

THE

PRESENT STATE

OF

THE OPIUM TRADE WITH CHINA.

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MINISTERS of the Gospel, and all who seek to promote that righteousness which alone exalteth a nation, are earnestly requested to consider the subject of the following pages, in the hope that it may lead to a more general concern among the people, and more earnest efforts to abolish a great national sin.

A LOVER OF HIS COUNTRY.

THE OPIUM TRADE IN CHINA.*

PERHAPS there is scarcely any question of public interest upon which the notions of even generally well-informed people are more vague and indistinct, than on that which we have placed at the head of this article. We propose, necessarily very briefly, to state the leading facts of the case, and then calmly to investigate the allegations so freely made against the traffic in question.

The opium of commerce, so far as embraced in the present inquiry, is the juice of the poppy, grown in India; when in British territory, exclusively for the British Government, or, when in independent states, paying it a large transit duty. It is manufactured, not for medicinal purposes, but expressly with a view to its use as an article of luxury in China, whither it is conveyed in heavily-armed clippers. By the Chinese purchaser it undergoes a further process to fit it for smoking, or rather for being inhaled into the lungs—the mode in which it is used in China.

Such is the nature of the opium traffic. Its history is of very recent date. Up to the year 1767, the quantity exported from India did not exceed 200 chests [and that for medicinal purposes]. In 1773, the East India Company entered the trade. Very gradually the shipments increased. The attention of the Chinese Government having been drawn to the practice of opium smoking, which had increased with the importation, it was forbidden under severe penalties. These proving ineffectual, in the year 1800, when the supply reached 2,000 chests, the trade was declared contraband, and the importation forbidden, as was also the native growth of the poppy. Owing to the weakness of the Government, and the corruption of their Mandarins, who were bribed by the European smugglers, according to a fixed rate agreed upon between them, the edicts of the Emperor were of comparatively little avail. The evident increase of the vicious indulgence, and growing boldness of the smugglers, gave rise, from time to time, to others of greater urgency, and more severely enforced. At last, the Imperial Government showed itself thoroughly in earnest. So rigorously was their prohibitory policy carried out, among its own subjects,

* Statement of Facts relating to the British Opium Trade and Revenue. By the Edinburgh Anti-Opium Committee. Andrew Elliot: Edinburgh.

The Opium Trade in China. By an Eye-Witness. Heaton and Son: London.

The Traffic in Opium in the East. By Dr. Jeffreys, Staff-Surgeon at Cawnpore. Longman: London.

What is the Opium Trade? By Donald Matheson, Esq. Constable: Edinburgh.

The Opium Trade. Appeal to the British Nation against it. By Rev. W. Tait. Wertheim and Macintosh: London.

Rise and Progress of British Opium Smuggling, &c., &c. By General Alexander. Judd and Glass: London.

Returns relating to the Trade in India and China, from 1814 to 1858. (Mr. Dunlop.)

that not a chest could be sold along the coast; and, on the testimony of Captain Elliot, the British Superintendent, the result was a "complete stagnation of the trade."

After this had lasted for four months, in January, 1839, a printed notice was addressed by the Provincial Government of Canton to each individual firm there, urgently warning them to send away their "receiving ships" (or floating warehouses) in the river mouth, and intimating the appointment of a High Commissioner for the purpose of extirpating the trade. This warning was disregarded; in six weeks the Commissioner arrived; he immediately demanded delivery of the opium on board these ships—surrounded the British merchants' houses with troops, and kept them prisoners there, until they had delivered up the entire stock of opium in Chinese waters, amounting to 20,283 chests. Previously to their doing so, they came under a voluntary engagement, pledging their honour never to import opium into China again—an engagement which, it may be remarked in passing, only two of them kept. The immense quantity surrendered, worth, at its retail price in China, two or three millions sterling, was immediately destroyed and washed out into the sea. For the time, the trade was annihilated. But war was declared by Britain, and, after immense slaughter, the Chinese were obliged to pay for the opium 6,000,000 dollars, and for the expenses of the war 12,000,000 dollars. Since that time the trade has been allowed to proceed without interruption from the Chinese authorities, although they uniformly refused every solicitation on the part of the British Government to recognise it in any form, until they have been compelled, as one of the results of a second war, to admit opium on a fixed duty. The later progress of the trade contrasts strongly with its earlier period. From 2,000 chests in 1800, it rose to 4,000 in 1820, to 34,000 in 1838, to 76,000 in 1858; having more than doubled in the sixteen years after the first China war.

Leaving the evils of a moral and physical character, which are charged as resulting from the indulgence in opium in India, to be dealt with along with those of a similar kind applicable to China, there are others of an economic and commercial nature, specially applicable to India, which first demand attention.

