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IPOH, PERAK, F.M.S.

The Opium Traffic.

ANNIVERSARY OF PERAK ANTI-OPIMUM SOCIETY.

Ipoh En Fête.

("Times of Malaya," 10th December, 1907.)

IPOH is in holiday attire to-day, the British, Chinese and Japanese national flags and many other hong flags fluttering in the gentle breeze from the house-tops and balconies of the substantially built offices of the merchants and traders, as well as from the verandah and porch of the well-known premises of the Perak Anti-Opium Society in Belfield Street. The latter premises are especially well decorated, both internally and externally, the occasion being the anniversary of the Perak Anti-Opium Society, which has very good reason to celebrate, for it has, under the guidance of the worthy Patron, Mr. Foo Choo Choon, accomplished a great deal during the first year of its existence. There is also a further good reason for the town being in holiday attire—this being the day when Mr. R. Laidlaw, M.P., will visit the 'Hub of Malaya' as the guest of the Anti-Opium Society, and, after being entertained at dinner at their premises, deliver an address in the Chinese Theatre.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY.

Public Meeting in the Theatre.

Stirring address by the Patron of the Anti-Opium Society.

At 1-30 to-day the first part of the proceedings in connection with the celebration of the anniversary of the Anti-Opium Society commenced in the Chinese Theatre—which was thrown open free

to the public and was packed with Chinese of all classes—when Mr. Foo Choo Choon, supported on the stage by the members of the Committee, delivered an address, explaining, *inter alia*, the objects of the Society and the reason for holding a mass meeting in the evening.

The theatre, which was very tastefully and appropriately decorated for the occasion, was, as we have just remarked, packed by the time Mr. Foo Choo Choon took his seat on the stage. Seated with him at the table were Messrs. Lim Choo Boon (Hon. Sec.), Leong Seong Tin, How Wan Yook, Au Kong, Lai Mo Phang, Chow Yong Yu, Lee Thet Kong, Lee Hap Seng, Cheow Choon, Yee Chin Sai, Oh Poh Ling, Lam Fook Thye, Chin Ah Saik, Lee Lin Pho, Soon Kuan Hin, Cheah Cheang Lim, Chin Chan Foong, Kong Yit Fong, Hew Khong, Aw Sew Hin, Khong Cheong Tak, Koh Yin Chong, Lim Swee Teik, and Mr. Chesney Duncan, Editor, "Times of Malaya."

Mr. Laidlaw's Arrival.

Mr. R. Laidlaw, M.P., arrived by train about 4 p.m. from Kampar (where he had broken the journey and been the guest of Mr. Eu Tong Sen, the Vice-President of the Perak Anti-Opium Society), and met with a most cordial welcome at the Railway Station, where a number of the members of the Society greeted him. He was then driven to the Society's premises, where tea was served and a reception held.

At the reception at 4-15 at the Society's headquarters a large number of leading residents were introduced to the distinguished visitor, who left about 5 o'clock for Mr. Cheah Cheang Lim's residence on Tambun Road.

Mass Meeting in the Theatre.

("Times of Malaya," 11th December.)

YESTERDAY Ipoh was, as we mentioned in our last issue, en fête, the occasion for the display of flags and bannerettes along the principal thoroughfares being the anniversary of the Perak Anti-Opium Society and the visit of Mr. R. Laidlaw, M.P.

At 1-30 a meeting was held in the theatre—which was crowded with Chinese of all classes—at which Mr. Foo Choo Choon, Patron and President of the Anti-Opium Society, presided, and explained the reasons for holding the celebration and for the mass meeting to be held in the evening.

In the course of his observations the able and indefatigable President—who was supported on the platform by Messrs. Lim Choo Boon (Hon. Sec.), Leong Seong Tin, How Wan Yook, Au Kong, Lai Mo Phang, Chow Yong Yu, Lee Thet Kong, Lee Hap Seng, Cheow Choon, Yee Chin Sai, Oh Poh Ling, Lam Fook Thye, Chin Ah Saik, Lee Lin Poh, Soon Kuan Hin, Cheah Cheang Lim, Chin Chan Foong, Kong Yit Fong, Hew Khong, Aw Sew Hin, Khong Cheong Tak, Koh Yin Chong, Lim Swee Teik, Khong Ek San, and Mr. Chesney Duncan, Editor, "Times of Malaya"—said the people must understand that they were all as members of one great family, and as such had to render obedience to their parents, the Government. Parents treated their children kindly and so earned the gratitude of their offspring, who gladly conformed with the wishes of their parents. In the same way it was the duty of the Chinese in the Malay States to obey the decrees of the Government, to cheerfully conform with the regulations issued from time to time. It was, however, competent for the subject to seek to improve his surroundings, and if rules and regulations which were at one time suitable to the times were later on found irksome and disadvantageous they were, under the British Government, at liberty to draw attention to them with a view to modifications or total repeal. As regarded the opium habit he was voicing the opinion of many thousands of his fellow-countrymen in raising his voice in protest against continuance of the traffic in the drug in these States. Opium smoking was a very baneful habit. Many Governments—Japan, France, the Philippines, and Germany, for instance—prohibited the use of opium except for medicinal purposes, and he was at a loss to understand why it should be countenanced in Malaya. The Anti-Opium Societies of Malaya had done, and were continuing to do, all they could to bring about much needed reforms in this connection, and with that object in view had drawn the attention of Mr. R. Laidlaw, M.P., and others to the evils of the opium traffic and licensed gambling as countenanced by the Government, which derived a great deal of revenue from these highly objectionable vices. What the Anti-Opium Society desired was that in respect of these very important matters Malaya should be placed on the same footing as other States which had legislated against them. That was what the Perak Anti-Opium Society and kindred societies were aiming at, and he would ask them whether they considered such action on their part was right.

Hardly had the universally esteemed speaker put this question to the thousands of his countrymen who were attentively listening to all he said, than the silence, which reigned supreme up to that moment, was broken with loud cries of "Yes, Yes," followed by an

outburst of applause that will remain long in the memory of all who were privileged to be present at this memorable meeting.

Continuing, when order was restored, Mr. Foo Choo Choon said it was the welfare of the people, the elevation of the masses, the conversion of the people of all classes into better and more useful subjects of the Government—more useful members of society than they can possibly be so long as opium smoking and gambling is countenanced by the authorities—that he and his worthy colleagues were aiming at. (Applause.) Surely that was an object which should meet with encouragement rather than the reverse, and he felt grateful—and he was sure they all felt grateful—for the encouragement they had received from gentlemen like Mr. Laidlaw, who had travelled thousands of miles in order to look into these serious matters on the spot. (Applause.) He had been to China and was now on his way hither from Kuala Lumpur, and would deliver an address in the evening in this building (applause) on the opium traffic. (Renewed applause.) He bespoke for Mr. Laidlaw an attentive hearing, which he felt sure they would grant. (Yes that the Government of the F. M. S., while passing laws to protect the Malays and Europeans from the evils inseparable from indulgence in such vices as opium smoking and gambling, ordained that the Chinese could smoke and gamble as much as they pleased. Why should the Chinese be allowed and be encouraged—for to grant them licence to do these things was in fact encouraging these evil habits—to smoke and to gamble while other nationalities were protected from these great evils? Surely the Chinese should receive at least as much consideration as others! (Applause.) That many prominent Members of Parliament agree with us that the Chinese do merit better treatment is—I rejoice to know and to state here to-day—proved by representations recently made to the Imperial Authorities by Mr. Alexander, Dr. Connolly, and others, and by the utterances of Mr. Laidlaw, who will, as I have just said, address you this evening.

