

C A U T I O N S

Against the immoderate Use of

S N U F F.

Founded on the known Qualities of the

T O B A C C O P L A N T ;

And the Effects it must produce when this
Way taken into the Body :

A N D

Enforced by Instances of Persons who have
perished miserably of Diseases, occa-
sioned, or rendered incurable by its Use.

By **Dr. J. H I L L.**



L O N D O N :

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M D C C L X I.

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Abstract of a Pamphlet

By Dr. J. HILL,

ENTITLED,

Cautions against the immoderate Use of Snuff, founded on the known Qualities of the Tobacco Plant.

TOBACCO is a Narcotic with a peculiar Acrimony. 'Tis such a Body as Art might prepare by mixing Opium with Euphorbium. The Herb itself is so nearly poisonous, that no Physician gives it inwardly. When by Accident it has been swallow'd, or, from external Use on a wounded Part, has made its Way into the Body, the first Effort is that of extreme Irritation; and after this come on the worst Effects of Opium, outrageous Vomiting and Purgings; and afterwards deep Sleep, but not without Convulsions.

The dried Leaves of Tobacco, ground, rasped, beaten, or otherwise reduced to Powder, make what we call Snuff.

To judge of the Effects this Powder may produce on being taken into the Nostrils, we should acquaint ourselves with the Structure of all the Parts which it may reach. There is no Part of the human Frame more delicately sensible than the Nostrils; they are covered, in a Manner, with Branches of Nerves; and those so thinly guarded, that the Brain itself may be said to lie almost naked there. This Construction was necessary for the delicate Sense of Smelling. The Nerves are easily irritated, and easily destroyed. When Snuff is taken, by a Person unaccustom'd to it, the Irritation is extreme, and then follows Sneezing: This is the Effort Nature tries to throw

off the offending Matter. A plentiful Discharge of a watery Fluid, succeeding, washes away every Remain of it. In this Case therefore the Snuff acts by its Acrimony only, there is not Time for it to exert its other Qualities.

This is the Effect on a Person wholly unused to Snuff; but Custom gets the better of Nature's Abhorrence in those accustomed to Snuff, who no longer sneeze on taking it. The Powder which was at first thrown off so violently, is permitted to lodge, and to exert all its Force. The Nerves are thus corroded and destroyed, the Sense of Smelling is impaired, and, in the End totally lost.

Snuff, thus received and retained in the Cavity of the Nostrils, tinctures the Fluid which the Glands of the Nose naturally discharge; and some of this will make its unopposed Way, with the Saliva or proper Liquor of the Mouth, drawn into the Stomach.

The Saliva assists the Juice of the Stomach in the Digestion of our Food; It cannot be increased without Hurt, nor altered without Mischief. The Acrimony of Snuff increases the Quantity of this, by stimulating the Glands which discharge it; and alters its very Nature by the Tincture which it gives, and which must be, from the Quality of the Plant, narcotic and acrimonious.

Narcotics, we know, weaken the Stomach, destroy the Appetite, and prevent Digestion: A Habit of taking Snuff must therefore bring on Disorders of the Stomach, and all the Mischiefs that attend a bad Digestion: But there is yet to be considered the Œsophagus, the Passage from the Mouth to the Stomach, through which it must go down: This is of a Construction as delicate and as sensible of Injuries, even as the Membrane of the Nostrils; and there is this farther dreadful Consideration, that its Injuries are beyond the Reach of Art. It has, like the Stomach, a great Number of Nerves, very sensible of Irritation; but, beside these, its inner Coat are villous, and by the Vessels opening there, it receives a great deal from the Tincture of the Snuff, even before that Tincture reaches the Stomach. This delicate and downy Substance of the Lining of the Œsophagus, while it receives the Virtues of the Saliva, strongly impregnated with Snuff, may also detain a Portion of it on some unlucky Occasion;

and, from its Irritation, when lodged upon a Part so tender, and so largely supply'd with Blood Vessels, there will naturally arise such an Inflammation as no Hand can reach, with an Extension of the Injur'd Part, whose Progress nothing can stop, and whose End must be fatal.

We see therefore, in the Eye of Reason, what are to be expected, as the Effects of forcing an acrimonious and narcotic Powder up the Nostrils for a Length of Time. The Acrimony of Snuff is able to produce in those Parts, with which it immediately or accidentally comes in Contact, Swellings and Excrecences, which, in some Kinds, require the severest Operations of the Surgeon to extirpate them; and in others become fatal, because they lie beyond his Reach: And the Tincture which it gives to the Juices of the Mouth and Throat, may prevent and impair the Actions of the Stomach, to such a Degree as to bring on many Diseases.