Strange as it may sound to some of our readers, the growth of the poppy is actually prohibited in British India. In the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay, in Scinde, &c., this prohibition is universal, and, we believe, effectual—the crop being one of the most conspicuous of the vegetable kingdom, a surreptitious growth is impossible. But in Bengal, the prohibition is only of the growth on private account. Immense tracts of the richest land are covered with the flaunting blossom, and every inducement is held out to substitute it for the more useful products of the soil. The culture is regulated by a very stringent and oppressive law. (Act XIII.—1857.) The main features of this Act are, 1. No poppy can be grown without consent of Government. 2. All opium produced must be delivered to the Government agent, and at the *price fixed by Government*. 3. Advances to be made to approved parties willing to cultivate poppy. 4. All disputes as to alleged failure to cultivate the assigned quantity of land, to produce the proper quantity or quality of opium, to be settled by the Government agents, and their decision to be final, "and not subject to

the review of any court whatever." Other provisions, very suggestive of remark, our limits oblige us to omit. It is sufficiently evident, that the opium manufacture in British India is a stringent monopoly of purchase, in the hands of a single buyer, from whom the seller, if we may so call him, may not even retain an ounce, but must deliver up the whole at the price fixed by the buyer; all disputes with whom as to quantity, quality, &c., must be settled by him or his servants to the exclusion of the constituted tribunals. The system of penalties, taken in connexion with the unparalleled corruption of native officials, is also capable of being made an instrument of great oppression. It is likewise alleged, that ryots or cultivators are often virtually compelled to grow poppy either by Government servants or the Zemindars, who exact deductions from the Government money passing through their hands. It is but fair to say there is diversity of evidence on this point; and it is prohibited in the Opium Act. But the very existence of these prohibitions, after the interval of sixty years, seems a strong presumption that the evil is practised. That it is so in effect, the following extract will show. An agent of Government thus writes of the advances of money, which all opium cultivators must take:—

"It is clear that when such balances become so large, that the cultivator cannot discharge them, *he is no longer a free agent*, but is perfectly subservient to the will of his creditor, (the Government,) for whom he must cultivate, whether he desire or not."

Apart from all moral questions, such a state of things is utterly at variance with sound principles of political economy. It might be got rid of by throwing the trade open; but there may be specialities arising from other considerations to prevent this, which will require to be looked at in their proper place.

A very important part of our inquiry next demands our attention. *What is the influence exerted by this trade on the commerce of India, China, and Britain?* The home opium trade of India, or the supply for the use of the Indian population, we need not enter on at present; only remarking that it also is a strict Government monopoly, farmed out by way of license to the highest bidder, that it is increasing, and that, however the East India Company may have deprecated the indulgence in their public documents, in practice they contemplated and provided for that increase.* As regards the export opium trade, with one exception so small that it is not worth taking into account, the whole of it may be said to be with China. To pursue our present inquiry, let us examine first—How far is it profitable to those engaged in the trade? and then, What are its effects on other commercial interests? First in order is the Indian cultivator or ryot. Our limits will not admit of any minute investigation here. In so far as there is the slightest compulsion, it is quite evident it cannot be a profitable trade. But it is alleged in some quarters that the cultivation is popular. There is every reason to believe, however, that the advance of the money is the great inducement. It is admitted on all hands, that in every case this advance is required, that the crop is very uncertain, that it demands the richest soil, that the ryots are the very poorest of their class, and, as we have seen, that the price is fixed by

* House of Lords Return, No. 40, 1857, p. 1.

the buyer. With such conditions as these, it is scarcely credible that the cultivation is profitable to the grower.