This last sentence was uttered in loud tones which echoed throughout the spacious building and evoked from the vast multitude a tremendous outburst of applause, amidst which the fearless opponent of the accursed opium traffic resumed his seat.

Following the President's address the boys of the Ipoh Mandarin School stepped forward and sang an anti-opium hymn in admirable style, and then the proceedings—the celebration of the anniversary of the Anti-Opium Society—were adjourned until 8 p.m.

Welcome to Mr. Laidlaw.

During the afternoon Mr. Foo Choon and his worthy colleagues greeted Mr. Laidlaw at the Station on his arrival from the Federal Capital, and conducted him to the Society's headquarters, where a reception was held and tea served. Then he drove off in Mr. Foo Choon's motor-car to the residence of Mr. Cheah Cheang Lim, returning at 5 p.m. to the Theatre, where photographs of a group of leading members of the Anti-Opium Societies of Perak and Selangor, with Mr. Laidlaw in the centre and Mr. Foo Choon on his left and Mr. W. Cowan (Protector of Chinese) immediately behind him, the Rev. W. Horley, Rev. A. J. Amery, Mr. Chesney Duncan, Mr. Eu Tong Sen, Cheah Cheang Lim, Lim Choo Boon (Hon. Secretary of the Anti-Opium Society), and many other leading members of the Chinese community were included in the group, which was formed in front of the main entrance to the Theatre, which had been tastefully decorated for the occasion with flowers and flags and a large silken scroll stretching across the entrance bearing the words

“WELCOME TO MR. R. LAIDLAW, M.P.”

This part of the proceedings concluded, Mr. Laidlaw was escorted by Mr. Foo Choon and his colleagues through the town to inspect the opium dens and gambling “hells” and other places where the life of the inhabitants leaves much to be desired, and others again which reflect no little credit upon the highly intelligent and enterprising people who have been so aptly styled by Sir Frank Swettenham and other recognised authorities “the backbone of the country.”

The Dinner.

At 7-15 in the evening Mr. Laidlaw was driven up to the premises of the Anti-Opium Society in Belfield Street in a motor-car, and was at once shown into the assembly-room, where he was cordially welcomed by Mr. Foo Choo Choon, Dr. John Cross (Vice-President of the Anti-Opium Society) Mr. Horley, and others. Shortly after his arrival dinner was announced and an adjournment was made to the dining-room, a number of musicians playing national songs and popular airs the while, and during the serving of the repast, which reflected the utmost credit upon the caterer, the whole being entirely in European style and the various courses excellently prepared and cooked to perfection.

The seating at the table was admirably arranged; instead of the Europeans being—as is often the case—seated together, the Master of Ceremonies (Mr. Cheah Cheang Lim) had them seated

so as to be opposite each other but with Chinese on either side. Mr. Foo Choo Choon, of course, sat at the head the table, with Dr. Cross opposite him, at the other end. On his left (the seat of honour in the East) was Mr. Laidlaw, and on the right the Rev. W. Horley. Then followed Mr. Eu Tong Sen on Mr. Laidlaw's left, and Mr. Chung Thye Phin on Mr. Horley's right. Then Mr. C. Duncan opposite the Rev. A. J. Amery, Mr. Cheah Cheang Lim opposite Mr. Neo Siang Peng (of the Selangor Anti-Opium Society), Mr. Kong Cheong Tak opposite Mr. Lim Choo Boon.

No speeches were delivered at the dinner, which was concluded at 8-15, and an adjournment immediately made to the Theatre, which was entered by the private door at the rear of the building.

The Meeting in the Theatre.

The appearance of Mr. Laidlaw, accompanied by Mr. Foo Choon, on the stage, was the signal for a tremendous outburst of applause, amidst which he took a seat beside the President of the Society, who, on the proposal of Mr. Eu Tong Sen, seconded by Mr. Lim Kok Lai, was unanimously voted to the Chair.

By this time (8-30 p.m.) the building was packed, there being fully 3,000 people all classes seated and standing wherever possible. The stage, too, was positively crowded, and among those seated there were—in addition to Mr. Foo Choon and Mr. Laidlaw—Messrs. Eu Tong Sen, Khong Cheong Tak, Chung Thye Phin, Gan Gnoh Bee, Lim Kok Lai, Lim Choo Boon (Hon. Secretary of the Anti-Opium Society), Cheah Cheang Lim, Rev. W. E. Horley, Mr. Foo Chook Yen, Dr. John Cross (Vice President Perak Anti-Opium Society) and Mrs. Cross, Mr. W. Cowan (Protector of Chinese), Rev. A. J. Amery, Mr. and Mrs. J. Crawford, Messrs. Koh Yin Chong, Chang Sen Yen, Mr. Chesney Duncan (Editor, "Times of Malaya"), A. E. Lewis, Tan Choo Beng, Thong Lim Seng, Foo Ban Seng, Chow Yang Yan, Au Hong, Norman R. Drummond, F. W. Douglas (Chairman, Sanitary Board, Kinta North), R. W. Palmer, R. S. Douglas, Cheah Kee Ee, Wong Choo Keng, Ng Lin Heng, Ng Chak Tong, Khong Aik San, Leong Siong Teng, Lee How Tuck, Chort Pak Yin, Tong Lay Ping, Yeap Leong, Hor Kar Seh, Yeoh Bok Thong, Hoo Hock Thye, On Poh Eng, Chin Shi Aick, Luh Weng, Lee Sin Hor, Pak Yong, Cheoit Pak Tee, Hung and Aik Hong, H. P. Curtis.

In a few well chosen words Mr. Foo Choo Choon introduced Mr. Laidlaw, Mr. Ng Chak Tong interpreting in a most excellent manner in Cantonese, his powerful voice ringing through the building and manifestly reaching the ears of the thousands

assembled to hear what the distinguished visitor and others had to say on matters in which they obviously take a very deep interest, intense earnestness being the leading feature of this memorable function from first to last. There was nothing of the jolly-half-holiday gala day hilarity about it at any stage. On the contrary, but little laughter was created by any of the remarks of the speakers, however jocular the intention; all were clearly intent upon supporting a movement having for its objective the lasting welfare of well nigh countless thousands of industrious, thrifty and peace-loving people—a nation, up to the present time, heavily handicapped by a habit universally and rightly, admitted to be a positive curse to all addicted to it.

Having introduced Mr. Laidlaw, Mr. Foo Choon called upon Mr. Foo Chuk Yun to read the address of welcome to him, in Chinese. Rev. W. Horley then read the English version of it, and handing it to Mr. Foo Choon, the latter then, amidst loud applause, handed it to Mr. Laidlaw.

The Address.

The text of the address is as follows:—

Presented by the Perak Anti-Opium Society.

TO THE HON. R. LAIDLAW, M.P.

SIR,—We, the members of the Perak Anti-Opium Society, beg to cordially welcome you to our midst. It is indeed a source of infinite pleasure to us not only to find a gentleman like yourself taking so enthusiastic an interest in helping us to suppress so great an evil as opium smoking and so be the means of saving the lives of thousands of our countrymen, but it is also a source of deep gratification and satisfaction to find that you have been pleased to visit us so soon after Mr. Alexander's advent among us.

