

THE OPIUM QUESTION.

A REVIEW

OF

THE OPIUM POLICY OF GREAT BRITAIN, AND ITS
RESULTS TO INDIA AND CHINA.

DEDICATED TO THE EARL OF CHICHESTER.

BY THE REV.

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DEDICATION.

—◆—
TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF CHICHESTER,
PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

MY LORD,

The following Essay was written by my brother at a Mission Station in China, in the midst of many occupations, and at a distance from literary helps.

The Society which has undertaken to advocate the limitation and repression of the Opium Trade nevertheless thought the facts and arguments it embodies worthy of publication, and desired me, as my brother's representative in England, to request your Lordship's permission to dedicate it to you, the Patron and Friend of Missions during so many years.

In my brother's name and my own, I beg to acknowledge your kindness in granting our request, and

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged and faithful servant,

GEORGE E. MOULE.

DORCHESTER, *Jan. 27, 1877.*

PREFACE.

I HAVE been asked to say a few words by way of preface to the following Essay; and perhaps my commendatory notice may carry more weight to some readers, because I frankly own at the outset what grave difficulties seem to me to beset the question. I several times examined the subject when I was in India, and I well remember how hard I found it to come to a practical decision, when I took into account the pressing difficulty of Indian finance. Still it is not merely a question of politics or revenue,—it involves a grave question of national morality. Few people, I think, can fairly look into the evidence as given in this and similar works, without coming to the conclusion that England has committed a grievous wrong in forcing the Opium trade on China. I hope that such Essays as this by Mr. Moule will help to awaken the national conscience on the subject; and when once men's minds are fairly aroused, it will be easier to devise ways of meeting the revenue

difficulty. A duty does not cease to be a duty, because it is difficult; and I cannot believe that England, if once convinced of the enormous evils which the Opium trade involves, will be content to fold her hands as if powerless to stay the mischief, and will not rather resolve, even at some cost and loss to herself, to get rid of the disgrace which has been brought on the national honour.

E. B. COWELL.

CAMBRIDGE, *Jan.* 8, 1877.

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THE OPIUM QUESTION.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORY OF BRITISH OPIUM POLICY.

THE History of the Opium Trade may be thus summarized. For 27 years it was carried on without much notice, and the drug was introduced professedly as medicine. For 60 years it was a contraband trade, and carried on in spite of edicts, entreaties, and force on the part of the Chinese. For 16 years it has been placed on a footing with other branches of commerce.

The British trade in opium must be supposed to date from the year 1773, when the British East India Company made a small adventure of opium from Bengal to China. Before that period the trade, such as it was (rarely exceeding 200 chests up to the year 1769, and continuing at the maximum of 1000 chests for many years subsequently), was in the hands of the Portuguese.

Opium was not unknown to the Chinese before the introduction of the foreign drug. The natives of Assam, where it has long been used, are supposed by some to have made it known originally

Opium introduced from Assam.

(Possibly
indige-
nous.)

to the Chinese.¹ The *Pen Ts'au*, or Chinese Herbal, published more than two centuries ago, mentions it, however, in such a way as to lead one to look upon the poppy as indigenous. Opium was at that time sold regularly as a drug, and used as an astringent and sedative in dysentery, diarrhœa, rheumatism, catarrh, and other diseases, but generally in combination with other drugs. Its different names, O-fu-yung, O-p'ien, imitations apparently of the Arabian Afioum, and Persian Afioum, seem to suggest Arabia or Persia as the original importers. At present it is more usually called Ya-p'ien (an imitation of opium), or Yang-yen (foreign smoke). Opium was a recognized product of Yung-chang, in the West of Yunnan, in 1736. In Se-ch'uen the story is that the poppy, now extensively cultivated there and beginning to oust the foreign drug, was introduced from India and Thibet 100 years ago.²

Or from
Arabia and
Persia.

Long
known as a
medicine;
not as a
luxury.

The sale of the Indian drug by way of Canton did not therefore introduce an hitherto unknown drug, but prompted its use for other than medicinal purposes. The writings of the Roman Catholic Missionaries from 1580 down to the eighteenth century, contain no allusion to the use of opium as a stimulant.³

1773-1793. Seven years after the first adventure in 1773,

¹ See Williams' "Middle Kingdom," ii. 382.

² Dr. Porter Smith's "Chinese Materia Medica and Natural History," pp. 162, 163.

³ Williams' "Middle Kingdom," ii. 385.

the East India Company established a depôt of two small vessels in Lark's Bay, south of Macao; the price was then \$550 a chest. In 1781 the cargo was sold at a heavy loss, and reshipped by the Chinese purchaser to the Archipelago. In 1791 it was imported as "medicine," at a duty of \$7 a cwt., and sold at \$370 a chest. In 1793, the Chinese having complained of the receiving ships at Lark's Bay, and the Portuguese having declined to undertake the responsibility of their protection, the station was removed to Whampoa, and for twenty-six years this position was maintained. Meanwhile the importation of opium had been prohibited (1799), and the punishment for smoking it at first was made transportation, and then increased to strangling. In 1800 heavy penalties were denounced as the result of an infraction of the decree declaring opium contraband. In consequence of this the supercargo of the East India Company recommended the Court of Directors to endeavour to prevent the shipment of the article for China, either in England or Bengal, and the result was that while the growth of opium was not interfered with, its conveyance in the Company's ships was temporarily interdicted. In 1809 a bond was required from the Hong merchants on the arrival of a ship at Whampoa, declaring that she had no opium on board; and it was announced that in case of disobedience the vessel would be expelled the port without discharging cargo, and the security

The importation of opium prohibited 1799.

Growth of the poppy continued. Shipment in E.I.C.'s ships stopped for a time.

Edict against opium.

merchants brought to trial. This edict was frequently repeated. In 1821 the Governor of Canton took vigorous measures, with a view to the suppression of the traffic. The drug had been continuously introduced by the bribed connivance of the local Chinese officials; but in this year the senior Hong merchant was disgraced, and papers were issued throwing the whole odium of the trade on the Portuguese, English, and Americans; the Americans might be excusable "having no king to rule over them," but all were exhorted to abandon so pernicious a practice. "The gods," said the Governor, "will carry fair dealers in safety across the ocean, but over contraband smugglers the terrors of the royal law on earth and the wrath of the infernal gods are suspended." The ships thereupon moved to Lin-tin, and spread the drug thence up the coast, even to T'ien-tsin and Manchuria. The habitual connivance of local officers led to the assumption that the edicts from Peking meant nothing, and the trade was eagerly engaged in. This state of things lasted from the year 1821 till the expiry of the East India Company's Charter in 1834. The contraband trade in opium off the Bogue assumed a regular character, and many fast sailing ships passed northwards, selling their cargoes with varying success.

It must not be forgotten that a knowledge of the exclusive policy of the Chinese exercised towards merchants, at least since the opening of the eighteenth century, may have contributed also

1821.

Measures
and procla-
mation of
Governor
of Canton.

Connivance
of local
officers.

1821-1834.

Exclusive
policy of
Chinese
cast doubts
on their
honesty of
purpose in

to the impression that some sinister motive, and denouncing the opium trade. not the honest hatred of a pernicious drug, lay at the root of this prescriptive policy. Our subject will allow, however, of no more than a passing glance at this strange picture. On the one side we see this great and long-secluded nation opening, and but ajar, one of its southern gates for commerce with the "far-travelled strangers;" treating those adventurers with haughty superciliousness, addressing them as vassals and barbarians, and restricting jealously their liberty. On the other side, these merchants from the civilized and stirring West are seen knocking at the door, and persisting in their efforts to gain an entrance, still using as their battering-ram a contraband trade, and inserting into every crevice or larger breach in the walls a drug, the use of which the Chinese denounce as pernicious and immoral.

The events of the year 1834 must be very briefly 1834, Lord Napier's Mission. summarized. Lord Napier's chivalrous attempt to carry into effect the change of English policy towards China—that policy formed all too hastily and in real ignorance of the state of things under the East India Company's *régime* at Canton; the insolent advantage taken of this mistake by the Chinese Governor; his refusal to receive aught but a petition from Lord Napier; the stoppage for a time of all trade; Lord Napier's retirement to Macao pending a reference to England for instructions; and his death there from over His death. fatigue and chagrin—these are events well known

President
Adams'
view of the
war.
The opium
war, a just
war.

to the student of recent history, and these events constituted, in the opinion of the American President Adams, the true cause, and a just cause, for the war of 1842-3, generally known as the Opium War, and which resulted in the peace of Nanking. China would not bend. England was her tributary, and China must break then before the power of her despised vassal.

Meanwhile the coast trade in opium went on. It was the only import which would sell, and patriotic Chinamen dreaded and opposed the opening of the country to trade, chiefly lest this drug should be increasingly used.

In the season of 1835-36 the Chief Superintendent of British trade remained at Lintin, on board a small cutter anchored amidst the opium ships, and he recommended the British Government to purchase a small vessel for the permanent accommodation of the Commissioner, thus beyond the reach of the Chinese. He reports that "the smuggling affrays on the north-east coast are not *more* serious nor more frequent than in the Canton province. Whenever Her Majesty's Government directs us to prevent British vessels from engaging in the traffic, we can enforce an order to that effect; but a more certain method would be to prohibit the growth of the poppy and the manufacture of opium in British India."⁴ The British Government did not adopt this suggestion. On April 25th, 1837, Captain Eliot, the new Super-

Smug-
gling.

British
Govern-
ment
supine.
1837, Capt.
Eliot.

⁴ Williams' "Middle Kingdom," ii. 489—491.

intendent of Trade, an honourable man, to whom the continuance of the contraband trade was an abomination, returned to Canton on the same footing as that held by the officers of the East India Company, communicating with the Chinese authorities only by petition and through the Hong merchants.

The empire was now agitated by the *opium question*. Heu Nai-tsai, President of the Sacrificial Court, and formerly Salt Commissioner and Judge at Canton, memorialized the Emperor in favour of the legalization of the opium trade, urging in support of his views—first, that the drain of silver will be stopped; secondly, that the revenue will be enriched; and thirdly, that the consumption of the drug will be regulated. To him replied in counter memorial Chu Tsun, a Cabinet Minister, and Hu Kiu, a sub-censor, enumerating in their papers the dire evils introduced into the empire by the drug, and urging the instant and stringent execution of often fulminated and long-despised restrictive edicts. The Emperor, Tao Kwang, took the sense of the empire on this momentous question through his high officials. The great majority voted against legalization and for annihilation of the trade; and the notorious and ill-fated Lin, despatched by his sovereign with tears shed over his imperilled people, to see, inquire, and act, reached Canton on March 10th, 1839.

The opium controversy in China.

Opium condemned by China.

Commissioner Lin arrives at Canton, March, 1839.

China will make one desperate effort to eject the poison. Lin demanded the surrender of all

Liu's
vigour and
violence.

the opium on board the ships at Lintin. He acted with vigour and reality of purpose, but mingled with his sincere zeal, inexcusable insolence and injustice. In strict conformity with the edict first issued in 1809, and afterwards repeated (to which I have already drawn attention), all that Lin could in justice demand was the expulsion of the opium ships from Chinese waters. But he was armed with plenipotentiary powers, and he carried matters with a high hand. He impounded all the foreigners for several days in the factories, and kept them there till 20,283 chests of opium, valued at eleven million dollars, had been, by Captain Eliot's order,

Opium sur-
rendered.
Bond
signed.

surrendered to him to be handed over to the Commissioner; and a bond moreover was signed by almost all the foreign merchants "not to deal in opium, nor attempt to introduce it into the Chinese Empire." This vast quantity of property was faithfully destroyed by the Emperor's express order. Not content with this great achievement, Lin proceeded to further acts of violence. He took vengeance on innocent British subjects at Macao, because of the inability to discover the British sailor guilty of manslaughter at Hongkong; he declared all trade with the British nation at an end (Dec. 6th, 1839), and he succeeded in making any other arbitration but that of the sword out of the question.