Next in order is the Government of India. This part of the inquiry may appear to be rather fiscal than commercial. Yet, strictly speaking, it is as much the one as the other, the opium revenue of India being greatly derived from the profit on the Government sales. In the Indian budget, opium figures as second in amount; the average for the last two years, as stated by Lord Stanley, being £5,800,000. It must be always borne in mind, however, that this is the *gross* amount derived from the two sources of a transit duty on the produce of native states, and the entire sale-proceeds of the opium produced in Bengal, for the Government. The large deductions have to be made of the price paid to the ryot, and the cost of collection. Besides this, there is the large capital employed in factories, warehouses, and Government advances, on which no interest is charged, while they are borrowing at six per cent. In all calculations, then, it must be remembered it is not a revenue of £5,800,000 which is at stake, but nearer £4,000,000, less the interest of the capital. The result—and a most important one it is—is, that while the gross revenue has greatly risen, the *rate of profit*, on an average of years, has very much decreased. From a statement in the Blue Book on the opium trade, (1856,) it would appear that, contrasting the last twenty years with the previous thirty, the East India Company have, during the latter period, occupied *ten* times the quantity of most valuable land, expended *twelve* times the capital, and realized only *four* times the profit. From this it would appear, that the more the cultivation is extended, the less is the ratable profit. The mere enunciation of such an anomalous fact, carries with it the conviction, that the whole system, so far as the Government monopoly is concerned, is vicious in the extreme. But this branch of revenue is liable also to the disadvantage of great uncertainty, being dependent upon the action of a foreign Government, and the caprice of its subjects. In consequence of the enforcement of the Chinese laws, in 1839–40, the opium revenue of India was for the time converted into a loss; and, still further, the very means taken to prevent the recurrence of a similar catastrophe, may very probably eventuate in worse, even the total annihilation of the revenue. These means have been—the extorting the legalization of the import into China. But it is quite certain, that along with that, there must also be the legalization of the growth of the poppy in China, and the production of opium at a price far below what the Indian Government could sell at. We have dwelt the longer on this branch of our inquiry, because of its importance in the present financial position of India, and also because it is the loss of that revenue which is the great obstacle in the way of righteous legislation on the subject.*

After the Government of India come the purchasers at the public sales in Calcutta. These are large English and native houses. Their princely wealth, and, as regards many of them, their princely munificence, alike testify how lucrative the trade is to them. With scarcely

* In his speech on the Indian Budget, Lord Stanley fully admitted the precariousness of this revenue, and so far back as October 19th, 1831, the Directors warned the Bengal Government against placing implicit reliance on it.

an exception, the British and American houses in China are engaged in it; and so much is it involved in all the business done there, that it is scarcely possible for a merchant to avoid it if he would. Both for its security and its profits, the opium trade has become so much a favourite, that all other departments of business are comparatively unpopular; British manufactures especially being "considered almost a bore." * We need scarcely say how important it is to keep this in view, in weighing any testimony from that quarter, whether as regards the commercial or moral bearings of the trade.

Passing by the Chinese purchaser and dealers, who, it is supposed, also find the trade a profitable one, we come lastly to the consumer. As the drug, in the form in which it is used in China, is avowedly and at best a luxury, indulgence in which, it is never pretended, tends to reproduce wealth by increasing the physical or mental power of the consumer, the commercial part of the inquiry may here well terminate, so far as those *directly* interested in the trade are concerned. But it is just at this point that the most important part of this branch of our inquiry begins, namely, What are the effects of the opium trade on other commercial interests; in short, on the general commerce of Britain, India, and China?

Our commerce with China has been the most disappointing chapter in the history of free trade. It has resulted, whatever be the cause, in a state of matters utterly anomalous. Four years after the trade was opened, our imports had increased £2,000,000 annually, but the average increase of our exports was only £400,000. New ports were thrown open in 1842; imports again increased; but in the course of other four years the whole trade had become so ruinous that a special Committee of the House of Commons was appointed in 1847 to inquire into it. After a very full examination of evidence of the most competent character, they reported,—“We find that the difficulties of the trade do not arise from any want of demand in China for articles of British manufacture, or from the increasing competition of other nations.” The cause they did assign was the difficulty of providing a return from China. In other words, could we take more tea, the Chinese would take more manufactures—they would not give us it for nothing. Sound reasoning, we should suppose, and eminently confirmed by recent free-trade legislation. The Committee therefore recommended “a considerable reduction of the duty on tea.” Although it was six years before this recommendation was carried out, and then only to a partial extent, the results have been most remarkable, as regards the consumption, and consequently, the import of tea. In 1846, the consumption was forty-six millions of pounds; in 1858, it reached seventy-three millions.

A still greater increase has taken place within late years in the import of silk, the other great Chinese staple, owing to the short produce in Europe. In 1843–6, the average value of Chinese silk imported was £1,058,432, while the average of 1854–8, was £3,973,811. The means for improving our exports to China were thus in operation to an extent not anticipated. Did they accomplish the end contemplated? The following table will show:—

* Mr. Donald Matheson, in “Leeds Mercury.” Mr. Ingram Cooke’s letters to the “Times.”