Our Society had the very good fortune of welcoming Mr. Alexander within a few months of its formation. His visit has been the means of infusing enthusiasm, and the object of the Society greatly advanced and pushed forward. Although this was some months ago, yet we feel it was but the other day. The Photograph taken of the delegates and members of the various Anti-Opium Societies in the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States reminding us of the good work done by Mr. Alexander is ever present in our mind's eye.

"Times change and we change with them" is a true saying, and it may perhaps be said that the enthusiasm and the interest at first inspired may be on the wane, and therefore your timely visit is most welcome, for it will undoubtedly rouse us to greater efforts in our great undertaking and so help us to bring nearer the fulfilment and accomplishment of our great desire.

We rejoice to think that Mr. Alexander, in coming to us, came from afar, crossing the great ocean, simply to help us, and the feelings of gratitude and thankfulness evoked by his visit are, shall we not say, more than doubled in finding you too coming amongst us and extending your support, sympathy, and co-operation in this crusade of ours.

In conclusion we would express the sincere hope that you, Sir, will on your return to England explain to the humane and benevolent people of England and those in authority what is being done here, and enlist the sympathy and co-operation of the great public men of England in suppressing the opium traffic.

(Signed)

FOO CHOO CHOON.
JOHN CROSS.
A. G. AMERY.
EU TONG SEN.
LIM CHOO BOON.
CHEA CHEANG LIM.

Ipoh, 10th December, 1907.

We have printed only a few of the names of the signatories, the exigencies of space precluding insertion of even half of them, amounting as they do to several hundreds, including almost all the leading towkays and firms in Malaya.

During the evening Mr. Foo Choon handed Mr. Laidlaw a monograph embodying his views on the Opium Question, and as we have been kindly favoured with a copy of the document—which is both ably composed and characteristically truthful and fearless in the tone—and as it will assuredly interest a large number of readers, we have much pleasure in giving publicity to it. The document reads as follows:—

THE OPIUM QUESTION.

By Mr. FOO CHOO CHOON.

(*"Times of Malaya," 12th December.*)

Following is a copy of a very interesting and able review of the much-vexed Opium Question by our worthy fellow-townsmen, Mr. Foo Choo Choon, President of the Perak Anti-Opium Society. The letter, it will be noted, is perfectly frank in style and obviously reflects in no uncertain manner the well-considered opinion of one who has thoroughly mastered every phase of the matter in hand. With such a document in his possession, added to his own observations in China and Malaya, Mr. Laidlaw, who evinces so much interest in the Opium Question, will, it is to be hoped, be able to convince the Imperial Government and our fellow-countrymen at Home of the crying evils of the opium habit and the injustice and injury that must accrue from failure to abolish the traffic as soon as possible.

Text of the Letter.

Dear Friend,—At the request of a number of friends, and because I am firmly convinced that "the gods are just and of our

pleasant vices make instruments scourge us" and so gladly do all that lies in my power to uplift my countrymen whenever I believe my humble services may be of avail, I venture to express my views on the Opium Question which is now, happily, under serious consideration by the British and Chinese Governments.

As in various parts of the world there appear to be grave doubts respecting China's sincerity in regard to the important matter of the suppression of the opium trade within her own borders, I deem it advisable to place the fact on record at the outset that I have just returned to the Straits from a somewhat lengthy sojourn in China, where I went to no little trouble and expense to ascertain whether the Government and the educated classes honestly desire to purge the country of the degrading vice (and I use the word vice advisedly, for it signifies a fault or defect, a bad or evil way of living and any evil or immoral habit such as opium smoking). As the result of my investigations and observations I rejoice to be able to state unhesitatingly that both official and public opinion in China is strongly averse to continuance of the vicious habit of opium smoking because it has unquestionably proved, and continues to prove, exceedingly harmful to attribute as a whole, and because to the habit it is impossible to attribute a single redeeming feature. It is, in short, regarded as a positive curse, a great national calamity. This being the case, the real truth, it goes without saying that there is not one iota of justification for the doubts which have been expressed respecting the bona fides of the Imperial Edicts issued by the Emperor Kwong Su with a view to compassing the complete eradication of the evil habit throughout the length and breadth of the Empire of China.

As an example of misleading and ill-informed opinion respecting the Emperor's Edicts it may be stated that it has been freely alleged that the issue of the Imperial Edicts, while they no doubt met with the unqualified approval of the Emperor, who admittedly takes a deep interest in the welfare of the nation, were in fact acts committed by powerful and wholly unscrupulous officials in order to bluff the world, being only a cunning manoeuvre by China to profit enormously at the expense of the Indian Government and people. That is absolutely false.

It has been urged from time to time during the past year that the provisions of the Anti-Opium Edicts should have been enforced in their entirety before the British Government was asked to release China from the obligations imposed by the Chefoo Convention or restrict the export of opium from India.

It is well known that the House of Commons has, after mature deliberation, passed a resolution, unanimously declaring

in the clearest terms, that the opium traffic is "morally indefensible." What is morally wrong does not become morally right simply because that which is morally indefensible happens to have been countenanced by the Government of a great and highly civilised State. I therefore submit that in view of the decision of the House of Commons, which represents the Will of the British nation, it is essential that immediate and drastic reforms should be undertaken in order to greatly reduce the vast areas under poppy cultivation in India and to completely eradicate the baneful habit in all British Colonies and Protectorates. What is immoral should, in my humble opinion, be abandoned unconditionally. Does it not seem rather illogical and unfair to expect China to solely take the initiative in far-reaching reforms looking to the elimination of a traffic which is declared by the House of Commons to be morally indefensible? China has, nevertheless, up to the present, borne the heat and burden of the day, and the results of her efforts have so far been little short of marvellous. She obviously has the Will which finds the Way. The Chinese authorities have, as you know, closed all the opium smoking shops in Shanghai, Tientsin, Peking, Foo Chow, Canton, throughout the province of Kiang Su, and in many other parts of the Empire. This has been accomplished without the slightest signs of resentment by the people, which proves that even the more ignorant of my countrymen fully realise that the drastic steps taken by the Government have been devised, not for any selfish purpose of aggrandisement, but solely for the well-being of the Fatherland and the lasting benefit of every son of the soil.

I hear that His Excellency Sir John Anderson, Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner, is to enquire into the opium traffic in the Colony. The Opium Question has admittedly been argued *ad nauseam*, and it may not unreasonably be doubted whether the present Commission, after probably a large number of sittings, will be able to throw any fresh light on a subject already worn threadbare. If the Commission is intended to do any good at all, it is possible that it would find it advantageous to visit the Federated Malay States and take evidence at the various mining and trade centres. The members would then be able to see things as they are, and "seeing is believing," and thereby save themselves a great deal of unnecessary trouble. It appears to me to savour of unreasonableness to expect busy residents of the F.M.S. to undertake a pilgrimage to Singapore merely to give testimony respecting time-worn questions bearing upon the opium trade, matters which were carefully investigated many years ago by a Royal Commission on Opium which visited the East and dealt with the questions at issue on the spot.

It seems to me that the Straits Government is in a position to furnish the Imperial Authorities with the requisite information from its own records, which include statistics made in connection with the letting of the Opium Farms in the Colony during, say, the last twenty years. The rise or fall in the opium revenue together with the figures relating to the population, death rate, and so forth, would be reliable data upon which to base calculations respecting the increase or decrease of the pernicious habit of opium smoking. Also, such information would prove helpful in estimating the benefits, if any, derivable from local ordinances devised with a view to diminishing the use of the drug by the masses.