British
trade
stopped.

Capt. Eliot
guarantees
compensa-
tion to
opium
holders.

Captain Eliot, when requiring the surrender of the opium from British subjects, guaranteed that the British Government would make good the loss.

Now Lord Palmerston, in 1837, had written orders to the effect that "any loss which British subjects may suffer in consequence of the more effectual execution of the Chinese laws on this subject of opium, must be borne by the parties who have brought that loss upon themselves." Yet the guarantee was not repudiated, and by the 4th Article of the Treaty of Nanking, which closed the war immediately following on these events, six million dollars were demanded as compensation for the opium surrendered, "as ransom for British subjects imprisoned in the factories at Canton." By Article 48 of that Treaty it is enacted that, "If any smuggle goods, the goods will be liable to confiscation." It is not fair to judge by an *ex post facto* law, but these two articles are scarcely consistent. The opium was demanded as contraband; as such, the Treaty of Nanking says it was liable to confiscation, and yet for that confiscation an indemnity is demanded. Is it thus, and and thus alone, that Great Britain can confess her faults? She grasps six million dollars in one hand (but a portion of which, by the bye, ever reached the original owners of the opium), and with the other she indites an Article declaring that in that matter of opium she was verily guilty.⁵

Guarantee
honoured
by British
Government.

Tacit ad-
mission of
fault by
Great Bri-
tain.

Sir Henry Pottinger, after the signing of the

The cause
of the war
of 1842-3,
Opium.

⁵ But see letter to the Editor of the "Bengal Hurkaru," maintaining that a principal (the British Government) is absolutely bound by a fully authorized agent's (Captain Eliot) engagements.—"Chinese Report," viii. pp. 113—120.

Treaty of Nanking. Treaty of Nanking, “ offered a few remarks to the Chinese Commissioners on *the great cause that produced the disturbances which led to the war, namely, the trade in opium.*”⁶

Opium still contra-
band. The trade was not legalized by that treaty, though Sir H. Pottinger had express instructions from his Government to accomplish this end if possible. The Chinese Commissioners politely, but positively, declined all suggestions to that effect, and Keying asked eagerly, Why the British Government would not unite with the Chinese in annihilating the trade ?

England offers a proclama-
tion, but
will not en-
force it. Sir Henry Pottinger had received authority to exclude opium from Hongkong and its waters, and he was willing to issue a proclamation in the Queen’s name calling on all opium ships to leave the harbours and inner waters of China on pain of seizure or confiscation, *provided that the Chinese were willing to enforce this penalty without the assistance of the British Government.* This, as was well known, the Chinese Government was impatient to effect, and from the sharp lessons of the antecedents and consequents of the war, they prudently declined the responsibility.

China dares not enforce it.

The British authorities, therefore, merely expressed their determination to prevent the contra-band trade from being mixed with the legal, and no definite orders against smuggling were issued. Meanwhile the Consuls at the now opened ports, in their trade returns forwarded to the Governor

⁶ Williams’ “ Middle Kingdom,” ii. 569.

of Honkong for transmission to the Home Government, gave statistics of the opium trade, as well as of that in tea and silk. Speedily the traffic surpassed all previous limits, and British ships heavily armed, as well as Danish and Swedish, laden with opium, lay at Whampoa amongst the regular traders. The drain of silver from the Empire became increasingly large, and lawful trade was injured and embarrassed. Opium trade flourishes.

From the signing of the Treaty of Nanking, 1842-1856. Aug. 29th, 1842, till the seizure of the lorcha "Arrow," on Oct. 8th, 1856, a period of fourteen years, the opium trade rapidly grew, but was still contraband. The illegal seizure of the "Arrow" seems to have been prompted by irritation, on account of continuous and daring smuggling. The attempt to compel Yeh to apologize by force of arms followed. On the arrival of the expedition diverted by Lord Elgin for the defence of Calcutta during the Indian Mutiny, Canton was stormed. Governor Yeh. War. Canton stormed. The expedition then moved northwards, and after the failure of negotiations, communicated to Peking from Soochow, the forts on the Peiho were taken, and T'ien-tsin occupied. Keying committed suicide by Imperial order. After much duplicity and delay, the Treaty of T'ien-tsin was signed by Lord Elgin, Treaty of T'ien-tsin, June 26, 1858. June 26th, 1858. In the following year, his brother, the Honourable Mr., afterwards Sir Frederick, Bruce, started for Peking to exchange the ratifications of the Treaty, according to Art. lvi., within a year from the date of its signature. The Taku Repulse at Taku Forts.

March on
Peking.
Convention
of Peking,
Oct. 24,
1860.

forts stubbornly resisted his passage, and the fleet was driven back. A new expedition was sent out from England; the allied French and English forces marched triumphantly to Peking; and the ratifications of the Treaty of T'ien-tsin, together with the Convention of Peking, were exchanged and signed in Peking, Oct. 24th, 1860.

Opium no
longer con-
traband.

By Art. xxvi. and xxviii. of the Treaty it was agreed that a new tariff should be arranged by officials of the contracting Powers; and the Treaty thus signed at Peking included a tariff and accompanying rules, in which it was at last conceded, in compliance with the combined pressure of England, France, America, and Russia, and extorted probably through the weakness and poverty of the Government of the Emperor, Hien-fung, that "Opium will henceforth pay thirty taels per pecul import duty. The importer will sell it only at the port. It will be carried into the interior by Chinese only, and, as Chinese property, no foreign trader may accompany it. The provisions of Art. ix. of the Treaty of T'ien-tsin, by which British subjects are authorized to proceed into the interior with passes to trade, will not extend to it; nor will those of Art. xxviii., by which the transit dues are regulated. The transit dues on opium will be arranged as the Chinese Government see fit; nor in future revisions of the tariff will the same rule of revision be applied to opium as to other goods."⁷

⁷ Rule 5.—"Concerning articles of commerce heretofore contraband."—"Tariff Rules," Treaty of T'ien-tsin.

The trade was legalized by local mandarins under the specious title of "foreign medicine" so early as June, 1857; but these tariff rules formed the first official recognition of the drug in its true character.

This closes our review of the history of British Opium Policy. The trade is legalized. Though guarded and restricted as to internal transit, it is no longer contraband.

Sixteen years have passed; a time long enough to test the effects of this policy on India and China. But in this investigation we cannot confine our attention to the period subsequent to 1860 alone; for the legal trade is the offspring, be it legitimate or illegitimate, of the illegal.

The last clause of the tariff rule would seem to exclude the possibility of the Chinese entertaining any future propositions as to the trade; and its legalization is considered by some final.

But the tariff rule probably excludes relaxation alone, and not a restrictive policy; and England surely is free to reconsider dispassionately the whole question. As a matter of fact it should be remembered that in the Commercial Convention arranged with the Chinese by Sir Rutherford Alcock in 1869 (a Convention eventually rejected by Her Majesty's Government), it was proposed to raise the import duty on opium from thirty to fifty taels a chest.

Commer-
cial Con-
vention of
1869.

I have thought it well to give thus in detail the different events connected with British Opium Policy, in order that the conclusions which I draw

from that history, involving grave charges against a great Christian Power, may not appear without proofs and warrants. Let, then, the following points be borne in mind:—

a. Opium grown in British India.

(*a*) British India was the field from which the opium trade drew almost all its supplies; and in British India, under the Company and under the Crown,⁸ continuous and unabated efforts have been made to suit the Chinese market, whether the trade were contraband or legal. “When the question of a new charter for the East India Company was discussed in 1832, Parliament decided that opium (though known to be contraband by the laws of China), should be grown exclusively by the Government of India, expressly for shipment to Canton.”⁹

β. Smuggling unchecked by British Government.

(*β*) Non-interference with smuggling was, as a rule, the policy of the British Government (see a letter dated Canton, Nov. 16th, 1833, and signed, W. H. C. Plowden, J. F. Davis, and J. N. Daniell).

γ. This policy continued after 1834.

(*γ*) This policy was maintained after the expiry of the East India Company’s Charter, when the monopoly of the Company in the trade with China ceased; and no instructions were given by the Home Government to the Superintendent of Trade as to the expulsion or suppression of smugglers; as Lord Melbourne expressed it in 1840, “from

⁸ In 1858 the East India Company’s last Charter of 1853, which would not otherwise have expired till 1873, was ceded to the Crown; and Her Majesty Queen Victoria became Empress of India.

⁹ “Friend of India,” July 9th, 1840.

the uncertainty of Government as to the willingness of the Chinese to legalize the trade.”

(δ) The instructions as to smuggling, given in accordance with the xlviiith Article of the Treaty of Nanking, as well as Sir H. Pottinger’s Proclamation on the subject, dated Hongkong, August 1st, 1843, were allowed to become a dead letter. δ. Instructions as to smuggling a dead letter.

Captain Hope, of H.M.S. “Thalia,” who stopped opium ships from proceeding north of Shanghai in violation of Sir Henry Pottinger’s order, which prohibited their going beyond 32° N. latitude, was recalled from his station, and ordered to India, where he could not interfere in such a manner with the undertakings of British subjects.”¹ An Order in Council, dated Feb. 24th, 1843, inflicted a penalty of a fine not exceeding £100, or imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months, on all British subjects who should proceed to other than the five open ports for trade and commerce; but no fine or penalty was threatened against those who, in armed ships and under the British flag, carried on the contraband trade in opium. Capt. Hope of H.M.S. “Thalia.”

(ε) England bore the brunt of the war of 1858-60, one of the results of which was the legalization of the Opium Trade. ε. England bore the brunt of the “Arrow” war.

In the eyes of the Chinese, therefore, without exception, and in the judgment of sober inquiry generally, Opium Policy must be regarded as the policy of the British Government. The expression “British opium policy vindicated.”

¹ Lord Palmerston’s despatch to Capt. Eliot, quoted in Williams’ “Middle Kingdom,” ii. 582.

CHAPTER II.

THE RESULTS OF BRITISH OPIUM POLICY TO INDIA.

Remarks by Lord Melbourne, “WE possess immense territories,” remarked Lord Melbourne in the China debate of May 12, 1840, “peculiarly fitted for raising opium; and *though I could wish that the Government were not so directly concerned in the traffic, I am not prepared to pledge myself to relinquish it.*”

the Duke of Wellington, and The Duke of Wellington followed, and observed that “his impression, formed after sitting as a member of the House of Lords’ Committee on British Trade generally, was, that it was a great object *that this very trade in opium should be continued, after the monopoly of the East India Company had been done away with.*”

Lord Ellenborough on the Opium Trade, May 12, 1840. Lord Ellenborough insisted upon the extreme inexpediency, as well as the inefficiency of any attempts to prevent the growth of opium in our Indian possessions. The sum at present received as revenue from that source amounted, he remarked, to upwards of a million and a half sterling, which was in effect *a tax on foreigners*; and if that were lost, the deficiency would require to be supplied by a tax on our own subjects; while all efforts to

suppress the trade from other parts would be entirely fruitless.”¹

These utterances of statesmen a generation ago may well introduce the subject of the opium trade as it affects *India*.