About eight Years since, there used to come to a Coffee-House near the Exchange an elderly Gentleman, who could not breathe but with his Mouth open; and from whose right Nostril there hung the End of a Polypus, or fleshy Tumour; the Remainder of which filled the Cavity on that Side. This prevented his breathing through that Nostril; and he could make very little Use of the other from a like Cause. Nothing appeared externally on that Side, but he was sensible of the same Swelling within. It is not easy to conceive how much this unfortunate Person suffered; yet to himself the greatest Distress of all was, that he could no longer take Snuff, to which he had been accustomed.

Some Time after I saw him so perfectly at his Ease, that he scarce appeared to be the same Person: A Surgeon of Eminence had undertaken to cure him after many had declined it; and by attacking, from within his Mouth, what could not be got at by the Way of the Nostrils, he made a perfect Cure. The greatest Advantage of all was that his long Disuse of Snuff, with the Sense of the Mischief it had done him, prevented his returning to the Custom.

A Gentleman, of somewhat more than the middle Time of Life, having been early accustomed to Snuff, and be-

ing very fond of the Irritation it caused, thought himself unhappy, that from the constant and long Use of it, he felt less and less of that Effect: He applied for stronger and more acrimonious Kinds; and at length met with a Sort which gave him the highest Satisfaction. Whether it was from a peculiar Management of the Tobacco, or by Means of some Addition of other Ingredients, is not known; but the Snuff was so acrid that few besides himself could bear it.

The Pleasure he found in it was but short-lived; for, after a little Time, he perceived two Swellings of a fleshy Substance in one of his Nostrils, and one in the other; they grew so quick, that, in eight or ten Days, one of them hung a considerable Way out of his Nose, and the other began to be visible in the Opening of the other Nostril.

The larger Swelling, which occupied the right Nostril alone, having grown out beyond the End of the Nose forward, began to spread the other Way; and forcing itself back thro' the Aperture of the Nostril into the Mouth, and increasing there very fast, reduced him to a miserable Condition: He breathed and swallowed with great Difficulty, and could scarce speak intelligibly.

The Swellings were of a deep Crimson, and very painful. His Friends terrified him with the Notion of a Cancer; but, a Surgeon of Eminence being sent for, he was soon released from that Fear; tho' not from the real Disorder without great Pain. The Swellings had arisen only from an Inflammation raised by the Acrimony of the Snuff; but there was no Possibility of resolving them, or any other Way freeing him from them, but by cutting them out. The Operation was performed very successfully; and the Blood that followed the Instruments prevented any farther Inflammation. The Operation was of immediate Necessity to Life; for that Part of the larger Polypus, which had extended itself into the Mouth, increased so fast, that the Patient was in Danger of Suffocation.

With Respect to Cancers of the Nose, which are as dreadful and fatal as any others, it is certain, that Snuff must be, of all Things in the World, the most dangerous, where there is a Disposition toward them; for, in such

Cases, what we are most of all to attempt is to keep the Parts quiet ; and what we are most to fear is to irritate them. This is the Voice of Reason, and the universal Rule learned from Experience ; and nothing can be conceived so irritating, in such a Case, as Snuff.

An Instance of Disorders of the Throat, occasioned by Snuff, is recorded in the *Acta Eruditorum*.—A Person who took a great deal of Snuff, perceived, after some Time, a Disorder in his Throat, which occasioned a Difficulty of Swallowing : No Medicines reached the Cause ; and, when he thrust an Instrument down his Throat, it stuck at a certain Place, and neither Art nor Violence could get it farther : He became unable to swallow solid Foods, and in the End even Liquids ; by this Means he gradually wasted, from a corpulent Man to a mere Skeleton, and at length died famished, being able to swallow nothing. He was opened by the Surgeons, and in his Throat was found a Polypus, just like those formed in the Nostrils, which filled up the whole Passage of the *Œsophagus*, and ran down it from the Place of its Origin to the Length of several Inches. These are Disorders, the Causes of which are latent ; but perhaps they happen oftener than we imagine.

From the *Œsophagus* the Passage is open and immediate into the Stomach ; thither therefore the very Powder itself may accidentally be conveyed. There is nothing that requires so delicate a State both of the Parts and Juices as Digestion ; and, in this Case, the inner Coat of the Stomach is injured by the continual Application of this acrimonious Substance ; and the Juices which should operate in Digestion are terribly altered ; from mild they are grown acrid, and from Dissolvents they have acquired a Degree of Power of hardening what comes in their Way in the Stomach. Experiments shew, that an Infusion of Tobacco Leaves in Water has, in some Degree, the Quality of that Infusion of Oak Bark which is used by Tanners to harden Animal Substances ; Such an Infusion, made to a considerable Strength, is of the Colour of the red Water which lies on Bogs, and which also has, in some Degree, the Qualities of Tan, If Flesh be put into any of these Liquors, instead of soften-

ing, and by Degrees dissolving, as it would do in common Water, it grows tough and hard. The Bodies of Persons who have unfortunately perished in Bogs, have, after length of Time, been taken up not at all soft and corrupted, but intire, and firmer by far than human Flesh in its natural Condition. All know the Effect of Tan upon Leather, which is the hardening of it to a great Degree; and an Intusion of Tobacco will have a parallel Effect.