	IMPORTS.			EXPORTS.
	Tea.	Silk.	Together.	
Average of 1843-46 1854-58	£3,435,483 4,993,244	£1,058,432 3,973,811	£4,493,915 8,967,055	£1,987,616 1,964,242
Increase	£1,557,761	£2,915,379	£4,473,140	
Decrease .....	...	...	...	£22,774

Imports had doubled, and show an increase of £4,473,140; exports fell off £22,774. If the last year of the comparison were kept out of the account, the decrease would have been £250,825 below what they were when they were thought so low that a Committee was appointed to inquire into the trade. The cause of such an extraordinary discrepancy should not be very difficult to discover. Accordingly, it seems obvious enough, when we find that between these two periods the Indian opium imported into China had risen from 38,000 to 76,000 chests, and from £5,000,000 to £8,000,000. This is very clearly put in the following extract from *The Friend of China*, July 28th, 1849. It refers to an increase in the shipment of silk for that year, and, although written before the reduction of the tea duty, foretells the result of such a measure most accurately:—

“The silk taken in barter for opium was shipped to England and sold at a profit, while Lancashire and Yorkshire goods, the legitimate articles of exchange, would have rotted in the stores of Shanghai, had the factors not pushed them off for what they would fetch. There is no way of getting over the difficulty. The opium trade progresses steadily. The increased consumption of teas and silk in Great Britain would merely result in the increase of the opium trade; the case of the British manufacturer is hopeless.”—*From Alexander's Rise and Progress of Opium Smuggling.*

Foreign competition has been suggested to account for this falling off; but in the words of the Committee's Report, there is no evidence for this. Such a cause would be wholly irreconcilable with the state of our exports generally, which are increasing in every direction, enormously. The following figures bring this out very strikingly. We give a comparison for the same periods as before of exports to all countries, to China, and to India—in climate and population the country nearest to China. The latter period is confined to 1857, as the returns for all countries are not yet out for 1858.

Average of Exports of British Produce and Manufactures.

	All Countries.	India.	China, including Hong-Kong.
1843 to 1846	£57,190,489	£6,813,248	£1,987,016
1854-57	107,691,466	10,322,403	1,736,191
Increase	£50,500,977 or 87 ½ cent.	£3,509,155 or 51 ½ cent.	
Decrease .....	...	...	£250,825 or 12 ½ cent.

But striking as these figures are, especially bearing in mind those on page 8, showing the great increase in our imports from China, the full force of the contrast is not sufficiently brought out, unless we also remember that the empire, where we are so unsuccessful in our commerce, contains much more than a third of the population of the globe,—and that population intensely mercantile in its character,—and that it is intersected by innumerable canals, affording the cheapest means of conveyance from the coast to the interior; while India, with one or two exceptions, has scarcely a road or canal worthy of the name. Yet, to “this magnificent market,” as the Committee call it, we send much the same quantity of goods that we do to Egypt, to such petty republics as La Plata or Chili, or to the slave population of Cuba!

Table of British Exports, on the average of 4 years, ending 1857, to—

Egypt, with a population of	4,000,000	£1,548,674
Cuba and St. Domingo, “	2,400,000	1,734,448
Chili, “	1,400,000	1,417,314
CHINA, “	400,000,000	1,736,191

Were the amount of the opium trade converted into British manufactures, the shipments to China, instead of barely equalling those to some of the petty states already named, would amount to the whole of them together, and of several more besides, and would place it next to the United States as our best customer. “Cease sending us so much opium,” said the chief Magistrate of Shanghai, “and we shall be enabled to take your manufactures.”

Any inquiry into the commercial relations of Britain and China must embrace those of India with China. The table below is instructive, and points in the same direction as those going before. We take the same periods of comparison as formerly.

Average of Exports from India to China.

YEARS.	Opium.*		Cotton.	Sundries.	TOTAL.
	Chests.	£	£	£	£
1842-3 to 1845-6	33,252	4,181,305	1,164,713	199,853	5,545,876
1853-4 to 1857-8	65,540	6,365,319	673,537	296,872	7,335,728
Increase	32,288	2,184,014	...	97,019	1,789,852
Decrease .....	...	...	491,181		

* It may be thought there is a discrepancy between the figures under Opium, both as regards quantity and value, and those given on page 8. To reconcile these, it must be noted, that the *quantity* imported into China is increased by trans-shipments from the Straits; and the *value*, by the amount of these trans-shipments, and the handsome profit and charges on the amount, as exported from India. The figures on page 8 are for the last year; those above are the average. We must call attention, in passing, to the remarkable confirmation this table affords as to the diminishing rate of revenue yielded by opium. An increase of 97 per cent. in quantity gives only 52 per cent. in value, and, but for the high price in the last year, caused by the legalization of the trade in China, it would have been only 41 per cent.

For twelve or thirteen years after the opening of the India and China trade in 1813, opium formed scarcely one-half of the exports to China. In 1858, cotton was £393,493, and opium £8,241,032, or *ninety per cent.* of the whole!