And first of all observe, that it has been a *lucrative* experiment. The million and a half of Lord Ellenborough has grown into an average revenue of *seven millions sterling*, or rather more than a seventh of the whole Indian revenue. The gross revenue from Behar and Benares monopoly agency at the close of 1871 amounted to £5,498,888; and the nett revenue from the tax on the Malwa or Bombay crop is from 2½ to 2½ millions sterling.²

It served for many years to turn the balance of trade wholly against the Chinese. In 1838 the items stood thus—

Value of Opium imported to Canton, in Dollars	13,344,030
Raw Cotton from Bengal, Madras, and Bombay	6,563,124
Gold and Silver	751,435
British Manufactures and Indian Produce, with that of the Straits Settlements (British manufactures only 2,493,630)	3,899,873
	<hr/>
	\$24,558,462
Exports—Tea and Silk	22,004,702
	<hr/>
Balance against the Chinese	\$2,553,760
	<hr/>

In 1854 the balance against China stood at \$7,900,000; and, as this balance must be liquidated in specie, its existence formed one of the leading

¹ Report of the Debate in the “Chinese Repository,” ix. 252, 253.

² “Times” Correspondent, dated Calcutta, Nov. 14, 1873.

complaints of Chinese statesmen. A reaction subsequently took place; and in the first three months of the year 1857 no less a sum than \$7,639,000 formed the balance of trade against England,³ that quantity of silver having been imported into China from England. A counter reaction has since then set in. From 1865 to 1871 inclusive, the value of the import trade between China and foreign countries exceeded that of the exports. But in 1872 the imports again sank from 78 to 74 millions; and the exports rose from 74 to 83 millions of taels value; thus leaving a balance in favour of China of 9 million taels.⁴ There seems to be a tendency to decline in the *import* trade from Great Britain, though with considerable fluctuations. The net imports of the first three quarters of 1873 from all countries show an increase of 9000 taels as compared with the same three quarters of 1872; but the following items of the British trade with Canton and Shanghai respectively will show that the downward tendency remains the same.

British
Imports.

No steady
increase.

Take the item of grey shirtings. In Canton the imports were as follows:—

	1871. Pieces.	1872. Pieces.	1873. Pieces.
April to June. .	24,715	8,843	16,899
In Shanghai:—			
January to March .	1,590,264	1,178,728	774,390
Total .	1,614,979	1,187,571	791,289 ⁵

³ Cooke's "China," p. 165.

⁴ "Returns of Trade at the Treaty Ports in China," 1872-73.

⁵ Cooke's "China," p. 167.

From Chinkiang, under date Jan. 26th, 1874, the following trade report reaches us :—*Grey shirtings*, a falling off of 50,000 pieces, or 26 per cent. ; *T. cloths*, a falling off of 30,000 pieces, or 50 per cent ; *sugar*, the same ; *metals*, a loss ; *woollens*, a loss.⁶ And the latest Customs returns give us the following items :—“ Nearly all kinds of piece goods show a falling off in the last quarter of 1873. In camlets, Spanish stripes, and long ells an increase ; in figured lustres a notable decline from 64,000 to 39,600. The revenue, meanwhile, has increased by 115,000 taels ; and both opium and exports show an advancing tendency.” From Shanghai, under date Feb. 4th, 1874, we learn that “ dulness has been, and is still the character of the woollen trade.” With every allowance for fluctuation, and for local and casual influences, one cannot but adopt the words of the “ Times’ ” correspondent, writing on this same subject in 1858 : “ There is no steady increase, no sure hope for the future, shown by these figures.”⁷

The *Export Trade* with Great Britain is steadier, and it has hitherto tended to advance. The net exports to all foreign countries in the first three quarters of 1873 show a falling off of no less than 800,000 taels. But the following silk and tea items, chiefly British, will show the generally steady character of the trade :—

Chinese
Exports to
Great
Britain.

⁶ Returns of Trade, published by order of Inspector-General of Customs, 1873.

⁷ “ North China Herald.”

Exported from Shanghai—

	January to September.		
	1871.	1872.	1873.
Tea (black) peculs .	350,777	368,126	352,472
Silk peculs . . .	32,381	34,521	30,742
Total of the two items	383,158	402,647	383,214

The value of all exports from China for 1870, 1871, and 1872 respectively, exhibited the following rapid advance :—

1870.	1871.	1872.
Taels.	Taels.	Taels.
61,990,235	74,860,530	83,719,187

The Opium Trade.

The *Opium Trade*, meanwhile, as far as the Chinese revenue is concerned, is growing, though not so rapidly as was formerly the case. The first three-quarters of 1871, 1872, and 1873, show the following figures of opium imports to Shanghai:—

1871.	1872.	1873.
Taels.	Taels.	Taels.
528,787	553,241	610,944 ^a

The advantage of the opium trade appears, therefore, to be that it tends to obviate the necessity for the drain of specie from England, since the Chinese readily barter their tea and silk for opium. Neither are these statistics foreign to our subject; for the pecuniary advantage, though shared in thus indirectly by England, of which India is but a dependency, is in effect an advantage enjoyed directly by India.

Take away this trade, and India is impoverished

^a Returns of Trade, 1872-73.

to the amount of seven millions sterling. Stop the trade, however, and England must not only come for a while at least to the rescue of Indian finance, but she must make good, either by exportation of specie to a vast amount, or by some mighty development of her manufactures, the balance of trade which is against her.

That balance at the close of 1868 stood thus:—

Value of British Home Productions imported	
into China	£6,000,000
Value of Chinese Produce imported into Great	
Britain	£11,000,000 ⁹

At the close of 1872 it stood thus:—

Imports from Great Britain, value <i>Taels</i>	29,885,871
Exports to „ „ „	43,022,112

A difference of more than thirteen million taels.

But that same year opium to the value of twenty-seven million taels was imported, and the aggregate value of the export and import trade of Great Britain, India, and Hongkong, from and to Chinese ports, shows an excess of fourteen million taels in favour of the imports,—that excess due to the opium trade.

The import and export *duties*, under the general head of *British*, exhibit a similar result, namely, a balance in favour of the import dues of 84,120 taels; the grand total of the duties on imports and exports, from and to *all countries*, exhibiting meanwhile a small balance of 15,000 taels in favour of China.¹

⁹ “The China Question,” by J. Macdonald, F.R.G.S.

¹ “Customs Returns of Trade.”

Its potent
influence
on Trade
generally.

The opium trade exerts and has continuously exerted a potent influence on the China trade. It has sometimes drained the resources of China very heavily; it has always kept the export trade (the tea, silk, and rhubarb, without which, as Commissioner Lin supposed, all barbarians must die) from wholly overtopping the import trade. And it has been meanwhile the mainstay of Indian finance—a fruitful and growing source of revenue.

How far the phenomenon of the slow and feeble growth of British imports has been affected by this trade, and how far the notoriously critical state of Indian finance may trace its source to this great staple of opium, must be discussed in another place. At present, it must be carefully observed that the opium trade has been a *lucrative* one to India and to the mother country.

An *uncertain* source
of revenue.
Mr. Grant
Duff's
opinion.

I notice, secondly, that it is an *uncertain* source of revenue. Mr. Grant Duff, when speaking on the Indian Budget (July 31st, 1873), reviewed first the alarming, and secondly the reassuring features of the financial future of India. Under the first head he mentioned, “*the uncertainty of the opium revenue.*”²

Fluctuates.

(a) That uncertainty may be understood in some measure from the following figures. In 1857-8 the revenue from opium had risen to £6,443,706, an increase of £1,800,000 in a single year. In

² “Our two great enemies, years of famine, and the *unknown action* of . . . Bengal Opium Monopoly.”—“Friend of India.”

1858-9 it had fallen to £5,195,191, a decrease of £1,248,515 in a single year.³ This decrease, apparently, was occasioned by the war of 1858-60; but this very fact suggests the question, whether it is prudent financially to entrust a full seventh of the whole revenue to one source, which source would be stopped or choked seriously in the event of war with China.

It is uncertain also from the fluctuation in the value of the drug. The Indian drug at the present time is *deteriorating in quality*. The quality of the drug is deteriorating.

In 1871, 59,670 peculs were valued at 28,910,925 taels.

In 1872, 61,193 ,, 28,077,500 taels.⁴

The quantity increased, the value decreased; a practice and a result wholly opposed to received principles of Indian policy, "so to regulate the opium monopoly as to realize the greatest revenue on the fairest terms, from the smallest quantity of the drug, and with the least injury to the Chinese."⁵

The "Times'" Special Correspondent, writing from Calcutta, Nov. 14th, 1873, tells us, "that whilst the acreage covered by the poppy crop in 1870-71 in Behar and Benares (the fields for Chinese opium), was 538,218; it had risen in 1871-73 to 557,067, an increase of 24,000 acres (and accompanied, as it should seem, with a decrease of revenue), the Increase of poppy acreage.

³ Lord Stanley's speech on the East India Loan.—"Church Missionary Intelligencer," April, 1859, p. 81.

⁴ "Returns of Trade," 1872.

⁵ See Campbell's "Modern India," p. 392.

policy being to increase the quantity produced, very much against the will of Sir W. Muir, the Lieutenant Governor.”^{6 7}

Chinese
native
grown
Opium fast
increasing.

(b) The uncertainty of this source of revenue is proved also by the *rapid increase in the growth of native Chinese opium*. As long as the quality of the foreign drug is not deteriorated, as long as the price is not advanced, and as long as British manufactures do not rapidly increase (compelling, with the existing value of opium imported, a large drain of specie), the danger from this source may not be considered imminent. But in the face of the facts and figures enumerated above, the following remarks from Mr. Hobson, formerly Customs Commissioner at Hankow, and drawn mainly from personal observation, are of the highest significance. “Fully half of the best arable land in Se-ch’uen is believed to be given up in the spring to the bearing of an annual crop of the poppy. *Indian opium is being replaced by the native drug*, although the price of the former, and its name for better flavour are still kept up by the native preference for it. Se-ch’uen opium can be produced to the extent of 60,000 peculs annually, and *at half the price of the Indian drug* in good years. *The drug is made to imitate the Malwa and other forms of the foreign article*. More extract for

Cheaper
than
foreign
drug.
Made to
imitate it.

⁶ “Times” Newspaper, Dec. 9th, 1873.

⁷ “Sir Richard Temple states that the ‘demand in China for Indian Opium is firmly sustained.’ *Prices do not yet support this view.*”—“Friend of India,” June 26th, 1873.

smoking is said to be got from the Se-ch'uen opium than from the Indian product. Kan-suh, Shen-si, and Shan-si yield good opium. A large quantity of opium, some of it of a very inferior kind, is produced in Honan, and largely consumed on the spot, according to Richthofen. Manchuria, and in fact all parts of the Chinese empire, produce more or less of the crop." ⁸ In a journal of a seven weeks' tour in the interior of the province of Shantung, during the summer and early autumn of 1873, Dr. Williamson remarks, "One change is to be noted with reference to the crops of Shantung, and I need not say that I regret to record it. I refer to the cultivation of the poppy. In my former tours I never heard of it, except in the gardens of a few gentlemen. Messrs. Legge and Edkins first drew attention to its wide-spread growth, and I have to add my own testimony."

These are serious facts for the contemplation of the Indian financier. The fashionable preference for the foreign drug may perhaps rapidly disappear, and to compete with the native drug on equal terms must be hopeless. Should this preference continue even, it will be necessary, with the rapidly increasing spread of the native drug, to reduce the price; and in order to do so without diminishing the revenue the Indian crop must be largely increased, a procedure involving simple and absolute waste of the best land in that country. This ruinous policy has already been pursued too far, as has

Increase of
poppy
growth in
India a
ruinous
policy.