It has been contended times without number that moderate use of the drug is not injurious to individuals. I am of opinion, nevertheless, that most thoughtful people will concede that the smoker, in common with the wine-bibber, is prone to increase his dose (*humanum est errare*) and that after a while—often not a very great while, either—he becomes an abject slave to the habit and is consequently always more or less unfit for work until he has had his customary dose. Is such the proper mode of existence of human beings? Surely not! Some people, it is averred, smoke opium as an anodyne to alleviate grief. I do not contend that, from a medical standpoint, in that way it may not prove a useful panacea. That is, however, not the point; it is at most a mere side issue of a main issue of unparalleled magnitude.

I maintain that opium is usually indulged in at first as a source of enjoyment (*pour plaisir*), not as a stimulant or anodyne. I know that a great deal of opium, most of it in fact, is consumed by young men in houses of ill fame. It is, as you well know, customary for my countrymen to extend hospitality to their friends either by inviting them to an eating-house or to a brothel, and I know, also, that when these same men become confirmed opium-smokers their wives and children are in most cases great sufferers.

A visit to any of the opium shops or brothels, which are usually crowded, will suffice to convince even the most bigoted of pro-opiumists that it is high time a paternal Government took steps looking to the redemption of fallen humanity—misguided creatures who, *de facto*, contribute more to the Opium than the tin revenue of the State.

I have no hesitation whatever in publicly asserting that the use of the drug, except in respect of comparatively few medical purposes, is an unmitigated curse and discreditable to all concerned in its use. It constitutes to-day the darkest cloud hanging over China, threatening to practically paralyse the nation and seriously impair her prosperity for all time.

This Opium Question is one of the gravest moral problems our Fatherland or any other nation has ever been called on to solve. There is little cause for surprise, therefore, because those who have the welfare of China at heart are found exhibiting keen interest and not a little impatience in the International Commission on Opium, composed as it is of representatives of Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Japan, Holland and China. I look forward with no little confidence to the findings of that Commission being in keeping with the well-considered opinion of the House of Commons, that the opium trade is "morally indefensible" and should therefore be obliterated as speedily as possible.

I do not now wish to waste time in replying at length to those who are pleased to urge that the evils of the opium habit in the East are not nearly so serious as the evils attributable to the alcohol habit in the West. It is the reverse of sound logic to contend that because Jack sees fit to hang himself Jill is therefore fully justified in following suit. I desire, though, to take this opportunity to emphasise the fact that both are admittedly and rightly regarded as great evils—great curses.

It has been urged as a reason for countenancing the opium habit that the suppression of opium-smoking will assuredly be followed by my countrymen taking to strong drink. Chinese, as a rule, do not care for alcoholic beverages, and the few who do partake of them have acquired the habit from Europeans. Chinese do not manufacture whisky, brandy, beer, and gin.

If the British Government is apprehensive of the Chinese talking to alcoholic beverages as a substitute for opium it can easily safeguard them by the raising of the value of alcoholic beverages considerably, and at the same time it would of course confer a boon upon the Indians and Malays resident in British Colonies and Protectorates. Apropos of the opium and alcohol habits, I would here recall an old Chinese adage about wine-bibbers, which runs thus: "First the man takes a dram. Then the dram takes another dram. At last the drams take the man." Is it not so with the victims of the pipe and the worshippers of Bacchus?

Let us now revert to the fact that Doctors differ in opinion respecting the injurious effects of opium. It seems to me that the opinion of medical men on a subject like this—a great national issue—is no more necessary than it is likely to prove of material assistance in solving one of the greatest problems of the age. One's own eyes, that which any of us can see any day, should suffice to convince one of the wide gulf between the opium-smoker and the man who shuns the pipe as he would poison. If it be

true that the drug is a good stimulant and indispensable to my countrymen to enable them to work in the mines or on estates and in other occupations in an enervating climate, then surely there should be good reason for assuming that Europeans coming hither from temperate zones will be well advised before leaving their Homes to acquire a taste for the opium-pipe in order that they may practice opium-smoking out here as a useful and indeed infallible pick-me-up.

I have carefully studied the excellent resolutions passed by the Singapore Chamber of Commerce with a view to their submission to the Opium Commission, and I append them to this letter. I most earnestly hope that the Straits Government will give effect to those recommendations at an early date. With regard to the fourth recommendation, viz.: "that the practice of selling and smoking opium in brothels be prohibited," it will, I fear, be difficult to enforce such an order in the Colony until such time as the Government takes over full control of the Opium Farm. I, however, see no difficulty whatever in the immediate enforcement of such reforms throughout the Federated Malay States as have been effected in Perak with great satisfaction to the Chinese community, with the sole exception of the brothel-keepers. The Perak Government (with Mr. E. W. Birch, c.m.g., British Resident, as adviser) has done a great deal towards bringing the whole Opium business of the State of Perak under proper and much-to-be-desired control. It has, like the Home Government, as well as the Viceroy of India, shewn a sympathetic attitude toward the cessation of the detestable opium trade, and I feel sure the representations of the Anti-Opium Society of Perak will always receive favourable consideration at the hands of Mr. Birch.

I was delighted to hear that the traders of Kinta, during my absence in China, succeeded in effecting a much-needed social reform. I refer to the agreement signed by numerous mining advancers, shop-keepers and others binding themselves of their own free will to relinquish the disgusting habit of inviting their friends and customers to indulge in a whiff of the fragrant drug in their shops. I trust this compact will be rigidly adhered to. I would suggest that the Anti-Opium Society of Ipoh should send collectors round to those who signed the agreement to request them to give effect to their action by handing over their opium pipes for storage in the Tai Pak Kung Temple with the ultimate object of course of having a bonfire made of them, as was done recently at Shanghai. That would prove a good object lesson for our misguided countrymen who have not yet freed themselves from the bondage in which they are held by the Demon Opium.

I have also read the Resolutions passed at the Anti-Opium Conference in Ipoh on the 8th and 9th March last. I cordially agree with all of them, and heartily congratulate the members of committees responsible for the Conference on the magnificent success achieved—a triumph, I venture to say, unique in the annals of this or any other Eastern State. Great was the committee's faith; great and praiseworthy indeed the effect of their patient labours.

I learn from the newspapers that Dr. Connolly, the worthy President of the Perak Anti-Opium Society, has had a very satisfactory interview with the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Winston Churchill) regarding the proposed reforms. We cannot, therefore, do better than wait and see what reforms are effected by the Government before the close of the year. I fail to see any difficulties in the way of introducing such reforms in Perak at once, for the following reasons:—

(a.) Because we are not hampered with Opium Farms here (excepting in the Coast Farm district).

(b.) Because the Federated Malay States, unlike the Colony, have a large surplus and no National Debt.

(c.) Because the Chinese community is favourably inclined towards any reform looking to the suppression of the degrading habit; which, by the way, will seriously inconvenience those who do not give it up before their return to the Homeland, where the opium regulations are exceedingly drastic.

I am strongly in favour of the import duty on opium as well as charges for the different opium licenses being raised as soon as possible. This would be quite legitimate, and the surest means of checking the opium habit.

I also earnestly hope that the Government, as a further safeguard, will increase the duty on spirits.

By such increases, opium and strong drink would soon become luxuries for the wealthy classes only, while as regards the coolies and others they would of course smoke a good deal less than formerly and gradually wean themselves from a costly and useless habit. There would then be no fear of them taking to strong drink, for it would be too costly, as some affect to apprehend.

The men would improve in health, be better citizens, and turn out more tin than when they were enslaved by the drug. Lastly, they would be in a position to send remittances to their aged parents in China, which they cannot possibly do so long as they are addicted to the accursed habit.

