transgressing what they would call their daily limits. A reform of this, like of all evil habits, whether of smoking, chewing, drinking, and other vicious indulgences, to be efficacious, must be entire, and complete, from the very moment when the person is convinced, either by his fears or his reason, of its pernicious tendency and operation. A single day, aye, an hour, spent with a friend, or a few old boon companions, will often render nugatory a partial reform of months, duration. Abstinence, resolute and entire abstinence, is the only means of safety and immunity. The chain must be entirely broken—so long as the links are entire, no matter how attenuated, they are ready at any moment to be coiled round and round us, until we are pinioned and shackled beyond the possibility of escape, or hope of freedom.



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