

A CYCLE OF OPIUM IN CATHAY.

The introduction of western civilisation into China, while bringing many blessings to the people, has not been unaccompanied by giant evils. Prominent among these is opium-smoking. Three-score years ago scarcely known along the coast, it has spread with great rapidity over the eighteen provinces. One of the principal articles of trade in the Middle Kingdom is opium. On the arrival of the great liners, the dailies tell us of the amount of specie and the number of passengers and chests of opium landed on these shores. In the Indian budget, up to a recent date, opium has been mentioned as a prominent source of revenue, and in the Chinese Imperial Customs, six out of twenty million taels come from opium. The British government in India cultivates opium, and in Central and Western China, fields of the poppy—its flowers so beautiful to the eye but with the poison of asps under its petals—are to be seen in many sections. In the Chefoo Convention the principal article settled by Sir Thomas Wade and Li Hung-chang was the duty on opium. Certainly then it is a subject that merits consideration.

THE NUMBER OF OPIUM SMOKERS

is simply appalling. Of the one hundred million adult males in China one-tenth may with safety be put down as addicted to the habit. When the statistics of the opium districts are obtained, the number will no doubt be found to be much larger, but ten million slaves are enough for one land! Knowing that the Chinese are constitutionally inaccurate, and that at the Dispensaries the question is simply asked each patient, "Do you smoke opium?" and his answer "Yes" or "No" is recorded, I applied to a physician whose hospital books are kept by a foreigner, in the hope of obtaining statistics in a measure trustworthy. His answer was: "Our records are not near correct, as we record what we can get from each man, except when it is manifestly omitted. In the city my opinion is that of men over twenty years of age, a light estimate would be to say that one out of every three smokes opium, the amount increasing with the age of the party in a regular ascending scale."

It is a vice that prevails among the poor as well as among the rich; in the country as well as in the city. From the Governor-General in the Viceregal capital to the lowest constable in his thatched hut, it pervades all ranks and conditions of the people. Of Szechuan, the Texas of China, with a population reputed to be equal to that of the United States, it is said that "everybody smokes." Even little boys chew the castaway pods of the poppy, thus in childhood imbibing a taste for the drug.

THE NUMBERS ARE INCREASING

year by year. It is not like the tide which ebbs and flows, but like a great bore rushing up the bays and rivers, and pressing steadily forward in its roaring, dashing, maddened career. In the cities the proportion is rudely estimated by the natives as one-half or seven-tenths of the adult males, and some towns are wholly under the sway of the narcotic. I mention one fact for which I can witness.

Twenty years ago the farmers, who are dependent on their annual harvest and have little ready money, were almost entirely exempt from the ravages of opium: now the evil is slowly making headway in the agricultural districts. In many sections of the country one or two dens are found in every hamlet. Another fearful factor in the trade is

THE INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT

smoked by individuals. Twenty years ago one who used two or three mace *per diem* was in Soochow considered a "heavy smoker"—moderate smokers used much less—now that amount is not considered extraordinary. Three or four mace is not spoken of as high and half-an ounce is not uncommon. Six and seven mace are sometimes mentioned. When men are able to purchase opium by the ball and prepare it at home, as a general rule, they smoke inordinately.

A short time since at 5 p.m. I called on a young man of wealth, who two years ago employed a foreigner to teach him English at \$100 a month for two hours each afternoon. "He is not up yet," said the janitor. "Is he sick?" "No; he smokes opium all night." "How much?" "An ounce a day." This would make two and one-half pounds avoirdupois a month, and that by one of weak constitution. A short time afterwards I was in the house about sunset, and his wife said it was no use trying to wake him; that his sleep was so sound, it amounted almost to a torpor prefiguring the sleep of death. How long before the undertaker will be called in it is hard to say!

One of long experience affirms: "The average daily consumption has increased three-fold within the last forty years and apparently it is to go on increasing." Used by the wholesale, opium is a dangerous commodity.

THE EASE WITH WHICH THE HABIT IS FIXED

is also to be considered. Suppose at home our young men who with convivial companions make merry over the wine cup were to become habitual drunkards in a couple of months' time, what would be the condition of England and America? This is frequently, yes, most generally the case, with those who visit the smoking dens for pleasure. In a brief period, quicker than most of the vices that are the bane of the human race, opium rivets its chains, and the habits clings to the victim for life.