⁸ "Chinese Materia Medica," &c. Dr. Porter Smith, p. 163.

been hinted at above. In a review of the years 1845-55 inclusive, we find that the number of chests imported into China had exactly doubled in the decade, and that the total net profit had increased only £199,191; that at the beginning of the decade 96½ per cent. was the average profit, and at its close 52¾ per cent. Thus, whilst the production was doubled, the price was reduced one-half. Compare two years—

	Chests.	Total net Profit.
1854-55 . . .	43,413 . . .	£2,187,448
1846-47 . . .	21,124 . . .	£2,096,142
	<u>22,289 . . .</u>	<u>£91,306</u>

Monstrous figures! as the Reviewer justly calls them; an increase of 22,289 chests in quantity—more than Lin destroyed in the Canton river—and an increase of revenue scarcely amounting to five rupees a chest.”⁹

This bad policy indispensable if opium is retained.

Now, in the present state of the crop in China, raising the price and diminishing the growth (the true policy, if opium is to be retained) must be considered no longer feasible. Increase of growth and diminishing the price is the only practicable plan, and that being ruinous to India, it must be admitted that Mr. Grant Duff had grave reason for his alarm as to the *uncertainty* of the opium revenue.¹ See Note D, Appendix.

⁹ “Parliamentary Papers on Opium,” pp. 53, 54, reviewed in “Church Missionary Intelligencer,” April, 1859.

¹ “It is hardly necessary to advert to the *uncertainty* which always hangs over the subject of prospective prices of Opium.’

(c) It must be remembered also under this head of uncertainty, that the crop is much dependent on the season, being easily injured by storms and winds, from its long tender stalks and heavy heads. It is also seriously affected by the amount of dew precipitated on the capsules. A current of wind or a cloudy sky checking the formation of dew, greatly lessens the quantity of juice exuded; and, on the other hand, heavy dew will sometimes wash away completely the exudation caused by the incision of the capsules, and waste the produce.”²

(d) The opium trade, further, has *wasted the soil* of India. From a statistical paper published twenty years ago by the East India Company, we learn that “the poppy requires the richest description of land. Its extended production must therefore displace other products.”³ On the finest corn-lands in Benares, Behar, and elsewhere in the northern and central parts of India, vast tracts are covered by the poppy crop. It is estimated that more than 100,000 acres of the rich plains of Central India, as well as 550,000 acres⁴ in the alluvial valley of the Ganges, are now occupied by the poppy. Formerly these same grounds were used for the production of sugar,

Sir R. Temple’s ‘Budget Minute.’—“Friend of India,” April 3rd, 1873.

² “On the preparation of Opium for the China Market. By D. Butler, M.D., formerly Opium Examiner to the Benares Agency.”—“Chinese Repository,” v. 495.

³ Quoted in “Church Missionary Intelligencer,” April, 1857.

⁴ “Times,” Dec. 9th, 1873.

indigo, corn, and other grain; but these useful crops have yielded to the more profitable culture of the poppy; which, however, is said speedily to exhaust the soil.⁵

The famine.

3. (a) In view of the famine which recently scourged the rich provinces of Behar and Rajshaye, the Indian Government has been urged to establish granaries on a gigantic scale, with capacity for a three years' supply; to be sold out one year at a time, and recouped in years of plenty;⁶ but with this great and increasing waste of soil, such a project will be hard of accomplishment, without interfering with the export trade in grain. The "Times" of Feb. 15th, 1859, was under the impression "that the opium trade was not only demoralizing to the Chinese, but also to the Indian Government; and that the improvement of public works (now at any rate under the pressing necessity for creating labour, being rapidly pushed forward) would have been more earnestly attended to, but for the easy way of getting revenue by the growth and sale of opium." Sir Bartle Frere, speaking at the Conference on the threatened famine in Bengal mentioned above, remarked that in his opinion the occupation of the people in large and useful works of irrigation and navigation was the best means to alleviate famines."⁷

Checks
improve-
ments.

⁵ "Eclectic Review," March, 1840.

⁶ "Spectator," Oct., 1873.

⁷ "London and China Express," Dec. 19th, 1873.

Is the theory right or wrong that the initiation or development of such works has been checked by the opium policy of Great Britain?

(b) But it is impossible to leave this part of my subject without a few words at least on the question of *the effect produced on Great Britain generally* by this opium policy; the seat and field of which has been her dependency, British India. If the mother country is, I will not say benefited, but at any rate uninjured, by the financial enterprise of her dependency, the results of the trade to India, and India alone, would need to be considered. But if England is *injured*, the advantage *Injurious.* gained by India can be but temporary; and the diminished trade of the mother country must in some degree react, sooner or later, on her mighty daughter.

Now the statistics which I have mentioned above, with reference to the unhealthy character of the British export trade to China, suggest naturally the question, how far opium is answerable for the phenomenon.

So far back as 1839, Captain Eliot, Her Majesty's Superintendent of Trade, wrote thus to Lord Palmerston, "After the most deliberate re-consideration of this course of traffic, I declare my own opinion, that in its general effects it is *intensely mischievous to every branch of trade.*" Captain Eliot's opinion, 1839.

In July, 1842, a memorial was presented to Sir Robert Peel, signed by 235 merchants and manufacturers of the highest standing and respectability, Petition to Sir R. Peel against the trade, 1842.

in which the obstacles which the trade in opium interposes to the increased demand for British goods by the Chinese is shown. They refer to the proposed legalization of the trade, and state that though they would hail the removal of the contraband character of the trade, yet that in their opinion *the opium trade, in whatever form, would inevitably undermine the commerce of Great Britain with China.* They show that the products of British industry purchased by the Chinese are less by £150,000 in 1834-39 than for *woollens alone* in 1803-8; whilst during that interval the opium trade has been multiplied tenfold, rising from 3000 to 30,000 chests.”^s

Mr. Wingrove Cooke's opinions, 1858.

Mr. Wingrove Cooke, writing twenty years later, was of the same opinion. He gives four reasons of his own for the paucity of British imports into China; after first dismissing as inadequate the four reasons usually alleged by merchants, namely:—*First*, that the Chinese are not easily induced to adopt foreign fashions. *Secondly*, that the Chinese are a manufacturing people. *Thirdly*, the disturbances caused by the T'ai-ping rebellion. *Fourthly*, the exactions of the Chinese custom-houses.

His four reasons to account for the paucity of British imports, -

His own reasons are the following:—*First*, that we are beaten by fair competition in the Chinese market. *Secondly*, the ignorance of British manufacturers as to the requirements of the Chinese. *Thirdly*, that British imports are an

^s “Chinese Repository,” xii. 163.

unpopular branch of commerce with the British merchant; and, *fourthly*, that the country is not open to our merchandize.”⁹

Now it is to reason three that I desire specially ^{Reason No. 3.} to draw attention. This reason, to some extent at least, remains in force after the lapse of seventeen years. The country has been opened to merchandize by transit passes for foreign goods (Mr. Cooke wrote before the conclusion of the Treaty of T'ien-tsin), and though it cannot be denied that the barrier exactions are in very many cases irritating and illegal, and that obstructions not a few are laid in the way of inward transit (thus making Mr. Cooke's fourth reason identical with the British merchants' fourth reason discarded by him), yet such is not always the rule. These passes are undersold to the Chinese; they cannot be a dead letter, therefore, or the natives would not buy them; but the pushing of foreign goods inland cannot be a popular or paying branch of commerce, or foreign merchants would not sell these passes. The goods are permeating the interior. From the Port of Ningpo alone, under the head of foreign goods conveyed to the interior, we find the following advancing totals:—

	1870.	1871.	1872.	1873.
Jan. to March	49,300	46,457	83,111	95,189
April to June	104,581	157,009	163,742	165,095
July to Sept.	51,600	57,068	74,112	11,082

⁹ “China, being the ‘Times’ Special Correspondence, in the years 1857-58, by G. W. Cooke,” pp. 185—203.

British goods are making their way into the interior.

This last item exhibiting a notable fall, which may in some degree be accounted for by the serious drought of last summer in the province of Chekiang ; but, as described above, this decline is general in China, though the drought was partial. The transit dues for 1873, January to September, exhibit a decrease of 33,644 taels as compared with 1872. Still these statistics are sufficient to prove that the country is in some manner open to our manufactures. Dr. Williamson, in his recent tour in the interior of Shantung, "in some places well known to him in former years, saw ten pieces of shirting for one; and even in remote districts among the hills he found a sprinkling of Manchester and Bradford goods. The Chinese," he remarks, "have no antipathy, *per se*, to foreign manufactures."

If reason four, therefore, is to some extent removed, if the country is open by treaty to some degree at least for our manufactures, can we account satisfactorily for the continuance of reason three by the continued existence of reasons one and two? Are British imports into China, that is, unpopular with British merchants because they will not sell? and is the reason for their unsaleableness the fact that the Chinese can get better and cheaper goods elsewhere? Probably not. Perhaps the whole picture must be reversed. There is an opiate which has lulled enterprise to rest, and has stupified the ready wit of British manufacturers. *The market was pre-occupied in*

But the market is

China by opium. “The great profits come from tea, silk, and opium,” remarks Mr. Cooke. “The British import trade of manufactured goods will not maintain mercantile houses.” Hence the merchant’s apathy about that trade, and hence the apathy of the English manufacturer to study with eager enterprise the wants and tastes of the Chinese.

I must in all honesty remark that these sentiments are in some respects obsolete. The *direct* opium trade has passed into the hands of a few houses; and in a letter to the “North China Herald” of July, 1872, the writer, a merchant, expresses great indignation against those ignorant persons who imagine that merchants as a rule do not execrate the opium trade. This altered state of things would possibly facilitate plans for the abolition of the trade, since the mercantile opposition would not be so strong as it once was; but the facts of stagnation remain untouched, and all that I have said above applies in full force to *the native dealer*. He would take British imports in exchange for tea and silk, did not opium intervene. But he prefers opium because, through the vitiated appetite of his countrymen, he is sure to find a market for it, and thus British manufactures are pushed aside as an element of subordinate importance.

A drain of 27,000,000 taels for opium, implies at least the *ability* of the Chinese to take British goods to fully double the present amount, were

that drain stopped. "There is a tremendous market yet in China," writes Dr. Williamson in somewhat fervid language, "for all kinds of foreign wares."

Dr. Dudgeon's sanguine views.

Dr. Dudgeon, of Peking, writing five years ago, gives an outsider's view of this subject:—"Were the whole country thrown open to our commerce; our manufactures introduced; railways, &c., allowed; and the importation of opium forbidden, and it rendered piracy to introduce it by all Governments; then there would dawn, as it were, a new era on the world and on China. Our merchants and India too might well afford to give up its production and transit. The exchange between the different countries would soon rearrange itself. The Chinese would be saved from beggary, starvation, and death; and they would become our best customers. The rich soil of India would easily produce the more generous fruits of the earth. A little economy exercised amongst themselves, and a helping hand for a few years if necessary from the *then* enriched British and Chinese merchants, and the difficulties would soon and easily be overcome. The day must come when the Chinese market even for opium must fail. The Tau-tai of Shanghai was once asked, what would be the best means of increasing our commerce with China, and his answer was, 'Cease to send us so much opium, and we shall be able to take your manufactures.' China cannot take both goods and opium; and the question for our merchants

therefore is, which branch of industry should be encouraged.”¹

These are enthusiastic periods! The whole country thrown open! Railways introduced! If this consummation be attained, it will be replied, the opium trade need not attract much attention! *But what if this very trade helps to lock the country's door, and to intensify prejudice against foreign improvements?* I am anticipating; and I will merely remark that Dr. Dudgeon's prophetic and imaginative statements may be, if you please, overlooked; but his facts are incontestable. *Opium at present shuts out British manufactures to a very great extent.*

Does the
trade shut
up the
country?