In conclusion, I desire to draw attention to the well-known fact that the percentage of mining advancers and employers of labour who still supply opium to their coolies in Perak is small. This, I submit, speaks volumes for Mr. Birch's administration, as well as for the strong and carefully formulated views of the Chinese towkays on the much vexed Opium Question.

Finally, I earnestly commend to your consideration the observations which, in the hope that I may be able to render a service to both Eastern and Western peoples, I have now placed on record. By the suppression of the trade Eastern people will be protected from a very degrading vice, while Western people will have discarded that which is known to be morally indefensible.

Yours sincerely,

FOO CHOO CHOON.

Ipoh, 10th December, 1907.

The Appendix.

The Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce, at a meeting held on Thursday the 29th August, 1907, considered the Opium Question. There were present Mr. Gua Chee Yong (Chairman of the Chamber), Mr. Goh Siew Tin (Vice-Chairman), Mr. Tan Toch Joon, Mr. Lim Wee Fond (Manager of the Kwong Yik Bank), Dr. Lim Boon Keng, Dr. Yin, and other prominent members of the Chinese community.

The following resolutions were carried unanimously:—

1. That the use of opium is condemned.
2. That the Government be advised to take over the control of the Opium Farms.
3. That shops for selling opium be closed.
4. That the practice of selling and smoking opium in brothels be prohibited.
5. That no opium shall be sold to children under a certain age.
6. That all opium smokers be licensed and a register kept of their daily consumption of opium.
7. That after five years' opium smoking shall be prohibited and the importation of the drug proscribed.
8. That more establishments be opened for the cure of opium smokers.
9. That Government servants using opium be dismissed from the service.
10. That the keepers of licensed opium shops be prohibited from dealing in any other articles, and that their families be not allowed to reside on the premises. Also that no women be employed to make use of such shops.

**The "Times of Malaya" on
Mr. Foo Choo Choon's Monograph.**

(12th December.)

We publish on page 6 of this issue a monograph on the Opium Question by our esteemed fellow-townsmen Mr. Foo Choo Choon. It is the most noteworthy contribution to the great controversy on this vexed question we have yet seen, treating as it does the whole matter from the point of view of one who has had exceptional opportunities of studying the question on the spot, both in the Chinese Empire and in the Malay Peninsula. Narrow-minded views are manifestly eschewed by Mr. Foo Choon, who deals with the matter in a singularly free and unbiassed manner, while patriotically keeping steadily in view the moral and material welfare of his countrymen, who have, it must be confessed, a great deal to complain about in this connection. The impartial critic will assuredly concede that this able and fearless exposé does Mr. Foo Choon infinite credit, and such will be inclined to agree with us that there is surely ground for strong hopes of a great future for a nation which counts among its citizens such self-denying and level-headed patriots as Mr. Foo Choo Choon and the gentlemen associated with him in the herculean task of rescuing the Chinese from the thralldom in which they have been held for centuries by such degrading vices as opium-smoking and gambling. We heartily congratulate the distinguished author upon his essay, which should carry conviction with all right-thinking men.

Sir John Anderson on the Opium Traffic.

Speaking in the Legislative Council on the 6th instant, His Excellency the Governor said (in reference to the vote for \$8,500 for the expenses incurred in connection with the Opium Commission, to which the Hon. Mr. Baker objected): No one who knew this Colony well could fail to be aware that there was undoubtedly a great amount of evil attached to the consumption of opium, in the same way as there was a great deal of evil attached to the consumption of alcohol, and the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the matter with a view to submitting what steps should be taken appeared to him a matter for which they might properly take local funds. They were making the enquiry with a view to action to be taken by Government here, and it appeared to him unquestionable—unless they were to assume that they were to be entirely ignored by the Imperial Government, an assumption for which there was no warrant, as it was a question

as to what action the Council should take—that this was a perfectly legitimate expense to be borne by the Colony.

The vote was of course passed.

Mr. Laidlaw's Speech.

Mr. Laidlaw said: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen—It gives me great pleasure to meet you and to address such a large and enthusiastic gathering as this. I feel most grateful for the very kind way you have received me, and for this very flattering address you have been good enough to present to me. If I can be the means of doing even a little towards accomplishing the objects you have in view, I feel my visit to the Far East will not have been in vain. (Hear, hear.) I wish you all to understand that I have come here to learn and not to teach. I have been anxious to find out if you are satisfied with the present laws or whether you desire any changes. I have heard a great deal of this country, but it is one thing to hear and another thing to see; and I have seen since I have been in this country much to convince me that you are very much in earnest in this great work you have undertaken. (Applause.) The Chinese people are distinguished by a great number of things, and one of them is this—their inclination to be faithful to their bargains. I know they are faithful to their bargains, and that they are always much ashamed if they fail to carry out what they have undertaken. The Chinese do not like to lose face, and I know they will not wish to have it said in after years that they had no intention to carry out their professions. For many years the people of the Empire of China and the Chinese people in this Peninsula have been suffering from the curse of opium. The Chinese people have declared that in order to become a strong nation—one of the Great Powers of the world—they must get rid of this curse. While in Singapore, in Kuala Lumpur, and in Ipoh, I have seen things which have made me believe that this is a much greater curse than I ever thought before. Let me tell you of one incident which should interest you very much. Last night at Kuala Lumpur, while I was being shewn round the town by our friend Mr. Horley and several Chinese gentlemen, we visited the opium dens. In one of them we observed a boy, about eleven years of age, smoking opium, with his face covered by his hat. When his hat was removed, Mr. Horley was horrified to find that it was one of his school boys, and the son of one of the gentlemen who were taking us round. I am greatly surprised to find that there are no restrictions against young boys going into opium dens and other evil places. I am the more convinced that if you do not wish to abolish this evil for your own sakes you wish to do so for the sake of your sons. (Applause.)

I shall not attempt to describe what I have seen. You know more about what goes on in such places than I do. I will now say a few words about China. During the last few weeks I have had the privilege of travelling in China. China has often surprised the world, and one of the greatest surprises came when the Emperor of China issued a Decree saying that this curse—of opium—must be removed. (Applause.) When this famous decree was issued the people of England asked two questions:

(1) Is China sincere in wishing to abolish this traffic in 10 years?

(2) If sincere, is she able to abolish the traffic in 10 years?

Those were difficult questions to answer, and while I was in China I tried to get information to enable me to answer them when I return to England. Let me tell you one or two of the things I observed in China which have enabled me to come to a decision on this subject. I discovered that the leading men there to-day are strong, earnest men, and that they carry out what they profess. They say they need a strong army, and they are creating one. They say the people should be better educated, and they are establishing schools and colleges. And when I find them sincere and active in such matters I believe they will be equally sincere in this. In fact they have already given proof that they are in earnest because in Canton, Peking and other parts of the Empire they have closed the opium dens. (Applause.) They have done more than this—they have taken a more difficult step—they have removed some high officials from office because they were opium smokers (applause), and have made it clear to all that those who are addicted to this habit of opium smoking need not aspire to high office. One more thing has happened that makes me think China is in earnest. It is that those who are engaged in the trade are crying out that their trade is in danger. While in China, in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and here, I have seen a large number of Chinese of all classes, and found them all united in this matter—and can I not believe that they are sincere? (Shouts of "Yes," and applause.) If one class favours it and another opposes it and you are not united, then I might think that there is nothing in it; but I find that you are thoroughly united in this matter everywhere I have been. Now let me tell you a little about the feeling in Great Britain and in Parliament on this subject. I have the honour to represent a part of one of the counties of Scotland, and when I go to the House of Commons I am supposed to represent the wishes of those people. Those people are in favour of total abolition, and if I asked them to vote I am sure they would vote in favour of it. As you are aware, this question has been discussed in Parliament many times. For many years the