A few years ago friends met at the teashops and sipped the national beverage, which, as they say, "makes the eyes so bright;" now, the invitation is to the opium den. Then men transacted business in the teashops; now they settle their affairs in the opium dens. Then a cup of tea was offered in the reception-hall; now, the opium pipe. "Treating" makes the fifth among the relations in China, that of "friend to friend," a very dangerous one, as in this way temptation is constantly thrown in the path of persons of all ages.

If a man has been absent from the city, on his return the salutation he receives the first day from a dozen friends, "Have a whiff of opium?" "I do not smoke." "But come, you must; we are all friends. I'll pay for it." Thus many currents

unite in sweeping the frail bark of China's manhood into the deep waters of an uncontrollable habit. The servant lies opposite his master and fills his pipe; the son stands beside his father's divan, and imbibes the fumes and alas! the craving as well.

A FASCINATING VICE.

No one questions the fact that opium smoking is a captivating pastime. The victim will say, "Fragrant! very fragrant!! very, very fragrant!!!" As men begin to light their pipes they sing in delightful anticipation of the luxury that awaits them in dream-land; forgetting the ills of life as they pass a blissful hour in Paradise. As the fumes envelop the soul, visions of the beautiful rise before the imagination and "the tongue wags" as with great rapidity they tell how fortune will lend her willing hand to assist in every enterprise that human wisdom can devise. Opium produces a certain stimulus and its victim can transact business better after indulging in the pipe. It is a solace under the many trials of Asiatic existence. Alas! how many hours are wasted by those who use it. The Chinese "expectant mandarins" and their host of retainers, the landed gentry and the people generally, have too much time on their hands, and they will readily yield to the pleasing effects of the drug imported from Malwa and Patna. It is especially during the watches of the night that its votaries indulge in revellings and drunkenness, i.e., drunk with opium. This is witnessed by foreigners running up and down the canals on the tugs. Some men will smoke constantly for two hours at a time, others will take their pipe every hour of the night till towards daylight when they will fall into a heavy slumber. The breathing is short, as opium is said in a slight degree to paralyse the muscles around the heart.

THE "YIN" OR CRAVING.

The opium-smoker is absolutely dependent on his regular "meals." When the yin or craving comes he must have his pipe; he is utterly helpless without it, and cannot think or work. "The craving is but the return of the subsequent depression after the effect of the stimulant has passed off." As the proverb says: "If his mother is dying in the next room, when the yin comes, the smoker must have his pipe." "At the appointed time he feels disinclined to exertion and his only comfort is to relieve his discomfort by taking the pipe." If deprived of the drug it produces sufferings of an excruciating kind. This craving becomes stronger and stronger the longer the habit is continued.

This illustrates what a bane to the army opium is. Were the foe in sight and his batteries opening fire, the "brave" must first lie upon the ground sheltered from the wind and smoke his pipe; after that he is ready to fight in battle. His motto is, "First my opium, then my country." The threatened partition of China is a factor in the near future unless the enemy within her camp be removed. To this end the Anti-Opium League will bend its first energies, and all who have the interests of this patriarch of nations at heart will wish success to its efforts.

THE OPIUM DEN.

There are a few opium palaces at the ports and in the large cities which are handsomely furnished with richly cushioned couches of rosewood and marble, and to these the wealthy resort. To the whole number, however, they are not one in ten-thousand. For the 9,999 a heavy curtain in front to prevent the ingress of air—for a slight breeze drives away the volatilised drug—is the sign of a den. The room is dark and filled with sickening fumes, and around the wall on beds covered with a strip of matting lie the wretched sons of Han. To go into the room has the same effect on the Westerner as *mal de mer*. These dens are suspected as the haunts of bad characters,

so each one in Soochow has upon the door a broad white circle to indicate the place to the police.