It is impossible to resist the conclusion to be drawn from these tables. If the Chinese take value for their exports in one form, they cannot, at the same time, take it in another; and further, as will be seen shortly, the more they take in opium, the more they diminish their productive power, and consequent ability to become profitable customers in any trade. The commercial part of our inquiry cannot be better summed up than in the words of Captain Elliot, British Superintendent of Trade in China. The opium traffic, in its general effects, is "*intensely mischievous to every branch of trade.*"

We come now to the most important part of our inquiry: *What are the moral and physical results of opium, as an article of luxury (and of the opium trade) to the consumer?* It is alleged that these are poverty, demoralization, and death. The evidence that is adduced in proof of these accusations preponderates to such an extent over that of an opposite, or rather of a modified, description, both in amount and in character, as to be altogether overwhelming. As for the very few Government officials who defend or palliate the trade, it will be found that they are contradicted, in the strongest terms the English language can furnish, by others in the same circumstances, or in other public positions affording even better opportunities of observation; that their defence is only a resort to a comparison between opium and spirits, to a disparagement of the latter; or, that they are not free from the taint of at least an indirect interest in the trade.* It may be as well here to examine the comparison alluded to. It is said, "Opium-smoking in moderation is no worse than spirit or wine-drinking in moderation." In answer to this, it is sufficient to say, the *least* indulgence in opium is *with a view* to produce that which is the result of an *excess* in alcoholics. In such a case we would prefer the hospital Surgeon's testimony to the Governor's; and here is that of Dr. Hirschberg, Medical Superintendent of the Chinese Hospital, Morison's Hill, Hong-Kong:—

"It is irrational, and very unfair, to compare the practice of opium-smoking, 'in moderation,' with the use of intoxicating beverages, 'in moderation;' it would be rational and no more than fair, to compare the opium-smoker—whether he be a moderate or immoderate one, a beginner or an inveterate one—with the man who drinks with the fixed intention of getting intoxicated. The primary, and mostly the sole purpose of the opium-smoker is, that he may fall into a trance or ecstasy; the secondary is, to forget misery, to allay pain, hunger, &c."

Dr. Little, who occupied a similar position in Singapore, says of the power of a smoker to inhale a mouthful or two, and, before his quantity is expended, to cry, "Hold—enough," "I have never seen it, and I have searched everywhere for one who, with money, stopped short of partial insensibility.....Many drink, but do not abuse it; many smoke opium, but all abuse it."

* E.G., Sir John Bowring, the father of one of the largest opium merchants in China. A thorough exposure, by the Edinburgh Anti-Opium Committee, of his reckless statements at the British Association, has already appeared in some of the most widely-circulated newspapers, and remains unanswered.

Mr. Matheson says, "The only comparison that can be made is between opium-smoking and *drunkenness*,"—not moderate drinking.

Further, the deprivation of his beverage will not affect the moderate drinker,—the want of opium, on the same and many other authorities, is sure to bring on disease, and may even be fatal to the "moderate" opium-smoker. Lastly, a "moderate" use of opium is *sure*, unless in exceptional organizations, to lead to unbounded indulgence, with all its ruinous consequences.

Reverting to the general question, we cannot do better than quote the following remarkable testimony:—

"However valuable opium may be when employed as an article of medicine, it is impossible for anyone who is acquainted with the subject, to doubt, that the habitual use of it is productive of the most pernicious consequences, destroying the healthy action of the digestive organs, weakening the powers of the mind as well as the body, and rendering the individual who indulges himself in it, a worse than useless member of society. I cannot but regard those who promote the use of opium as an article of luxury as inflicting a most serious injury on the human race."

(Signed)

B. C. BRODIE.

And by twenty-four more of the most distinguished members of the London Faculty.

How affecting is the following testimony from the unhappy Coleridge—a testimony which he solemnly charged his friends to make public! After a most harrowing description of his misery, he says:—

"I used to think the text in St. James, 'that he who offended in one point offends in all,' very harsh; but now I feel the awful, the tremendous truth of it. In the *one crime of opium* what crimes have I not made myself guilty of! Ingratitude to my Maker; to my benefactors, injustice; and unnatural cruelty to my poor children; self-contempt for my repeated promise-breach, nay, too often, actual falsehood. After my death I earnestly entreat that a full and unqualified narration of my wretchedness, and of *its guilty cause*, may be made public, that at least some little good may be effected by the dreadful example."