The United States Consul at Ningpo, a resident in China for the past quarter of a century, and a cautious observer, in his contribution to the “Annual Report of Commercial Relations between the United States and Foreign Nations, for the year ending September, 1869,” writes in terms of unreserved condemnation of the opium trade; a trade which, in the single port of Ningpo, and in one year, brought to the Customs revenue an increase of 40,000 taels. “Poverty,” he remarks, “makes bad customers; and so, whatever vices or circumstances tend to place our customers in this condition (as is pre-eminently the case with opium) *injure our business.*”

U.S. Con-
sul at
Ningpo.
His views.

An “old resident,” writing to the “North China Herald” on April 1st, 1868, remarks that “the

¹ “Chinese Recorder,” Feb., 1869.

Honest
commerce
injured.

opium trade *injures honest commerce.*" China but for this might be the first market for British and American produce; whereas Egypt, Cuba, and St. Domingo nearly equal it."

Summary. To sum up, then, this branch of our subject, observe,—

(a) That British Opium Policy has produced for *India* an *increasingly lucrative source of revenue.*² More than 160 millions sterling revenue from opium, being profit on Bengal cultivation, and export duty on that from Malwa, has been drawn virtually from China by the Indian Government since the peace of Nanking.³

(β) It has of late years *lessened greatly the drain of specie from England.*

(γ) It has checked to some degree at least Governmental enterprise for the improvement of India.

(δ) It has continuously and to an alarming extent *checked and blighted the development of direct British import trade with China.* See Note C, Appendix.

(ε) The trade has probably reached its grand climacteric, and *must soon decline*, possibly to set in sudden darkness.

"Is not this wing of our Indian Castle built on a foundation of sand?" See Note D, Appendix.

² "*Opium*," says the "Friend of India," commenting on the Budgets of the last three years, "to which we are chiefly indebted for this overflowing treasury."

³ "The Chinese Question." J. Macdonald, F.R.G.S.

CHAPTER III.

THE RESULTS OF BRITISH OPIUM POLICY TO CHINA.

WE pass now from the producers and manufacturers to the consumers of opium. "At present, retained as it is in the hands of the monopolists (the Government), until disposed of on the seaboard at Calcutta, it is, to a considerable extent, sealed up from home use; and thus the facilities afforded to the Hindus of indulging this propensity are comparatively limited,"¹ "and thus the demoralization of the people is prevented."²

India the producer.

China the consumer of Opium

With the exception of Assam, where opium is largely consumed, India generally may be regarded pretty exclusively as the producer, and not the consumer of opium.³

In the present chapter, therefore, we must pass from mere fiscal and commercial considerations, to the direct physical and moral effects of the opium trade on the Chinese people. But in the outset it must be noticed that since the legalization of the trade in 1860 a *large increase of revenue has*

Results of the policy to China.

¹ "Church Missionary Intelligencer," April, 1859.

² Campbell's "Modern India," p. 388.

³ We must except also Rungpore, where Opium is largely used, though its cultivation was stopped in 1841.

(1) *Lucra-* been the result. For China, as well as for India, it
tive. has been a *lucrative* experiment.

I have noticed above that it was in all probability the urgent want of money which finally decided the Chinese to accept, though late in the day, the policy of Heu Nai-tsze, by yielding to the combined pressure of Western Powers, and legalizing the trade. The trade increased very rapidly after its legalization, and rose in three years (1853-55) from 56,000 to 70,000 chests. In 1856 it rose to 76,300 peculs,⁴ and from 1865-1872 the import into Hongkong has reached an average of 83,000 peculs. But in our present calculation an average of 27,000 peculs must be deducted from this total, on account of opium transhipped in part to the Straits, and to a very large extent spread through the south of China in native bottoms. The Customs' returns are concerned with the total introduced into Chinese Treaty Ports from foreign vessels, and taxed there at the Treaty tariff rate of 30 taels a pecul. That total for the eight years under review gives a yearly average of 56,000 peculs, yielding an average annual revenue of 1,680,000 taels. The exact figures for 1872 were—

Total Revenue—Exports and Imports	11,678,636 taels,
Opium Revenue .	1,831,943 taels, ⁵

in English money the equivalent in round num-

⁴ The pecul is equal to 133 $\frac{1}{3}$ lbs., and as a chest of opium varies from 116 lbs. to 140 lbs., on a rough average a chest equals a pecul.

⁵ "Customs' Returns," 1872.

bers of £3,500,000 and £550,000. Although, therefore, the sum total of the Chinese Customs' Revenue is only one-half of the single item from opium revenue reaped by the Indian Government, yet remembering that India is but one of England's dependencies, and the Customs' Revenue but one of China's sources of income, the relative pecuniary advantages gained by the two countries may be roughly estimated, and perhaps without serious inaccuracy, as tolerably proportionate. In India a seventh of the whole revenue is derived from opium, in China a sixth of her Customs' revenue; and the sacrifice would be felt with perhaps equal acuteness by the two countries were the trade stopped.

Imposts on Opium a sixth of Chinese Customs' revenue.

But, secondly, *the opium trade has injured China.* (2) *Injurious.* Shall I revive an old controversy laid to rest, as some supposed, by the legalization of the trade? It is absolutely necessary to do so. On the right understanding of this point the whole question turns. We must, as a Christian nation, rise for a time above the atmosphere of pounds, shillings, and pence, and leave the language of the minutiae of commerce to ask in earnest, *Have we by this trade done good or harm to a great pagan nation?*

The "North China Herald," of April 1st, 1868, remarks that "the argument, if foreigners do not import opium the Chinese will grow it, is the only feasible ground for defence; and Mr. Laing, when introducing his budget to the Calcutta Legislative Council, rested his opium policy on this very argu-

Argument that "if India does not import Opium China will grow it."

A weak
argument.

ment. "It is a weak one," remarks the writer in the *Herald*, "for the uncomfortable question arises, *how much have we done towards stimulating, if not creating, the taste for opium in China?* It may well be said that for *one* to whom opium is a blessing there are *ninety-nine* to whom opium is a curse. So important, however, is opium financially, that having introduced it at the bayonet's point, we had better let it rest than attempt to defend our indefensible action."

Is opium
after all
injurious?

This is a dreary line of argument for an Englishman's ear, however true it may be. But *are* our actions indefensible? Is there no better argument for the opium trade than this singularly weak and foolish one? *Has opium, after all, injured the Chinese?* Is it more injurious than other articles of commerce long excluded from Chinese ports, and now introduced also at the bayonet's point. If opium is in effect *not* injurious, then we may bear to listen to the old smuggling argument, that the Chinese were not *honest* in their prohibition of opium; that it was the drain of silver, or the wish for a "poppy monopoly" (to quote Lord Palmerston's words), which suggested that exclusive policy. Smuggling would still be smuggling; but to smuggle a nutritious article of luxury is better than to smuggle poison.

Arguments
in the De-
bate on Sir
W. Law-
son's mo-
tion.

Our statesmen understand this well. Mr. Grant Duff, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Henley, in the debate on Sir W. Lawson's resolution condemnatory of the traffic, moved in the session of 1869-70,

adopted this higher ground, namely, that opium is simply an article of luxury, injurious, like alcohol, when taken in excess, but not injurious in moderation; and that the Chinese outcry on the score of morality being false, or a gross exaggeration, England might be at ease as to the morality of the opium revenue.

Now at some little length, and in some detail, this question must be dispassionately considered. I will arrange as briefly and concisely as may be the arguments on the two sides of this question.

(a) And first, in favour of the view that opium is merely a *stimulant*, and harmless when taken in moderation.

(a) Sir Henry Pottinger, after leaving China, wrote thus at Bombay in the course of a communication to the Chamber of Commerce at that place:—"I now unhesitatingly declare, that after the most unbiassed and careful observation, I have become convinced, during my stay in China, that the alleged demoralizing and debasing effects of opium have been and are *vastly exaggerated*. It appears to me to be unattended with a hundredth part of the debasement and misery which may be seen in our native country from the lamentable use of ardent spirits."⁶

(β) In a letter to the editor of the "Chinese Repository," dated Canton, December 10th, 1836, "A Reader" writes thus:—"Opium is a useful soother, a harmless luxury, and a precious medicine,

⁶ "Parliamentary Papers on Opium," pp. 7, 8.

The question considered.

(a) Opium is a *stimulant*, harmless in use, evil in the abuse.

Sir H. Pottinger's opinion.

"A Reader's" opinion.

except to those who abuse it. Many millions of the Chinese participate in opium, using it as a rational and sociable article of luxury and hospitality." In a second letter, a rejoinder to his opponents, he uses still stronger language, "I aver that opium taken in moderation is a healthful and exhilarating luxury."⁷

T. T. Meadows' opinion.

(γ) In Meadows' "Chinese and their Rebellions," pp. 487—489, the writer declares his opinion, formed after frequent consideration of the subject during thirteen years, the last two spent in England, to the effect that "although alcohol and opium as substances are different, he can, as to the morality of producing, selling, and consuming them, see no difference at all. The opium smokers are like the alcohol drinkers, the opium smoking houses are like beer-houses and gin-palaces, the opium merchants are like wine merchants, and brandy, gin, and rum importers, and opium producers are like the vine and hop growers, maltsters, brewers, and distillers."

Fortune's views.

(δ) Mr. Fortune speaks thus, "No one who has seen anything of the habits of the Chinese will deny that the use of opium, particularly when taken to excess, has a most pernicious effect, both upon the constitution and morals of its victims. From my own experience, however, I have no hesitation in saying that the *number of persons who use it has been very much exaggerated.*"⁸

⁷ "Chinese Repository," v. pp. 369, 525.

⁸ Fortune's "Tea Countries of China," p. 176.

(ε) A writer in “Knight’s Cyclopædia,” speaking of opium, remarks that “it appears to be an almost necessary stimulus in a climate where languor and listlessness so commonly prevail” (a questionable proposition, by the bye, as regards the Chinese people, and in a climate with temperature varying from below zero to 100° Fahrenheit). “Enjoyed in moderation,” the writer continues, “it has no bad consequences. Strict philosophical inquiry must not be influenced by casual circumstances, and least of all should it be biassed by the rash assertions of those who debate the effects of opium with the violence of partisans, or the partiality of interested dealers.”

Writer in
Knight’s
Cyclo-
pædia.
His views.

(ζ) Messrs. Jardine, Matheson, and Co., in the course of a memorial presented to Sir R. Graves Macdonnell, C.B., Governor of Hongkong, in 1867, on the subject of the Treaty, after asking that the Chinese Government may be prevailed upon to allow the removal of the restrictions imposed upon opium by the tariff rules, go on to say “that they enter upon this subject with none of the delicacy or hesitation which, out of deference to the preconceived ideas of many well-meaning people, they should have experienced eight years ago. The trade in opium has been ventilated, and all its fallacies and fables have been cleared away. Since 1860 it has been rendered abundantly clear that the use of opium is not a curse but a comfort and a benefit to the hard-working Chinese. As well say that malt is a curse to the English

Messrs.
Jardine,
Matheson,
& Co., their
views.

labourer, or tobacco to the world at large. If to a few the opium pipe has proved a fatal snare, to many scores of thousands, on the other hand, it has been productive of healthful sustentation and enjoyment. Were we not well assured that these statements are true we should not press this matter as we are now doing.”⁹

These views
not to be
lightly set
aside.

The list of witnesses given above cannot be said to consist entirely of men “free from bias.” But they are the opinions of honourable men, and if these opinions are to be disproved and their evidence rebutted, it must be done by solid fact and sober argument.

Remarks in
corrobor-
ation of some
points in
these testi-
monies.