answer of Government was: "We have made a treaty with China and have promised to send opium from India and they are bound to take our opium." This question was discussed last year. The House of Commons unanimously passed the resolution that the opium trade is morally indefensible, and Government took a totally different attitude to that which had been taken by any previous Government, and they declared through the Secretary of State for India that if China desired to assist her, and as a first step towards that do all in our power to assist her, and as a first step towards that resolution we should reduce the quantity of opium sent there every year from India, and we should no longer hold China strictly to her treaty obligations. As soon as China took the first step we should respond by reducing shipments from India, and that has already been done this year; and to shew that we are sincere I would mention that the Government of India are not taking any more recruits for the Opium Department in India. (Applause.) This proves that they expect this trade to be speedily reduced. One of the outcomes of that discussion in Parliament has been the appointment of a Commission, and that Commission is now sitting in Singapore to consider the question as it affects the S. S. and F.M.S. That Commission will shortly visit these States, and the leaders of the Anti-Opium League and others interested will give evidence before that Commission. I have great hopes that the Commission will recommend to Government that this traffic should be abolished. If the traffic can be abolished in China surely it can be abolished in these States, which are under control of the British Government. It will be a great shame if we put any obstacles in the way of your desire to carry out reforms. Now I have said enough to let you know what is in my mind. I now want to know what is in your mind. I propose to ask you two or three questions—

(1) Does this meeting desire the total and immediate abolition of the Farms system?

The whole audience shouted "Yes," and held up their hands.

(2) Does this meeting consider it possible to abolish the Farms without creating disturbances and causing other evils?

Again the audience replied in the affirmative, meaning that there was nothing to be apprehended in such an event.

(3) Does this meeting consider control by Government preferable to the present system of farming?

Once more came shouts of "Yes" from the multitude, followed by loud and long continued applause, which, of course, indicated that the meeting favoured Government control as opposed to continuance of the Farm system.

Continuing, Mr. Laidlaw said: I am very much obliged to you for your answers. I will carry home the views of the people out here. They will help me very much in England. I wish you to understand that I am only a humble member of Parliament and cannot do very much; but I have information that will enable me to push the matter with those who can act. Let me tell you this: The gentlemen who are at the head of the Government today are earnest and sincere, and do not desire revenue to be raised by the degradation of the people. I am sure they have a sincere wish to help China and these States in this matter. Let me assure you, in conclusion, that if there is any service I can do you in England I shall be most happy to do it. I am exceedingly grateful for this kind reception, for the holding of this meeting by the Anti-Opium Society, and for this address; and I wish you to know that I shall always be at their service.

At this juncture Mr. Laidlaw resumed his seat amidst a storm of applause.

Mr. Horley's Address.

He was followed by the Rev. W. Horley, who spoke in Chinese. After addressing a few words to the occupants of the dress circle, pit, and stalls, he spoke in English as follows: We have listened with great pleasure to the words of Mr. Laidlaw. He has promised to help us in Parliament, and I hope, therefore, that the Government will soon do away with the gambling and opium farms. We desire to do something to deliver the Chinese from these two great curses. The great mass of Chinese present this evening affords a proof that the Chinese *are* sincere. I heard from a friend in China recently that 6,000 opium shops have been closed in the city. In Canton, an F.M.S. cadet has informed me, *all* the opium shops have been closed. China is in earnest. We want our Government to be in earnest. (Hear, hear.) I am glad a Commission of enquiry has been appointed and is coming to Ipoh, and I trust our worthy Protector of Chinese will be commanded to go before the Commission and give evidence. Over 200,000 men and women have come for opium medicine to cure them of the habit. I trust the Commission will do much good. One lady took me to task the other day and said—'You are trying to abolish the opium traffic. Why not try to abolish the drink traffic?' I say to the Chinese—'Give up the opium traffic but do not take on the whisky traffic.' From March the first next no woman will be allowed to smoke opium in the Philippines, and may the time come when the same law will be in force here. Twenty million dollars will be lost to the revenue, but men are more than revenue. (Applause.) It roused my indignation last night in Kuala Lumpur

to see that boy of tender years smoking opium. It is a disgrace and blot on our vaunted civilization, and I hope that these things will soon pass away. (Applause.)

His address concluded, Mr. Horley called for three cheers for Mr. Laidlaw, which was most heartily responded to.

Important Resolutions.

Mr. Eu Tong Sen proposed the first Resolution as follows:—

RESOLUTION NO. 1.

Resolved, that we unanimously endorse the resolutions recently passed by the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce, viz.:—

1. That the use of opium is condemned.
2. That the Government be advised to take over the control of the Opium Farms.
3. That shops for selling opium be closed.
4. That the practice of selling and smoking opium in brothels be prohibited.
5. That no opium shall be sold to children under a certain age.
6. That all opium smokers be licensed and a register kept of their daily consumption of opium.
7. That after five years' opium-smoking shall be prohibited, and the importation of the drug prohibited.
8. That more establishments be opened for the cure of opium-smokers.
9. That Government servants using opium be dismissed from the service.
10. That the keepers of licensed opium-shops be prohibited from dealing in any other articles, and that their families be not allowed to reside on the premises. Also that no women be allowed to make use of such shops.

He said it afforded him very great pleasure to move the adoption of this Resolution in its entirety. Any man who had the welfare of the State and of his countrymen at heart could but approve of every word of it. (Applause.)

Mr. Cheong Tak seconded, and in so doing said he felt sure that the earnest throng he had the honour to address would not fail to support the motion to a man. (Cheers.) Mr. Laidlaw had come many thousands of miles to inquire into these matters with a view to helping them to get full justice. It was, therefore, fitting that such a resolution should be put in order that he might know whether they really desired the abolition of the hateful opium traffic. (Applause.)

The Chairman then put the resolution to the meeting and it was carried by acclamation, not one dissentient voice being heard.

Mr. Cheah Cheang Lin proposed the second Resolution as follows:—

RESOLUTION No. 2.

Resolved, that a copy of the Resolution passed at the Anti-Opium Conference on March 8th and 9th, 1907, together with those passed at this meeting, be presented to the Honourable R. Laidlaw with an earnest request that they be submitted by him to His Majesty's Secretary of State for early action.

Mr. Cheang Lim said: I am sure I voice the sentiment of all here to-night when I say that we are at a loss to find words wherewith to adequately express our gratitude to Mr. Laidlaw for travelling thousands of miles to inquire into the opium evil and to honour us with his presence this evening. (Applause.) He has come hither on an errand of mercy; he has taken great pains to investigate the whole question in China and in Malaya, and in addition to that has kindly favoured us with an address which I am sure all of us will long remember. ("Yes, yes," and applause.) He has seen for himself the ruin and misery caused by the imported drug, and he knows, for he has seen it, we are in earnest (applause) in our cry for the abolition of the traffic. (Applause.) His presence among us here to-night is evidence of the interest he takes in the welfare of the Chinese and of his wish to see justice done us. (Applause.) The Chinese in Malaya are unfortunately under the bondage of two detestable vices—Opium and Gambling. They are great drawbacks to our advancement, and a great hindrance to our well-being as a community. (Hear, hear.) We know such is the case, and therefore earnestly trust that the united efforts of Mr. Laidlaw and his friends to put an end to these things will be crowned before long with success. (Cheers.) It affords me extreme pleasure to move the adoption of the resolution I have just read, which I hope you will adopt unanimously. (Applause.)