The proof of the accusation that opium-smoking is productive of poverty, demoralization, and death, is so abundant, that the difficulty is to make a selection. With regard to the *poverty* of which it is the cause, when once the habit is commenced, the quantity *must* be increased from day by day till it has been known to reach one hundred-fold, to produce the desired excitement. All concur in this. It soon comes to cost the greater part of the labourer's wages; he is not only pauperized, but actually starved. At last his whole earnings are insufficient to purchase opium alone. A Chinaman says to Mr. Matheson, "He can do without rice (that is, meals) for a time, and without clothes, but not without opium." *The Times'* Commissioner says, he found the coolies smoking 80 out of the 100 cash they earned daily. Dr. Little found men in the House of Correction who smoked in the average 1 dol. 37 cents. in the month more than they earned, which of course had to be begged, borrowed, or stolen.

This naturally leads to the demoralization caused by the practice. The craving is so irresistible, the smoker will stop short of no crime to appease it. The Rev. Alexander Williamson, from Shanghai, says: "Its tendency to crime is most appalling. It loosens all sense of moral obligation. There is hardly an evil which I have not heard or seen perpetrated by these infatuated mortals." In Assam, Mr. Bruce, Superintendent of tea-plantations, says: "He will steal, sell his pro-

perty, his children, the mother of his children, and, finally, even commit murder for it." When unable to obtain it by any means, Dr. Little has known a man rip himself up. Many such cases occurred during the recent siege of Lucknow. Mr. Sym, an opium agent of the East India Company, says: "One opium cultivator demoralizes a whole village," and traces half the crimes in opium-growing districts to its effects. One most revolting feature of the indulgence we can only allude to—the gross licentiousness with which it is associated. The evidence on this point is not fit for publication.

As to the *mortality*, a well-known Missionary, the Rev. W. C. Burns, speaks of it "as threatening by its direct, and still more by its indirect, effects, poverty and anarchy, to sweep away a great part of this nation off the earth." Assam has almost been depopulated by it, the growth there being free. Dr. Little asserts that, owing to the increase in the mortality, and the decrease in births occasioned by the practice, the race of Chinese in Singapore would, in two or three generations become extinct, but for the influx of new immigrants. On the whole, besides the diminution of births just adverted to, the premature deaths must amount to thousands and tens of thousands annually, along the sea-coast of China alone.

As single incidents often convey a livelier conception of a subject of this kind than general statements, however accurate, we give one or two. The following is from Dr. Medhurst:—

"Whilst these notes were preparing, the writer had occasion to go into the City, and just inside the north gate, in front of a temple, he saw one of such destitute persons unable to procure either food or the drug, lying at the last gasp; there were two or three others with drooping heads sitting near, who looked as if they would soon be prostrated too. The next day, the writer passed, and found the first of the group dead and stiff, with a coarse mat wound round his body for a shroud. The rest were now lying down, unable to rise. The third day another was dead, and the remainder almost near it. Help was vain, and pity for their wretched condition the only feeling that could be indulged."

Dr. Hirschberg says:—

"The then police Magistrate frequently sent to me poor Chinese found in the street nearly dead. Many of these were brought to this state by the *want of opium*, and as long as I live, I shall remember one beggar woman, who, having been carried up by two policemen, and laid on a mat, held out her hand as in the act of begging, and cried out continually, '*A—peen! A—peen!*' (Opium! Opium!) She died the next day, with her arm stretched out, her hand open, and her last word was, '*A—peen!*'"

And her "cry entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." We would ask our opium princes, "Have you ever read words like these: 'Go to, now, ye rich men; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days,'—when that poor tempted sister shall stand side by side with you, to tell how those riches were gathered?"

Dr. Little says:—

"Upstairs I found one woman who had been an opium smoker for three years. She stated she had two children, but they were very sickly, and always crying. And how did she stifle their cries? O, women! if you have a spark of motherly feeling in you, ye will join with me in execrating this vice, whose practices are so horrible, that, if I could not vouch for it, credulity itself might turn a deaf ear to my cry.

I saw the woman pressing to her shrivelled, sapless breasts, her weeping offspring, whose thin and yellow face, and withered limbs, showed how little sustenance was to be obtained there. Its shrill cries, and convulsive limbs, seemed now to excite the attention of the mother, who was all the time enjoying her pipe, when, to my horror and astonishment, she conveyed from her lips to that of the child's, the fresh-drawn opiate vapour, which the babe inspired. This was repeated twice, when it fell back a senseless mass into its mother's arms, and allowed her quietly to finish her unholy repast"—

—on poison bought [now] from "Her Majesty Queen Victoria," whose servants prepare it to the taste of that mother, and do their best to minister to a vice that has sunk her immeasurably below the brute!