The first Effect of Indigestion is Wind; for this is naturally produced by Food which is not properly managed by the Powers of the Stomach; and the very worst, most obstinate, and incurable Flatulencies arise from Snuff, on this Principle. More than half the Diseases that torment and destroy Mankind have their Origin from a bad Digestion; therefore indulging in the Custom of Snuff is laying a voluntary Foundation for the worst Disorders, since it vitiates and depraves that Juice without which good Digestion is impossible.

It has been observed, in commendation of Tobacco, that it reduces Corpulence, and will render the fattest People lean. This is in some Degree true; but it is on that Principle of spoiling the Digestion, that it acts. I knew a Gentleman of a good Constitution, and fond of Exercise, but upon whom Fat grew, notwithstanding all his Toils; he chewed Tobacco, according to the Directions of a rash Person in whom he confided; and he certainly grew thin, and got rid of an almost lethargic Drowsiness, which had hung upon him a considerable Time: But the Effect did not stop where he desired; his Digestion was quite enfeebled; his Flesh continued to waste; he became subject to terrible bilious Vomiting, and died in spite of all Assistance, after having been reduced to a Skeleton.

If to those immediate Effects of Snuff upon the Stomach we add those natural Consequences which attend an impaired Digestion, we shall take into the Account, in a Manner, all chronic Diseases; and lay upon this idle Custom a Charge so great, that it would appear as if we exceeded the Bounds of Reason: But it is well known to Physicians, that the first Seeds of Diseases, in general are laid in the Stomach, and are to be attributed to Faults in

the Digestion. That Power resides in the Stomach; and it is there capable of being by Degrees impaired, and at length utterly destroyed, by Snuff.

The miserable Consequences of indulging in this Custom are plain; and, happily, the remedy is as obvious: There needs no Medicine to combat the Effects of Snuff, nor is any of Power to do it; the sole Cure, and the certain Cure, is to leave off the Custom: This will take Effect at any Time, and usually even in the worst Cases, at least so far as I have seen; and, if the Parts which have been corroded and destroyed cannot be restored, yet the Ravage will be prevented from extending farther; and, though some delicate Sensations may be lost, Life will remain secure.

One Thing there is yet farther to be observed of Snuff, which would appear more terrible than all, but that happily is not universal: This is the Effect it makes upon the Understanding. In some Persons, it evidently dulls the Apprehension, and, by a long Course, brings on a Condition of absolute Stupidity, a Torpor of the Faculties, and as it were, a lethargy of the Mind.

What is the immediate Seat or Source of Genius and Imagination, or how the Soul is connected with the Body, we are not permitted to know; therefore we cannot say why it is, that what are called the rational Powers are impaired greatly in some, and less in others, by the Effect of Snuff; or why some, as is really the Case, lose them totally, and sink into a State of absolute Idiotism, from its Effect; while others seem altogether unhurt by it. But thus much we are able to affirm, that Things which immediately affect the Brain are capable of disturbing the Operations of the Mind, and, in some Cases, of absolute obstructing, or even irrecoverably destroying, its Faculties.

Let none object, that Snuff has an Effect contrary to what is here considered; that it assists instead of impairing the Imagination; and that those who write and speak find great Assistance from its immediate Efficacy: Though we allow the Truth of the Remark, the Argument is nothing in their Favour; but may, perhaps, be greatly in reality against them.

The immediate Effect of a Pinch of Snuff, in quickning the Imagination, is like that of a Glass of Spirituous Liquor

In giving Chearfulness; it is a false Fire in both; it is most perceived by those who are least accustomed to the Things; and Use wears it off. Those who are habituated to Snuff feel no such Effect from it; and, for the rest, all that deserves Consideration is, that we are sure, by this, Snuff can Affect the Brain.

I do not pretend to reason them out of the Custom; all I have attempted is to lead them to think; and, if the Instances here recited alarm and caution those, who by the same Custom run themselves into like Danger, they will see the Importance of controuling their Inclination in this Point; and they may have the Comfort to be assured, that those Mischiefs which have arisen, or may arise from this Cause, though no Medicine can relieve them, will in a great Degree, if not intirely, cease, on leaving off the Practise which occasioned them.