Mr. Lim Koh Lai, in a pithy and witty address which evoked a good deal of laughter, seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

The last Resolution.

At this juncture Mr. Lim Choo Boon, the indefatigable Honorary Secretary of the Perak Anti-Opium Society, rose to propose the third and last Resolution, worded as follows:—

RESOLUTION No. 3.

Resolved, that the heartfelt thanks of this meeting be tendered to the Honourable R. Laidlaw for his generosity in leaving his own home to come out to the Far East to study the great Opium and Gambling questions in order to satisfy himself as to the true feeling of the Chinese regarding these important matters. Further, we thank him for having brought these subjects so prominently before the Home Government, and for his able speech this evening. We ask him on his return to England to convey our grateful thanks to the Anti-Opium Society there, for the great help and interest shown on these great

social problems. We take the excellent work already done by such men as the Honourable R. Laidlaw and Mr. Alexander as a token of further help in coming days towards the early realization of the object of this Society. Visits such as these, we are assured, cannot fail to remove any prejudices that may exist regarding the sincerity of the Chinese Government or the Chinese of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States.

Mr. Choo Boon's Speech.

He said: Mr. Foo Choo Choon, Mr. Laidlaw, and friends—It affords me very great pleasure to move the adoption of the Resolution which I have just read and which has been so ably interpreted to you by our good friend Mr. Lim Koh Lai. But before formally proposing its adoption I desire to draw attention to the evils and the vices inseparable from the opium-smoking habit, and to point out the enormity of those evils and vices in order that you may all perceive the reasons and of the justification for passing such a Resolution unanimously. (Applause.)

In the first place, then, let us take the sale and use of opium as carried on in houses of ill-fame. In such places the drug is either provided by a friend for a friend or friends he has brought into the place, or it is supplied by one of the poor unfortunates earning a terrible livelihood in the establishment. If supplied by the latter, she prepares the drug for smoking and hands it to the visitors, smiling the while and endeavouring to induce them to follow the first with a second or third pipe. It usually happens that when men visit such places one of the inmates promptly prepares the pipes (loads them) for smoking and with winning smiles and the enunciation of many "sweet nothings" presses them to take a few whiffs. Approached in such a way the voice of the charmer usually has the desired effect, the visitors falling an easy prey to the fair vendor, and the first step on the broad road leading to moral and material degradation of the victim is taken. One to smoke leads, in nine cases out of ten, to more, and once the habit is acquired it is most difficult to abandon it. It has been well said that opium is a seductive drug. Taken at first without any intention to become thoroughly addicted to the habit, it seldom happens—I have never yet heard of an instance—that the beginner is satisfied with the "few whiffs" the fair charmer induced him to indulge in. He usually becomes a confirmed opium smoker, and though, likely enough, by no means naturally a reckless individual he soon loses the force of character and sinks to the level of regular habitués of the divans. In a few weeks his acquaintances observe that he is not half the man he used to be; in a few months he is a mere wreck in comparison with what he was before he made the acquaintance of the seductive drug. This being, as you are well aware, the truth in a nut-shell, we, the members of the Perak Anti-Opium Society,

with a view to improving the condition of our countrymen—in order to uplift them and instil into them hopes of a brilliant future for their Fatherland—appeal most earnestly to the Honourable Mr. R. Laidlaw to use his influence with the Home Government to bring about the total cessation of opium smoking in houses of ill-fame in all parts of the F.M.S. and Straits Settlements, as Mr. Cowan, our esteemed Protector of Chinese, has done so effectively—and without the least disturbance or friction—in this place.

Secondly: If you happen to call upon an opium-smoking friend the first thing he does is to invite you to lie down beside him on his opium couch and smoke with him. If a non-smoker you decline but nevertheless take a seat on his couch in order to converse with him. At first he prepares the pipe as if about to use it himself, but before doing so he presses it upon you. In most cases it is refused at first, but after calling on him several times and being pressed on each occasion the visitor very often accepts it. Then the taste is acquired and another victim is soon added to the long list of opium sots.

Now I do not want you to misunderstand me. I do not say that there is no good at all in opium. I know full well that it is not without its virtues when used as a medicine; when taken in accordance with the advice of a physician. But what I contend is that when taken in excess it ceases to have a beneficial effect and becomes a great evil with those addicted to its use. Furthermore, you all know as well as I do that when too much is taken it acts as a deadly poison, and is often used to put an end to life by those who, for some reason, either desire to cut their own lives short or put an end to the existence of others.

Let us now take the case of a man who has acquired the habit only a few days or weeks. Such men are usually fairly healthy and strong. They have sufficient energy to go about visiting friends, who extend hospitality to them, including of course free smokes of the pipe. Once such an one has become a confirmed smoker some fine day he calls on friends with whom, only a few days or weeks before, he was quite a *persona grata*. He thinks he will get more free smokes and be made quite at home as of yore. Not so, however. They have got tired of supplying him with the costly drug, and besides there is the master of the house to be supplied, and the habit has grown on him to such an extent that his requirements have become a matter of serious calculation, being a strain—in very many cases—upon the resources of the wife, who has probably several children to feed and clothe and educate. She and her trusty servants are not desirous to admit a man who will assuredly not only put them to useless expense and

trouble, but hasten the head of the house—the bread-winner in many cases—along the road leading to utter ruin. It is not surprising, therefore, that the door should be closed upon the 'smoking friends,' or if, when opened, the servant says the Towkay is asleep or has gone out. Occasionally it happens that on visiting a smoker he is found pretending to be sound asleep on his opium couch, his object being to avoid supplying the visitor with opium, the supply of which is now barely sufficient to meet his urgent needs. Thus finding friends' pipes no longer at his disposal, the new smoker has at last to buy his own smoking outfit and smoke at home. He has become an habitual smoker; the habit has got a hold upon him, and he will remain a smoker for the rest of his days unless he puts forth vigorous efforts to be rid of it. Alas! Few can ever do that, for the habit has wrecked their will-power—they have become weak, emaciated creatures; not half the men they were before they acquired the useless and baneful habit. It often happens that when a non-smoker is suffering from some disease which has got a strong hold on him, his friends will advise him to "try the pipe." Usually, everything else having failed, the advice is followed, with the result that he becomes addicted to the habit. It is not long before he is completely beyond redemption and shuffles off this mortal coil. Passing now from the conditions prevailing in what may be termed the early stages of smoking, let us consider the case of the confirmed smoker. When such men are in need of opium, or have run short of it, they are more or less prostrate, and quite unable to put forth a vigorous effort to do anything. They are mere useless creatures—often almost as helpless as infants. Is it not a fact, too, that smokers often sleep during the day and are only able to do a little work at night? Many are unable to rise before noon or one o'clock in the afternoon, and when food is brought to such people they usually refuse it until they have had a 'draw at the pipe,' which tends to create animation in such wrecks and to slightly stimulate the appetite. Hard smokers—and their name is, unfortunately, legion—are usually drowsy, and when the effect of the drug has passed off they are usually very irritable, offensive, and troublesome—a perfect nuisance to all with whom they come in contact.