Enough—more than enough. The Select Committee of the House of Commons shall answer this part of our inquiry: "*The demoralizing results of the opium trade are INCONTESTABLE AND INSEPARABLE FROM ITS EXISTENCE.*"

One feature of this part of the inquiry, however, demands special notice. By the testimony of Missionaries of all denominations, the opium trade is the great stumbling-block in their way. "Why preach to us?" said an old man to a Missionary friend of ours; "Why preach to us? Preach to your countrymen. I had three as fine sons as you could look on; one is already in his grave; a second is dying; a third is reduced to rags—all through your opium." The two-fold character by which an Englishman is known in China, is as an opium merchant, or as a Missionary; and, with beautiful consistency, Lord Elgin's Treaty stipulated accordingly for the legalization of Christianity, and—opium!

It may now be necessary, very briefly, to review the actings of the British and Chinese Governments respectively. The former (through the East India Company) for a considerable period professed to act on the principle of drawing a large revenue from a small supply, by keeping up the price as high as possible. But for more than thirty years they have discarded this profession, and their object now is to procure as large a supply as can be obtained, except from those districts where, for other reasons, it is not considered expedient to allow the cultivation of the poppy. With this view, says Mr. St. George Tucker, an eminent member of the Indian Government,—

"We introduced it into our own districts, where it had not been cultivated before, or where it had been abandoned, and gave our revenue officers an interest in extending the cultivation in preference to other produce much more valuable and deserving of encouragement."

Besides this, they contracted "burdensome treaties," with independent states, to introduce the culture, and hand all the produce over to them. It is of great importance to observe this, for it lays the responsibility of the independent growth at the door of the British Government. When these treaties would not work, a transit duty was imposed on the growth of these states, on its way to the port of shipment. A large portion of it, however, to avoid this duty, went round to the ports of Scinde. Scinde was annexed, and one reason which has been alleged for this "gigantic act of necessary villany," as it has been termed, was, that we might obtain possession of these ports, and, by thus necessitating the opium to pass through British

territory, enable the East India Company to raise the transit duty. At least, this was what immediately took place. From £17. 10s. it was raised to £40 per chest. After the trade was declared contraband in China, the East India Company professed to have nothing to do with the shipment to that country, and they gave up sending it on their own account. But they granted licenses to vessels to carry opium there, provided they took none but the Honourable Company's opium; they allowed these vessels, and no others, to be armed in the Hooghly; they made up the opium in their own factories, in Chinese weights, and packed so as to suit the requirements of a smuggled trade; they sent for samples of the kind most preferred by the Chinese smokers; they even endeavoured to prepare it for smoking, and sent experimental parcels to test the Chinaman's taste;* and, finally, when the stringent measures of Lin rendered opium a "drug" in more senses than one, and caused the price of what had been sold in Calcutta to fall to a ruinous extent, the Government of India—the representatives of the Queen of Britain—actually shared the loss on all opium shipped or transhipped to China. Did ever one Government deal with another as did that of Britain with China in this matter? And, after this, we complain of the treachery of the Chinese!

This is the proper place to notice one of the worst features of this trade—one, indeed, which invests it with a character truly fiendish. It is, that to a great extent the guilt of *creating the demand*, as well as furnishing the supply, is chargeable to this country. The East India Company's first venture of two hundred chests was disposed of with the greatest difficulty. So again and again "a trip," as it is called, has been made to a new part of the coast, which barely paid, or rather was a losing affair. But it was necessary to create the taste, to inoculate, rather to infect, the new population, assured that the next would be profitable. Such has been the action of the merchant, and in keeping with it has been that of the Government. A treaty with Siam provided for the free admission of opium thither. When Pegu was annexed, we found opium unknown, and the growth of the poppy prohibited. Immediately our Government farmed out the right of sale, and already a large amount finds its way into the Indian Exchequer, from the spread of a vice which, effectually suppressed by a Heathen Monarch, is fostered by the Government of a Christian Queen. In the treaty with Japan, it is true, opium is declared contraband. But our Government have intimated *they* will do nothing to enforce the prohibition; they will leave British subjects to be dealt with by the Japanese; *i. e.*, they will allow the cargo to be confiscated, for they will not surrender the persons of British subjects. But this is exactly what was said before the Chinese, under Lin, confiscated the opium; and should the Japanese follow his example, doubtless they will meet with the same treatment. Already an attempt has been made to ship it. Britain's mission in the East would seem to be the diffusion of opium.

The policy of the Chinese Government has already been briefly described. The opium war—so it will be known in history—was one

of fearful slaughter to the Chinese. As a specimen, take the following from Sir Henry Pottinger.*

"It appears that field-pieces, loaded with grape, had been planted at the side of long narrow streets, thronged with men, women, and children, and that they were mowed down like grass, and the gutters flowed with their innocent blood."