I may remark, in corroboration of the view at present before us, that though in my researches I have met with but one Chinese witness on the same side, yet without doubt such a view is being increasingly advocated in Chinese private life at the present day. The use of opium as a stimulant, an article of luxury offered to personal friends in rich men’s houses, and to large customers by mercantile houses, has very greatly increased.¹ And the extent of such a custom is shown by the estimate of 75 per cent. of opium smokers in, for instance, the city of Ningpo, and seven out of every ten in the neighbouring Hien city of Tse-ki.

⁹ See “North China Herald,” April 1st, 1868.

¹ A similar habit prevails in *Bhownuggur*. “No friendship can be called true, no feast sumptuous, without the presence of a solution of opium in water, *Kassumba*, this poisonous solution.”—“Friend of India,” June 26th, 1873.

Now it is impossible for such a custom to become thus general, without the argument being urged, whatever be the sincerity of the pleader, that opium is but a luxury, a stimulant, like wine or spirits.

It must be admitted, however, that such arguments have not seen the light in Chinese print, and would scarcely be urged in a respectable audience. The opium smoker is ironically praised in rich houses, for his debauchery (if such I may by anticipation call it) keeping him awake, or his lamp at least burning, far into the night, deters thieves from their works of darkness.

The curious and interesting argument has been urged in extenuation of opium, that it has probably driven drunkenness out of China, or that at least it has considerably restrained that vice. In the *Shoo King* of the Chinese, numerous instances are given of the disastrous effects of drunkenness on the petty states of the ancient Empire. The evil example of King Chow, of the Shang dynasty, B.C. 1100, and of King Këe, of the Hea dynasty, B.C. 1817, infected their people generally with the destructive vice, and was the chief cause of the downfall of those dynasties.² And one of the books of the *Shoo* is entitled "Announcement about Drunkenness." But the theory is in all probability mythical. Reformation in drinking habits amongst the Chinese, if it has occurred at all, took place long before the era of opium. The

Opium
smoking
very gene-
ral.

Has opium
driven out
or checked
drunken-
ness in
China?

² Legge's "Chinese Classics," vol. iii. part ii. p. 400.

Probably
not.

use of opium as a stimulant is but a century old, and the proofs of such a cleansing efficacy, the expulsion of one vice by a milder evil, are not forthcoming. I may remark here in passing (an observation, too, not wholly irrelevant to the theory I have just noticed) that while it is an incontrovertible fact that opium is used as averred by the witnesses enumerated above, simply as a fashionable luxury, yet it appears to be an equally certain fact that those only can thus use it, who can afford abundance of wine and strong food as antidotes to the drug, or who live constantly in the open air.³

China still
vigorous.

It cannot be denied that China, notwithstanding her wars with Western Powers, and notwithstanding the tremendous strain of the twenty years' T'ai-p'ing struggle, shows marvellous recuperative energy. Her army and her fleet, in appearance at least, have greatly developed in efficiency. Opium may be slowly undermining her strength, but on the surface there are but few marks of imminent decay and decrepitude. It is, however, a curious question, how far the use of opium in the Imperialist army (an evil noticed and inveighed against early in the century) may have accounted for the long list of victories gained by the T'ai-p'ing hordes over that army; and for the fact that that rebellion would undoubtedly have succeeded, and China's disintegration have been the result, but for the interference of foreign powers. The T'ai-

But did
Opium help
the T'ai-
p'ing Re-
bellion?

³ See Doolittle's "Social Life of the Chinese," ii. 354-5.

p'ings were sworn foes to opium; and this fact bears, by the way, very directly on the question as to the honesty of the Chinese in opposing the importation of the foreign drug. The drain of specie, or a poppy monopoly, can hardly have swayed the opinions of Hung-seu-tsuen in his inland warfare. It must have been from a strong persuasion as to the baneful influence of the drug itself. The T'ai-p'ings, moreover, in their earlier days studied the likes and dislikes of the people; and both the restoration of a native dynasty, and the hatred of opium were essentially *popular*.

Honesty of Chinese opposition to Opium.

(b) And this leads me to notice the witnesses on the other side of the question; witnesses to prove that *British opium policy has injured China*.

(b) *Opium an injurious article.*

(a) I bring forward the Chinese themselves, first of all. We cannot ignore their testimony. If honest it is the most valuable we can have. One proof of honesty I have just now mentioned. Another is the destruction of the 20,000 chests of opium by Commissioner Lin. If Lin or his imperial master really fancied or believed with Messrs. Jardine, Matheson, and Co., that opium is "a nutritious and harmless luxury," then, though seized as contraband, they would without all controversy have turned those chests somehow or other into money, instead of ruining the whole with salt and lime, and draining it into the Canton river.⁴ The edicts from Peking for forty years were uniformly denunciative, both of the use and

(a) Chinese testimony.

⁴ "Chinese Repository," v. 70—74.

importation of the drug. *Death* was the punishment almost unauimously recommended by the leading statesmen in Tau-kwang's reign, to be inflicted on those who indulged in this drug, "productive of such healthful sustentation and enjoyment;" an act of tyrannous severity which would be unaccountable in the most despotic empire, were Messrs. Jardine, Matheson, and Co.'s theory known to be the true one.

(β) Heu
Naitsze's
views *pro*
and *con*.

(β) The only Chinese advocate in favour of opium was *Heu Nai-tsze*. He reminded his imperial master that there are many harmless luxuries which are deadly in the excess; but that because of that excess it would be wrong to deprive the temperate of their enjoyment; and therefore, he argues, legalize the Opium Trade. Yet even he denounces the practice of opium smoking as "*a bad practice; a path leading to the utter waste of time and destruction of property;*" and he petitions that the ruling classes, the literati, that is, and the army, shall be absolutely prohibited from its use.⁵

(γ) The
Emperor
Tau-kwang

(γ) The *Emperor himself* (a competent witness as to the excellencies or defects of the drug; for he was believed to have been an opium smoker at one time, and to have abandoned the practice by a vigorous resolve), when urged in 1844 to legalize the traffic, spoke thus: "*Nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people.*" Sir H. Pottinger, therefore, and the Emperor joined issue on this question.

⁵ "Chinese Repository," v. pp. 138—144.

(δ) Commissioner Lin, in a letter destined for the Queen of England, a letter which, whether apocryphal or not, undoubtedly expresses the views of high officials at that period, writes thus: “How can it be borne that the living souls which dwell within these seas, should be left wilfully to take a *deadly poison*” (not, observe, “a healthful stimulant”). “Doubtless,” he continues, “you, the honourable Sovereign of the English nation, have not commanded the manufacture and sale of opium; but,” he implies, “you connive at it. We would now, then, concert with your honourable Sovereignty means to *bring to a perfect end this opium, so hurtful to mankind.*”⁶

(δ) Lin's views.

Dismiss, if you please, these witnesses as partisans biassed by the dread of the drain of silver; but now, after fifteen years of legalization, the same, I fear, is the verdict of intelligent Chinamen.

(ε) Take first a poetical verdict. A native of Foochow writes thus:—“All the bamboos of the southern hills (Chinese pencil-holders are made of bamboo) would be insufficient to describe the evils of opium. It would take all the waters of the North Sea to wash away the stains.”⁷

(ε) Views of Chinese opium smokers.

(ζ) An old literary and official character, himself in secret a smoker, thus enumerated the evils of this “healthful stimulant” to Dr. Dudgeon of Peking. “It destroys life; it unfits for the dis-

⁶ “Chinese Repository,” viii. pp. 9, 497.

⁷ “North China Herald,” April 1st, 1868.

charge of all duties ; it squanders substance, houses, land, and money ; it *diminishes the population.*"⁸ And a native writer quoted by Dr. Knowlton in his "Lecture on the Population of China,"⁹ speaks thus :—"In comparison with arsenic I pronounce it tenfold the greater poison." Dr. Knowlton adds his own testimony (after fourteen years' continuous residence in China), that excessive use of the drug during three or four years *produces sterility* amongst the Chinese.

Dr. M'Cartee, a resident in China for the past twenty-five years, describes two cases which had come under his own personal observation, when young men who had contracted the habit of opium smoking, were so constantly involving their friends and relations in disgrace and trouble by their petty thefts and other scandalous expedients, to obtain the means of procuring opium, that their own parents, with the consent of the headman of the clan, caused them to be sewed up in a mat, carried to the river, and drowned.¹ Note A. Appendix.

English
testimony.

(c) I pass now to the *English* view of this question. Is opium, or is it not, injurious to China?

i. a. Official
witness.
E.I. Com-
pany's
views.

a. I quote, first, *official* opinions on the subject. The Court of Directors of the East India Company in writing to the Bengal government, confess that "so repugnant are their feelings as to the

⁸ "Chinese Recorder," February, 1869.

⁹ "Notes and Queries on China and Japan," August, 1868.

¹ "Chinese Recorder," January, 1869.

opium trade, *they would gladly in compassion to mankind, put a total end to the consumption of opium*, if they could; but they cannot do this; and as opium will be grown somewhere or other, and will be largely consumed in spite of their benevolent wishes, they can only do as they do.”² This could hardly be said of “a nutritious and wholesome luxury!”

β. The Report of the Special Committee of the House of Commons on the Opium Trade,³ contains the following passage:—“*The demoralizing results of the opium trade are incontestable and inseparable from its existence.*”

β. Report of
the House
of Com-
mons.

γ. Mr. C. A. Bruce, superintendent at that time of tea plantations in Assam (quoted in the “Church Missionary Intelligencer,” April, 1859), writes thus:—“The British Government would confer a lasting blessing on the Assamese and the new settlers if immediate and active measures were taken to put down the cultivation of opium in Assam, and afterwards stop its importation by levying high duties on opium. If something of this kind is not done, the immigrants from the plains will soon be infected by the opium mania, *that dreadful plague* which has depopulated this beautiful country. *This vile drug* has kept and does keep down the population.”

γ. Opinion
of Mr.
Bruce.

δ. Sir George Stanton, speaking of the argument

δ. Sir G.
Stanton.

² Quoted in “Chinese Repository,” v. p. 304, from D. U. K. Almanack, 1830.

³ Quoted in “North China Herald,” April 1st, 1868.

detailed above as to the abuse of opium being on a level with the abuse of alcohol, remarks, "It is the *main* purpose in the former case, but in the latter only the *exception*."⁴

ii. *English
Medical
vote.*

(a) I quote, secondly, *English medical opinion* on this subject. The following "opinion," substituted by the writer for one couched in milder language, which had been presented for his approval, will fairly express medical opinion in England:—

Sir Benjamin Brodie and others.

"However valuable opium may be when employed as an article of medicine, it is impossible for any one 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 those of the body, and rendering the individual who indulges 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."

Signed also by twenty-four leading physicians and surgeons, amongst whom were Sir H. Holland, Bart., F.R.S.; Mr. Aston Key; Sir C. Locock, Bart.; Dr. Thos. Watson; Dr. James Johnson; and Dr. Ferguson, F.R.S.⁵

⁴ Quoted in "Chinese Recorder," February, 1869.

⁵ Quoted in "The Traffic in Opium in the East," by Julius Jeffreys, F.R.S., formerly Staff Surgeon at Cawnpore.