Efforts in years past have been made in many cities by honourable mandarins to close these dens. This has a salutary effect, for though the smoker may use the drug in his home yet the temptation to those who have not the habit fixed and to those who "treat" is taken away. The leader in this, in Kiangsu, was the late Governor T'an, a Martin Luther, who closed the thousands of dens, and on the door of each private residence had registered the numbers of opium smokers within, so that it could be seen that there was no increase. The people were seized with terror and many threw away their pipes.

THE POVERTY AND SUFFERING.

Political economy in the Middle Kingdom has dealt with one great problem and that is, how shall these countless millions be fed? The country yields but a bare subsistence to her teeming population. The arable land, that is withdrawn from grain and devoted to the poppy lessens the supply of bread-stuffs in a country where suffering humanity calls for bread. The rate of wages is necessary for economic living. If then the money intended for the purchase of rice goes for opium what is to fill the mouths? Each of the two million slaves consumes from \$15 to \$150 (or even more) *per annum*; what an immense sum it aggregates! This by men on wages from \$3 to \$5 per month. In what a molten stream does silver flow out of the country!

Opium consumers may be divided into three pretty equal classes. The first, those who can afford to use it. The second, those who with opium, are barely able to purchase the necessities of life. The third, those who are reduced to abject poverty. There is nothing that draws on the sympathies of visitors from the prosperous lands of the West more than to behold the wide-spread poverty in Asia. The little that China has, opium, like Pharaoh's lean kine, eats up. The lazy, idle habits engendered, the inability to work, the unwillingness to make any exertion, are characteristics of the habitual devotion to the pipe.

The opium smoker borrows right and left, and seldom pays, and the pawn-broker flourishes on his misfortunes. The wife desires to visit her relatives and goes to her trunk for her nice cloak, when suddenly screams fill the house! Her husband has pawned the garment! "Stealing his wife's clothes" is the special accomplishment of the impecunious opium-smoker.

Where the father consumes three-fourths of his gains in opium, the children have insufficient clothing in winter or they are in rags, and the mother toils all day at embroidery to earn a mouthful of food to hush the cries of her hungry children. There are hundreds of thousands of these cases. Opium is the ancestor of beggary. The smoker pawns his goods, disposes of his furniture and sells his house. Every resident in the interior can testify to scores of instances of well-to-do people becoming vagabonds and outcasts from society. "There are whole bands of suppliants who bend the knee and beg for the opium ashes from the pipes of former acquaintances." The last home of the sot before he enters his coffin, is the watchman's box at the street gate, and his undertaker, the constable, collects no fees. The young man lying on the curb stone with a piece of matting over his lifeless body was once a happy boy in a comfortable home!

THE PERNICIOUSNESS OF THE VICE.

The physical effects are equally as disastrous as the financial. Among people past middle age, in easy circumstances, with vigorous constitutions, good food and comfortable surroundings, the drug may be used for some time without any apparent deleterious effects. This class is only a small

percentage of the whole. Accustomed to the large audiences in the street chapel, I can, almost without fail, from the pulpit point out the opium smokers, and they are not selected because of their ruddy countenances and stalwart frames, but from the glazed eyes, the dilated pupils, the pale cheek, the sunken chest, the stooped shoulders, the swarthy complexion, the stained thumb, the emaciated form, the spiritless expression and the haggard appearance. The Chinese sum up the evils attending the use of the drug in three words: "No flesh, no strength, no money."

An authority says: "The average weight of opium-smokers falls considerably—about twenty pounds—below the standard for the ordinary healthy man of the same height." Dr. J. Johnston, when in charge of the General Hospital at Shanghai, said: "Daily observation in hospital and dispensary practices during the past eight years, as well as attentive scrutiny of the health of opium smokers in all classes of society, abundantly proves to my mind the deleterious influence of opium smoking on the health, and the serious effect it has on longevity."