The "Times" Commissioner mentions one scene of carnage, where, in ten minutes, the half of an army of 10,000 men "perished by the steel, or were forced into the broad river." After the principal Treaty, by which this war was closed, a supplementary one was entered into, by which the British Government (that raised and sold the chief contraband article to the smugglers) bound itself to discountenance all smuggling, (!) and also to discountenance all trading whatever, to any other than the five authorized ports. These conditions of course were never kept by us. On the contrary, licenses were granted by our authorities at Hong Kong to vessels laden to a great extent with opium, to go coasting voyages wherever they pleased. The notorious "Arrow" was one of these. The island of Hong Kong, which we obtained under the treaty, "for the purpose of careening and refitting ships, and keeping stores there for that purpose, (words which were introduced, Mr. Matheson, M.P., says, solely to "pacify the Emperor, who did not contemplate more than that," when he signed the treaty,) was immediately colonized, and shortly afterwards converted into a large opium store. While the peace lasted, the Governors of Hong Kong, by directions from Lord Palmerston, never ceased to importune the Chinese Government, by arguments and threats, to legalize the import of opium. These efforts uniformly failed; the answer of Commissioner Keying to the argument of the large revenue that might be derived, was, that such a measure would "certainly *put a value on riches, and slight men's lives*, and I am apprehensive that the great Emperor would not get over this;" and neither he would; often as his answer has been quoted, it cannot be too often held up to the shame of our nation. "It is true, I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison; gain-seeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes; but **NOTHING WILL INDUCE ME TO DERIVE A REVENUE FROM THE VICE AND MISERY OF MY PEOPLE.**" To this resolution he adhered; and although the legalization of the opium trade was made a condition of Lord Elgin's recent treaty, the present Emperor was not induced, but compelled, to grant it, by the threat of an instant march upon Peking. Thus ended the second act in the drama of our Chinese relations. A third has opened at the Peiho, the origin and probable results of which are beyond our province. One thing we are safe in saying, that to that vast population, more than a third of the human race, our nation is the object of intensest hate; a consideration which our Government may affect to despise, but which no thinking man can contemplate without concern.

Having completed our inquiry, it may be asked, What is the course which justice and humanity would dictate? Our limits prevent us doing more than merely indicating what has been proposed. At home, a feeling prevails that the present position of matters is unseemly; that "Her Majesty" should retain a monopoly of manufacture and

* Report on Trade with China, 1840, page 114.

* At a dinner given to him in Liverpool.

sale of such an article seems very undesirable. Hence, it is proposed to throw the trade open, and impose either an excise or an export duty. The objections to both are, the oppressive measures necessary to repress smuggling; the certainty that these would be most thoroughly evaded; that the revenue could never by possibility be maintained at its present amount; and, lastly and chiefly, that the dreadful results of the free cultivation in Assam might only too surely be dreaded for the whole peninsula. Another proposal is more thorough. It is, in one word, the extension to Bengal of the policy followed in Madras, Bombay, &c.—*The prohibition of the growth of the poppy.* It is said prohibition is impossible. The best answer to this is, it is practised with complete success already, wherever it is wished. Nay, more, if the British Government chose, that prohibition might be extended to the native states. Fifty years ago, when its influence was nothing to what it is now, it sufficed to put down the poppy, where its growth was considered adverse to British interests. In this way it was prohibited in Gujerat as far back as 1803; and the Bombay Government, writing many years later, say the cultivation in Malwa for export might be prohibited also.* Instead of that, the East India Company, as already mentioned, stimulated the growth in Malwa, binding the native authorities to deliver the produce. The true objection, and it is not concealed, is the loss to the revenue; a weighty objection, certainly, especially in the present state of Indian finance. But, after all, what is this but the old excuse of every evil-doer? "I must live!" says the thief, when told to steal no more. "I must live!" says the unhappy outcast of the streets. And does the plea avail *them*? If not, shall it be urged with success by a Christian Government? To throw it aside, to follow the dictates of justice and benevolence, will, indeed, require more "faith" than has been "found upon the earth." Yet, were it done, it is quite within probability that the sacrifice would not be so great as it seems. Remembering the insecurity of this source of revenue, the displacement it occasions of the most valuable products of the soil, the incalculable damage it inflicts on the commercial interests of Britain, and the material evils, following on the moral, in India, we hesitate not to avow our belief, that in this, as in everything else, honesty would be found the best policy. *That can never be politically or economically right, which is morally wrong.* The sovereignty of the universe is not divided. The God of justice is the God of might. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

* Report on Opium, House of Commons Committee, 1840.