Now, I am perfectly aware that 2000 medical men in the United States and in England are of the opinion that alcohol, as a mere luxury and stimulant, is unnecessary, and in many cases positively injurious. But this medical opinion does but strengthen the view as to the injurious nature of opium. It has hitherto been considered a triumphant defence of the trade, if it can be proved that opium is not worse than spirits. But if in Christian lands the injurious effects of the abuse of alcohol are rousing so strong and daily growing an opposition, an opposition liable to run into excess, and to exaggerate from the intensity of the evil, the necessity for the sweeping remedy of total prohibition—if in Christian lands, with all the restraints of moral principle and of enlightened law, the evils of drinking are yet so appalling, the very defence that opium is no worse is turned into a crushing accusation. In China there is no Christian principle, no strong and just arm of law to resist the plague; and if in England 60,000 die every year from this one evil of intoxication, in China 600,000 must be cut off by the sister plague; a life lost for every five dollars of Custom's revenue! Besides, the fact cannot be ignored that, whereas wine and strong drink have been used, and beneficially used almost as long as the human race has lasted, opium, as a stimulant, was introduced scarcely more than a century ago. The one is useful medically, and lawful as a luxury. The other is a medicine alone, and has been forced

But the same may be said of alcohol.

The defence in reality an attack.

Opium and alcohol compared.

Alcohol never forced upon England. into its other use. Neither must we forget that wine and spirits were never forcibly introduced into England by a foreign power in defiance of royal proclamation, and continuous protest.⁶

(Opinions of Medical men in China. The medical opinion which I have quoted above may be taken exception to by some as the opinion of those unacquainted from personal observation with the effects of opium in China. I supplement it therefore with the views of *medical men in China*.

(β) I have met with but one medical opinion as to the *beneficial* effects of opium, and this is expressed in the most vague and guarded terms. In the Shanghai Hospital Report for 1864, it is remarked that “smoking opium is less injurious than eating it, and that in this way it is good for tic douloureux, tetanus, spasms, &c.”

Two favourable to opium. Mr. Wingrove Cooke also informs us, that “English physicians, *unconnected with Missionary Societies*, affirm that the opium smoker dies more from starvation than from opium.” This is but a poor testimonial, for opium produces the starvation; the *expensiveness* of the habit is indeed one of its marked features, and as Mr. Cooke himself remarks, “If he starves himself for his pipe, what becomes of his family?”⁷

Their remarks vague, and self-condemnatory. The medical opinion as to the *injurious* effects of opium is, on the other hand, positive, strong, and well-nigh unanimous. Dr. Lockhart, in his

⁶ See Note B, Appendix.

⁷ “China.” By G. W. Cooke, p. 179.

“Medical Missionary in China,” admits that opium, when first used is a pleasant and refreshing stimulant, giving a vigour and tone to the system, *followed by a corresponding relaxation and listlessness*; after which an effort is made to remove the latter by a return to the pipe. This stage may be prolonged for some years without the health being interfered with (as in the case of drunkenness), “and at this time a little decision will enable the smoker to throw off the habit. This is seldom called for, *and the rule is* that the smoker continues the habit till the hour of retribution comes. He cannot live comfortably without his opium. All the pleasure is gone, but he must obtain relief from the pain of body and dissipation of mind caused by the absence of the drug at any cost. The quantity is increased, and the dose taken more frequently.”

I have heard of two instances, the one a mandarin in office in Formosa, the other a rich man near Ningpo, who by sudden resolution abandoned the habit, but the natural course of the opium smoker is described accurately enough by Dr. Lockhart.

Dr. Porter Smith, late of Hankow, in his “Chinese Materia Medica,” dedicated to R. Hart, Esq., Inspector-General of the Chinese Customs, and by whose assistance the work was published, writes thus:—“The moderate use of the pipe is not incompatible with the health of those who practise it. The *positive necessity* of improving or increasing

Dr. P.
Smith.

the extract used leads to the loss of the volitional, digestive, and sexual powers; or, in other words, to the *gradual degradation of man.*"

Dr. Dudgeon.

Dr. Dudgeon of Peking, Dr. M'Cartee of Ningpo, and Dr. Graves of Canton, from the centre and extreme North and South of China, give the same opinion.

"Opium," says Dr. Dudgeon, "is the *most mischievous of all substances ever resorted to as a daily stimulant.* It is externally more decent than ardent spirits in its results. A casual observer might walk through China (like Sir H. Pottinger), and see little or nothing of opium-smoking. One requires to come into contact with the people, either officially, medically, or otherwise, to know the extent, strength, and evil of the system." *

Dr. M'Cartee.

Dr. M'Cartee remarks that "opium enervates smokers; gradually undermining their constitutions; and *very frequently* (either from inability to procure the drug, or from its losing its power over them, or from a resolute endeavour to break off the habit) produces an incurable diarrhœa, which carries off the victim in a short time. It blunts the moral sense." * It should be carefully observed here, that *total abstinence to an habitual drunkard would seldom if ever produce the fatal results which total abstinence brings very frequently to the confirmed opium smoker.*

Dr. Graves.

Dr. Graves speaks thus:—"The effects of opium

* "Chinese Recorder," January, 1869, p. 181; February, 1869, p. 204.

smoking are, *Physiologically*, loss of appetite; emaciation; a dull leaden hue. *Socially*, late rising; loss of time, from the recumbent posture necessarily adopted when smoking, and from the subsequent sleep; expense, gradually exhausting a man's means, and driving him to the greatest shifts so as to satisfy his craving; such as neglect of family, pawning clothes, and selling his children. *Morally*, testiness of temper, tendency to lying, duplicity, and trickery;—all are produced by this habit. It differs from drinking habits in the insidiousness of its approach, and the difficulty of escaping its clutches.”⁹

It is a melancholy and significant fact that the cure of opium smokers is becoming a less and less hopeful task with medical men. In the early days of medical mission work in China, numbers were, as it was believed, cured. But the tone of medical men is altered now.¹ During the years 1869-70, 153 opium smokers were received and treated in an Opium Hospital at Ningpo. They were all discharged cured; but in eight months' time, all but two were known to have relapsed into their old habits again.

I mention, thirdly, the opinion of *Missionaries* generally. This evidence may be set aside by some as that of bigoted partisans. But it cannot be ignored. Young missionaries no doubt receive from their predecessors a kind of hereditary dislike

Cure of opium smokers increasingly difficult.

iii. Opinion of *Missionaries* must not be ignored.

⁹ “Chinese Recorder,” January, 1869.

¹ “North China Herald,” April 1, 1868.

of the trade and of the drug; but it is an insult to an intelligent and devoted body of men to suppose that that dislike, in its origin and in its perpetuation, must be traced to blind prejudice and partisanship.

Obligations
of Missions
to Mer-
chants.

The merchants, and conspicuously those engaged in the Opium Trade, have been liberal contributors to works of Christian enlightenment and charity. Dr. Morrison's elaborate and voluminous Chinese Dictionary was executed at the sole expense of the Court of Directors of the East India Company. Amongst the first Trustees of the *Morrison Education Society* for the benefit of the Chinese, we find the names of Launcelot Dent, Esq., President; and William Jardine, Esq., Treasurer. The first edition of the Chinese Classics, with prolegomena, commentary, notes, and new translation, by Dr. Legge, of the London Mission at Hongkong, owes its existence to the liberal help of Messrs. Jardine, Matheson, and Co.

Mission-
aries would
be glad to
approve of
the trade,
were it pos-
sible to do
so.

The Opium Trade, moreover, opened China for Christian preachers; and it would be greatly to the advantage of Missionaries could they approve of the trade, and could they bring themselves to believe that opium is simply "a nutritious and health-giving stimulant." Yet as a fact, the opinion of these men, acquainted more or less with the languages of China, moving amongst the people day after day, and penetrating oftentimes far into the interior, is *absolutely unanimous*.

Their con-

Opium they consider a deadly evil; positively and

very extensively injurious to the Chinese. I quote denmation of it unanimous. but one from the opinions of all. Dr. Williamson, a laborious worker and indefatigable traveller in North China for the past ten years, writes thus, under date August, 1873:—"Opium, without controversy, does undermine the wealth, sapping the physical strength and blighting the moral sense of several tens of millions (to speak within the mark) in this country; so its introduction was not merely a sin, but a commercial mistake." ²

Finally, I adduce the opinions of *more general* iv. General witnesses. *witnesses acquainted with China.*

Mr. James Macdonald, F.R.G.S., in the course Mr. Macdonald. of a brochure on the proposed Mercantile Convention of 1869, eventually rejected by the British Government, after assuring his readers that he knew more of Chinese family and domestic life, and that in several provinces, than most foreigners in his time, observes, that he believes himself within the mark in stating that if a Chinaman above the class of labouring men has three sons, opium will ruin at least one of them; and that if a native contracts the habit in youth he will end his life ten or fifteen years before his time. He quotes also from M. Carné's article in the "*Revue* M. Carné. *des deux Mondes*," Jan. 15th, 1870:—"I do not believe that there has ever been a more terrible scourge in the world than opium. The alcohol employed by Europeans to destroy savages, the

² "North China Daily News," November 28th, 1873.

plague that ravages a country, cannot be compared to opium.”³

Mr. Matheson.

Mr. Matheson, one of the original partners in the firm of Messrs. Jardine, Matheson, and Co., and who left it from conscientious motives, says, “*Opium cannot be compared to malt or tobacco. The only comparison which can be made is between opium smoking and drunkenness.*” It is not sustentation and healthful enjoyment for which the opium smoker seeks, but “a trance or partial insensibility—a true species of drunkenness—the habitual upsetting of the mental constitution. Opium is twice as seducing as alcohol. Of those who take alcohol not 1 in 100 are victims; of those who take opium scarce 1 in 100 escapes.”⁴

Opium harmless, the exception. Opium injurious, the rule.

I conclude, therefore, that the evidence in favour of opium given above, though the honest opinion of honourable men, is yet *evidence as to the exception, not as to the rule.* The testimony on the other side is overwhelming.

The opinion of the Chinese, official opinion in India, China, and England, medical opinion, and that of the very highest order at home, the unanimous vote of Missionaries, whether medical or otherwise, the press generally in China, and the voices of not a few formerly interested in the trade,⁵ unite to *denounce the opium policy of Eng-*

³ “The China Question.” M. Carné had travelled in Yunnan and the south-west of Sze-ch’uen.

⁴ See “North China Herald,” April 1st, 1868.

⁵ The Opium Hospital at Ningpo alluded to above, now

land as productive of great and ever-increasing injury to China.

British
opium
policy in its
results to
China.

It has brought some millions of dollars to the Chinese revenue; but it has brought moral degradation and physical deterioration to millions of the Chinese people.

*Lucrative
but
injurious.*

And now, briefly recapitulating,—if it be true that England is in the main responsible for the Opium Trade with China; if that trade was for many years contraband, though carried on under the British flag; if it was finally legalized through the pressure of war, and not by the willing consent of the Chinese; if since its legalization, along with pecuniary advantages to the exchequers of India and China, it has brought a stagnation of trade, a relaxation of governmental and commercial enterprise, and a vast amount of moral and physical evil to the Chinese people;—What, I ask, is to be done?

Summary.

What is to
be done?

This question, involving considerations of solemn and imminent importance, I will briefly discuss in my closing chapter.

transferred to Hangchow, is supported by the anonymous contribution of one formerly connected with the Opium Trade, an who has abandoned it from conscientious motives.

CHAPTER IV.

REASONS FOR ACTION. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

What is to be done? THE following remarks by an anonymous correspondent of the "Chinese Repository," in the course of an otherwise thoughtful and interesting article on the Chinese Government, containing as

Objections. they do an objection which may be urged by some *in limine* against the consideration of the question now before us, I quote here, but only to dismiss them as unworthy of such a theme. "What," he asks, "is to be done to suppress the use or abuse of opium? To which we answer laconically, *nothing as respects others but persuasion and warning*. A man's conduct, as long as it hurts none but himself, is a business between himself and his Creator, not an affair for earthly legislation." But does the opium smoker hurt none but himself? What of his family, what of his neighbourhood, what of the State? The nearer and further rings of the circle in private and social life are all agitated by this vice. I may remark here that in the United States very stringent measures are adopted to repress the vice of intoxication, and that these laws are sanctioned by the general sen-

Is it an affair for legislation?