The writer's observation is that with young men it is attended with rapid loss of strength, and followed by premature death. The Chinese proverb says: "The opium smoker lives eighty per cent of his natural life;" i.e., the man who would be expected to reach sixty, dies at forty-eight. In the medical profession opium is said to be considered one of the six principal drugs, but if the system is previously saturated with it, the ordinary dose (or even doubled) has no effect in various diseases like dysentery. As a general rule three or four generations will end an opium-smoking family. Testimony was given before the opium-commission that the families of the former "Hong Merchants" at Canton, who controlled the foreign trade, had with one or two exceptions been swept off by smoking. Opium is an engine which pulls a train of evils. Among these evils may be mentioned the use of the hypodermic, for as morphia is not subject to the heavy duty imposed on opium it is cheaper, and the forearm, a mass of ulcers in July, tells of the constant use in cold weather. Another of the evils is a fearful increase, as the Chinese testify, in the number of suicides. Taking life by one's own hand has been prevalent for ages, and in the case of defeated Generals and chaste widows, the ethical books of China commend the custom, but now the ease with which the narcotic may be obtained, especially in cases of anger, and the knowledge that death is free from pain, makes suicide a gigantic evil in this land.

Many deleterious effects to the physical constitution, some not suitable to be named in print—might be mentioned, but I will content myself with presenting one which the

DOCTORS CALL "CONSTIPATION."

It is necessary to call attention to this in order to combat the views of the defenders of the habit. We ask what in western lands is the effect of opium on the system? For what class of diseases is it generally used? The Chinese normally are troubled along this line but opium aggravates the evil many fold. The writer, for the last two or three years, has enquired of every opium smoker he conversed with as to his bodily functions. Very occasionally, daily; often once in two days; commonly, from three to five days; not infrequently, once a week; every ten days is mentioned and twice a month is not unheard of; while we have a neighbour who, it is said, keeps a monthly record. Another case of forty days came under our observation, but he died. We would like to put upon the witness stand divers English physicians who advance the theory that opium is anti-malarial in its tendencies; that the

peasants are by the drug fortified against chills and fever, that there is something in the mode of life and climatic surroundings which causes the effects of the opium habit in China to be different from those which are known to Europe; and that a people who have so little to make life joyful should not be denied this one luxury? I ask, please give your medical opinion on this one point? If chronic constipation is dangerous to the health of Europeans, why should it be helpful to Asiatics? This is the prime cause of the dark, sallow complexion of the opium smoker, the source of his headaches and his "manifold infirmities." We drive a bullet into this "bull's-eye" and ask the medical advisers of opium to the Chinese to extract it.

WOMEN AND OPIUM.

A quarter of a century ago there were comparatively few women who smoked opium; at this time hundreds of thousands are swept along by this devastating flood. It is natural to suppose that this would be the case, for at home it is reputed that women yield more readily to the opium habit than those of the sterner sex. When we think of the many aches and pains to which the flesh is heir, and when fathers, husbands, and sons have a repented antidote for pain, it is not surprising that they gladly welcome the pipe. The estate of Chinese women is bad enough, but with the warp of heathenism and the woof of opium the condition is fearfully sad.

The opium-smoking mother! Wandering about the house during the forenoon, the cheek with a deathly pallor, the hands unwashed, the clothing filthy, the house in disorder, the husband wretched, the children "street Arabs," the family sinks to the lowest level of humanity. Let the artist paint in brilliant colours

"THE BENEFITS OF OPIUM TO THE WOMEN OF CHINA."

OLD COUNTRY AND NEW VICE.

The "heathen Chinese" is none too good to begin with, but when he becomes addicted to the Indian drug he seems to lose many of those characteristics which recommend him to the respect and esteem of the European. My own experience is that lying prevails to an unusual degree among this class. The habit is often attended with the entire loss of shamefacedness and certainly the trend is downward.

The question is often asked, what do the Chinese think of opium? On the continent if a man has wine daily on his table he defends the habit. If a Kentuckian makes Bourbon whiskey, he argues that the distillery is legalised. Not so the Chinese with their favourite pipe. They consider the use of opium as a vice and a vice of the deepest die. Even were the Protestant missionary disposed to baptise moderate smokers, its use is so generally condemned, that it would be considered by the heathen a disgrace to the church to have men of this class within the fold. Their only defence is: "You, a teacher from the West, exhort men to be virtuous and you sell poison to our people." They say: "Your words are very plausible but we look at your actions. You bring Christianity and opium; are we to judge the one by the direful effects of the other?"

Opium is making havoc in this old land. It has lulled the conscience of the country to sleep. As the craving increases, ideas of principle diminish. The craving has a tremendous grip and opium becomes the one thing needful for life. Men, and they are not a few, become fiends, and mortgage their wives and sell their daughters for a roll of silver so that they may pass a few happy hours in the opium den.