As regards female smokers, it is, as most of you are no doubt aware, a fact that large numbers of them have contracted the habit through husbands, who, to their disgrace be it said, have pressed them to partake of the fragrant drug. Others have taken to it in houses of ill-fame. Being 'down on their luck' they have sought solace in the pipe, while others again, have become mesmerised by their surroundings which are degraded. While speaking of the fair sex I am reminded of the fact that not a few women seek to

prevent their children from troubling them by giving the poor little things small doses of opium or by blowing the smoke over their faces to stupefy them for a while. Many in this way contract a liking, and indeed a craving, for the drug while of very tender age.

Smokers, be they male or female, are usually unreliable, and it is notorious that they can never be depended upon to keep an engagement in the forenoon, for they have either to smoke or prepare smokes before they can muster enough energy to go out on business, while not a few opium-sots cannot get up until they have had a few draws at their pipe. Such people suffer great agonies when deprived of the drug. Their limbs refuse to bear the weight of their emaciated bodies; water runs from their eyes; pains create torture in the intestines; they feel that it were better to be dead than alive!

I have now dwelt at some length upon the evils of the habit. Let us now consider remedies for it. It is within the power of all to abandon the habit, but what—as I have just intimated—often proves a check to the will that finds the way is the weakness of the intellect or the fear of pains—the penalties—that follow upon total abstinence for a few hours. To meet this the Anti-Opium Society has prepared a decoction which, if taken as ordered, prevents the ill-effects which are so much dreaded. Throw off the yoke, tear yourselves away from the bondage in which you are held by the Demon Opium! We have long supplied smokers with our remedy free. It is ready for smokers now, and if other kinds of medicine are needed to alleviate the pains that may be felt at first they will be given now—as they have been to hundreds before—free of any charge whatsoever. Come unto us ye who are smokers and we will liberate you. (Loud applause.) We will restore to you your manhood, your powers to think and to act as other men do. (Applause.) The way to salvation is open to all. None are refused. All are welcome. (Applause.)

In what I have said to-night I have carefully refrained from saying aught that could be construed into manifest contempt for smokers. I have nothing but pity for them. Did I not pity them, did I not earnestly desire to do good for them, I would not be here to address you to-night. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I have stuck to facts. I have not sailed into the limitless realms of sensational fiction. My reason for stating the facts is that I desire to see all Chinese—wheresoever they may reside—give up opium smoking. It has been stopped by many of the Viceroy and Governors of Provinces of the Empire, and those who may have any doubt about it have only to read the copies of notifications issued by the authorities of Kwangtung prohibiting continuance of opium

smoking. (Applause.) I have a number of these documents with me. Here they are, (holding them up and handing some down to the occupants of the pit to read). There is no doubt about it. (Applause.) I desire that the habit should become a thing of the past—a relic of an evil past. (Applause.) As long as this habit continues to hold sway in China so long will the nation be weak and more or less helpless. But I look forward to the time when it will be abandoned; when China will rank not only as a Great Power but one of the Greatest Powers of the world (applause)—as Japan has proved herself to be. (Renewed applause.) But we, the people, cannot cause total prohibition by ourselves. We must obey the laws of the land in which we live. That, friends, is why this meeting—as I take it—urges that the Honourable R. Laidlaw will plead our cause in Parliament and with the Imperial Authorities to ordain that the opium traffic shall be abandoned once and for all time. (Applause.) If the Home Government would ordain the enforcement of such Resolutions as we passed at our Conference last March, we should soon see an end of the opium evil in these fair Gardens of the Sun. (Applause.) Mr. Laidlaw is, I believe, the first Member of Parliament to visit these States. I hope and trust he will carry away with him pleasant recollections of his visit among us. (Applause.) We have often seen his name in the papers reporting that he has asked questions in the House of Commons on the important subject we are here to consider to-night, and we felt grateful that we should have such a true friend to help us in our efforts to remove this terrible curse from our midst. Now that we have had the honour of seeing and greeting him we shall follow his career more closely, and can only hope and trust that we may yet have occasion to congratulate him on his merits and efforts for the welfare of his country being recognised by a high position under the Government or, better still, a seat in the British Cabinet being his portion at no very far distant date. (Applause.) In him we recognize a true friend, a gentleman of the noblest type, and one who unquestionably has the best interests of the great British Empire close to his heart. (Applause.)

That success may attend all his efforts in attacking the gigantic foe we earnestly pray, and speaking for our Society I may say we faithfully promise to do our utmost towards bringing about that glorious day when the greatest drawback to the welfare of the great Chinese people shall have for ever passed away. (Loud applause.)

Mr. Foo Choo Choon seconded Mr. Choo Boon's motion, and it was carried by acclamation.

Then there was a momentary lull followed by loud cheers for Mr. Foo Choo Choon, for Mr. Amery, and, lastly, for the Rev. W. E. Horley.

Following this demonstration of enthusiasm the boys of the Mandarin School (of which Mr. Foo Choon is the Patron) were marched up to the stage and sang, in capital style, an anti-opium ode, their teacher supplying the music on the harmonium.

This concluded the interesting proceedings—such as will remain long in the memory of all who were privileged to be present.

In concluding this report of the function we avail ourselves of the opportunity to tender very hearty congratulations to Mr. Foo Choo Choon and his worthy colleagues upon the stand they have taken on the important matters of the accursed opium habit and licensed gambling. That their efforts to remove such blots from territory controlled by the British Government may be crowned, very soon, with complete success, will assuredly be the hope of all who have the welfare of Malaya at heart.

Away with opium! Away! they say,
So let us hope they'll gain the day,
And th' dust of the curse soon lay,
May it in the evil past decay
And the Chinese see a happier day,

APPENDIX.

Anti-Opium Crusade in China.

Following is a translation of the Chinese document referred to by Mr. Lim Choo Boon in his speech at the mass meeting in the Theatre and handed down by him to the occupants of the pit and stalls to inspect, as stated in the report of the proceedings published in our last issue:—

NOTIFICATION BY THE POLICE DEPARTMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF KWANG-TUNG.

It is hereby notified that by an Imperial edict opium-smoking shall be rigorously suppressed. This edict has already been duly proclaimed. It has, however, come to the notice of this Department that false rumours have been circulated in various cities to the effect that, owing to the interference of foreigners, it has been decided not to strictly enforce the order for the suppression of the opium habit. As a result, the opium shopkeepers have

violated the opium regulations by selling chandu (i.e., prepared opium) to unlicensed smokers, and by selling more than the quantities as specified in the smokers' licenses. Such reports tend to hinder the object in view.

The Imperial edict will in no way be relaxed, as the Board for Foreign Affairs has made arrangements with the British Government to reduce the importation of opium every year, with a view to total abolition. The objects of those who circulated the false report are, firstly, to deceive the public, and secondly to enrich themselves. We cannot but express our indignation with such persons. Instructions have been issued to all the Branch Police Departments to make most careful inquiries, and to arrest all offenders. Opium smokers and opium shopkeepers are hereby informed that the object of suppressing the opium habit is purely a national movement for the purpose of converting us from a weak to a strong nation. The public are therefore requested not to listen to idle rumours, which will hinder the good work that is being done. After the issue of this proclamation smokers shall gradually reduce the habit, so that they may not do any injury to themselves or to their families. Opium shopkeepers shall hereafter comply with the regulations and shall retail chandu to smokers according to the conditions specified in each license. Any person discovered selling chandu to unlicensed smokers or retailing chandu more than the licensed quantity shall be prosecuted and punished without mercy. Let all tremblingly obey this!

Dated this 28th day of the 8th moon of the 33rd year of Kwangsu.