THE UNALTERED HOSTILITY

of the Chinese Government, up to the last few years, is a matter of history. In the

"Angell Convention" the Chinese approved "the Exclusion Act" for the sole reason that the "Anti-opium Clause" was inserted in the American treaty. China would probably gladly permit the Yunnan Railway to be extended, the one line to Hankow and the other to Chungking, were England willing to forbid her people engaging in the traffic. Whereas not one in twenty of the British merchants sells opium, why should the treaty assiduously guard the rights of the wealthy few to the detriment of the monied interests of the great majority of noble Englishmen? It is said that now in India the revenue from opium is only five per cent of the whole, so in that country it ceases to be a factor worthy of consideration.

The ability of the Government "to cope with so formidable an adversary" has been questioned. It must be remembered that though the Chinese may be too feeble to meet foreign nations on the field of conflict, yet they are perfectly competent to manage their own people. At great epochs in the history of this land, great men have appeared upon the scene and accomplished great things. Were the nation freed from its treaty fetters, might not some distinguished mandarin rise equal to the occasion? Can we with certainty say, Nay? To theorise on the question is useless, as arguments may be presented on both sides. The right thing to do is to give China a chance.

To those who consider that agitation is useless and who despair of any change in the attitude of the British Government towards the growth and exportation of Indian opium, I would cite one instance from the history of times just previous to our own, and ask them to consider the condition of

THE SLAVE TRADE

during the whole of the 18th century and its complete suppression about the middle of the 19th.

The first Englishman to engage in this traffic was Sir John Hawkins, who was M.P. for Plymouth in 1572, and the next year was made treasurer and comptroller of the navy.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* says: "The African Company, however, continued to exist and obtained from time to time large parliamentary grants. By the treaty of Utrecht, the *asiento* or contract for supplying the Spanish colonies with 4,800 negroes annually, which had previously passed from the Dutch to the French, was transferred to Great Britain; an English company was to enjoy the monopoly for a period of thirty years from 1st May, 1713. . . . Between 1680 and 1700 about 140,000 were exported by the

African Company. Between 1700 and 1786 as many as 610,000 were transported to Jamaica alone. . . . Bryan Edwards estimated the total import into all the British Colonies of America and the West Indies from 1680 to 1786 as 2,130,000, being an annual average of 20,095. . . . The British slave trade reached its utmost extension shortly before the war of American Independence. It was then carried on principally from Liverpool, but also from London, Bristol, and Lancaster. The entire number of slave ships sailing from these ports was 192, and in them space was provided for the transport of 47,146 negroes."

During the year 1790 it is estimated that 38,000 slaves were exported from the continent of Africa by British traders. At this time the English had 14 factories on the coast of Africa where slaves captured in the interior were collected and kept "in stock" till the arrival of a slaver. Badinel states that the number exported from the coast in 1798 was not less than 100,000 of whom 55,000 were taken by the English. Thus just one century ago more than half the slave trade was in the hands of the British, and "British interests" were assiduously guarded by the home government.

This iniquitous traffic reached its height at that time and soon began to decline. When public opinion, under the leadership of Wilberforce and Macaulay had been thoroughly aroused to its injustice and inhumanity, a very general desire was awakened in the English mind to repair the injuries that had been inflicted on that ill-fated continent.

It was a herculean task when the British undertook to suppress the slave trade. There were forty or fifty barracoons, along 3,000 miles of coast, where slaves were collected. The fastest ships were employed as slavers and were sometimes detained only a night "to take in cargo," so, as the number of places occupied by the slave trade exceeded the number of cruisers, the frequent escape of the slavers was inevitable. Yet such was the diligence and activity of the officers of the squadron—amidst terrible sufferings on this deadly malarial coast—that during a score of years one by one the strongholds were abandoned, till the "hunting and stealing of human beings to make them slaves" ceased on land and sea. The suppression of the slave trade is the glory of England during the present century. Is it too much to hope that with the dawn of the 20th century British cruisers will sweep the China seas in search of opium-slavers who poison their victims on these unhappy shores?

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