The analogy of restrictive legislation as to the spirit trade.

timent of a people exceedingly jealous of personal liberty. I refer now to the general State laws, not to the Maine Liquor Law. These restrictive measures in the States generally are being increased in severity. In 1868 the tax on distilled spirits was 50 cents per gallon. In 1872 it was increased to 70 cents. In 1864 the duties levied on imported liquors were 2 dollars and 50 cents on brandy per gallon; on porter, ale, and beer in bottles 35 cents per gallon, and other liquors in proportion. In 1865 the duties were made still heavier. Now, if this may be done in young and free America, there is not much danger of breaking some high speculative law as to personal liberty by restrictive or prohibitory rules against opium in old and despotic China. It is a subject for legislation; and I remark, first of all, that the *Governments* of Great Britain and China must act in this matter, if action is necessary and practicable. It is a *Government question*. It will not do for English or Chinese philanthropists to inveigh against opium dealers any longer, now that the revenues of their respective Governments are avowedly enriched by the trade.¹

Combined
action ne-
cessary.

A Govern-
ment ques-
tion.

Now, in the opinion of many of the most earnest enemies of the trade, it is *too late* for Government action. An "Old Resident" in China, quoted above, states that in his opinion "the remedy is beyond the power of either Government. Were

¹ See letter to Lord Palmerston from merchants at Canton, May 23rd, 1839.—"Chinese Repository," viii. 32—35.

the growth in India interdicted, it would be imported from other places or grown in China, and the present race of Chinese officials are too weak and corrupt to grapple with the subject."

Dr. Lord's
opinion.

Dr. Lord, American Consul at Ningpo, from whose "Trade Report" I have already quoted, is of a contrary opinion. He combats, first, the argument that the Chinese *want* opium, with the contrary assertion that the Chinese generally, not excepting the opium smokers themselves in their rational moments, would gladly vote for its annihilation. He notices, secondly, the argument that *they will have it*.

The
Chinese
want
opium.

The
Chinese
will have
it.

These
statements
refuted.

Admitting that as long as it is imported the Chinese will take full advantage of that importation, he disposes of the argument by refusing to allow that were importation stopped the Chinese would *necessarily* grow it themselves. They might do so to some considerable extent, but (were that growth prohibited by the Chinese Government) certainly not to anything approaching the extent required by the present rate of consumption. He notices, also, the means now possessed by the Chinese for preventing smuggling in their admirable Customs' service, protected as it is from fraud and speculation, and armed with ample powers to enforce promptly and safely all its regulations. And in reply to the retort, Why do not the Chinese then adopt some means for turning back this "tide of death" from their shores? he adds the significant hint of immediate bearing on

The Cus-
toms ser-
vice.

Why does
not China
act?

She wants

my present subject, "*perhaps China would do so*

were she sufficiently enlightened and encouraged by those nations whose interests, like her own, clamour for the destruction of this great evil.”

light and help.

My own impression is, that it is almost too late to apply a remedy; but that with the urgent demand for a remedy, the effort should be made, and that immediately.

Instant action required. Why?

With the risk of some slight repetition, I remind my readers of the reasons which call for prompt action.

(a) The evil, if evil it be accounted, is spreading with *terrible rapidity*. In the city of Ningpo, with its suburbs, containing, according to the Customs' reports, a population of 115,000, there are (by the information of four native policemen) about 2700 opium shops. The Customs' returns are very largely under the mark; and the ordinary estimate of 400,000 inhabitants is probably far nearer the truth. Yet even with this large population the result suggested by these figures is alarming. The frequenters of these shops are, as a rule, confirmed smokers (and almost all of the poorer classes), to whom the drug is simply a curse. And yet in this one city there is a den for every 148 of the inhabitants. Cutting off three-fifths for children, and halving again for adult males and females, we have the rough estimate of one shop for every thirty men.

(1) The plague is spreading rapidly.

This estimate is exclusive of sixty houses where opium is sold wholesale; five of these conducting a very large business in native opium. The evil

is less in proportion in the country districts. Two neighbouring towns containing 10,000 and 30,000 inhabitants have only twenty-five and forty dens respectively; but many respectable shops sell opium now, together with other goods, and these are not included in the estimate. One small village of only 100 families has as many as sixteen opium dens, forming a centre for surrounding villages, but corrupting and demoralizing that particular village, of course, to a great extent.

A city (Ngan-i Hien) in the south of the province of Shansi, is described by a recent traveller as wholly given over to this vice; the business of the day being carried on at night by torchlight, from the inability of the smokers to rise².

(2) It is a question of political bearing.

(b) It is a *political* question. Very early in the century the Chinese government suspected that the importation of opium was a political strata-gem. In the "Chinese Repository" of May, 1832, I find the following item of Canton news:—"Of 1000 men sent by the Governor of Canton to act against the rebels, the commanding officer has sent back 200, rendered totally unfit for active service by the habit of opium smoking."

In Choo Tsun's Memorial on Opium, written in the year 1836, he remarks:—"In introducing opium into this country, the purpose of the English has been to weaken the central empire."³ A writer in the "Friend of India" at the same date,

² "North China Herald," April 1st, 1868.

³ "Chinese Repository," vol. v.

speaks thus :—“ One might almost fancy that the trade arose out of *some preconceived plan for stupefying the Chinese, to pave the way for conquering the empire*, did we not know how predominant the pecuniary passion is in modern nations.”⁴

A Chinaman quoted in Doolittle’s “ Social Life of the Chinese,” vol. ii. 358, spoke thus :—“ The Master and Governor must intend to destroy the nation. There is no other way of accounting for the love of the Chinese for opium.”

“ I believe,” says Dr. Williamson, “ that had it not been for the policy we took up in regard to opium, the empire would by this time have been open from end to end ; so that the shortsighted policy of our pioneers has left to their successors a crippled commerce, and the malediction of a great nation.”⁵

Now the exclusive policy of the Chinese existed before opium was introduced ; but any Chinese politician would maintain that if that policy required justification, the history of British opium policy has supplied it.

It is, to say the very least, a misfortune even *politically*, that in our intercourse with China during this century, opium has been ever in the forefront ; a drug which in *Chinese* opinion, at any rate, has injured the people and enfeebled the empire. That distrust and dislike of foreigners, that unwillingness to allow foreigners to take part in the introduction of foreign improvements, which

The Chinese antipathy to foreigners continues.

⁴ “ Friend of India,” vol. ii. No. 87, August 25th, 1836.

⁵ “ North China Daily News,” November 28th, 1873.

continue to this day, if not caused, have surely been fostered by the opium policy of Great Britain.

The Audi-
ence.

The drawn battle about the Audience (for though that Audience was granted, it was held in a building set apart for the reception of vassals; it was held on a Sunday; the Emperor conversed in Mantchu, and through an interpreter; the Audience was contemptuously ignored in the "Peking Gazette," and has been maliciously caricatured by Chinese writers); this the result of thirteen years' manœuvring at Peking, whilst mining, railways, and inland telegraphs, are still stolidly opposed,—do not these facts all point to a deeply seated distrust and suspicion of foreigners? The "peace policy" introduced by the lamented Lord Clarendon, refusing to put the power of declaring war in the hands of the Minister at Peking, or the power of demanding local redress in the hands of local officers, cannot insure peace as long as the true causes of irritation and suspicion remain.

War has
not re-
moved dis-
trust and
dislike.

The political atmosphere in China is heavily laden with the mists and fogs of antipathy, enmity, and doubt. A thunderstorm, or a strong keen wind, is required to clear the sky. Twice has the air been shaken by England's artillery demanding reparation for insult and wrong. Shall the minds of the Chinese be agitated and stirred for once by the news that England in magnanimous regret, offers to repair a great wrong, and to check a great evil? Has she ever yet offered any formal apology to China for the long years of

Try gene-
rous con-
fession of
wrong.

her more than doubtful opium policy, prior to the legalization of the trade ?

It is a *religious* question. Some may think that the introduction of Christian Missionaries equally with the introduction of opium by the last treaty, must be regarded as a calamity. (3) It is a religious question.

Christian Missions have not seldom been the immediate cause of disagreements with Chinese officials ; and, especially in the case of the French, sharp retribution from the hands of naval and military authorities has sometimes proved the solution of such difficulties. But deeply as such events are to be regretted and their recurrence by every fair means to be obviated, the conclusion, unfavourable to Christian Missions, drawn therefrom, is both incorrect and superficial. Incorrect, —for mercantile complaints have been as frequent as Missionary ; superficial,—for the true cause of such troubles is to be sought, not so much in acts of Missionary indiscretion (though such acts have no doubt occurred) as in political antipathy. Christian Missions the cause of political troubles.

The Chinese are a tolerant people ; and until Christianity shall have gained large and widespread triumphs, opposition to the religion, as such, is not to be expected. Persecution of converts and insults to Missionaries are now chiefly political, and but a symptom of the suspicion entertained by the ruling classes in China as to the ultimate reason for the presence of foreigners in the land. Remove, then, this opium question out of the way, by an act of generosity, tardy though it be, and the effect Political antipathy the cause of Missionary troubles.

sooner or later will be a decrease of antipathy, and therefore a diminution of *Missionary troubles*.

Besides, it must be remembered that Opium and Christianity are not, as a matter of fact, placed on an equal footing.

Christianity praised.

Christianity is described by Art. viii. of the Treaty of T'ien-tsin, as "a religion which inculcates the practice of virtue, and teaches man to do as he would be done by." Opium is introduced into the Tariff rules without note or comment. The Chinese authorities did not say, neither were they required to say, that they were formerly mistaken in their estimate of the drug; that they now esteem it highly, as a nutritious and health-giving luxury. It is admitted sullenly; perforce, and without praise or blame.

Opium barely tolerated by treaty.

Opium hinders Christianity.

It is surely fair, therefore, to argue that that which is virtuous and charitable has and ever must have the precedence over that which is at best unnecessary. And if the first is injured by the second, Christianity by Opium, it forms a fair argument against the opium. This injury is incontestable. "Missionaries from Great Britain have not a fair field for their efforts in China, while the nation's honour is stained by the cultivation of the poppy, and the manufacture of opium under the immediate control of the Indian Government."⁶ Every Christian teacher and preacher is aware of this obstacle. Rarely does a Chinese crowd in city or country break up without this

Which shall yield?

⁶ Edkin's "Religious Condition of the Chinese," pp. 25, 26.

taunt being flung at the preacher by some listener, "Who brought the opium? Physician heal thyself!" The easy and ready reply, "Who smokes the opium?" is sufficient to raise a laugh, and often to silence the opponent. But it is not fair. "Nay," replied one thus argued with, a few weeks ago, "Nay, it is not true; *you forced it in.*"

The ability, therefore, to say to the Chinese, "this reproach is wiped away, we bring it no more," would, without controversy, be the removal of one of the great stumbling-blocks in the way of the reception of Christianity. "*Every act that tends to bring Christianity into contempt is treason against the civilization of the human race.*"⁷ -

"To the English revenue of $76\frac{3}{4}$ millions, the Excise on spirits alone contributed £13,600,000. To the Indian revenue of $48\frac{1}{4}$ millions, Excise and opium to China yielded £10,895,000. What a commentary on the civilization in which England rejoices, and is spreading in Asia."⁸

(d) England is a Christian country; and her *honour* is closely wedded to her Christianity. Lord Elgin used noble words: "Christian civilization will have to win its way amongst a sceptical and ingenious people, by making it manifest that a faith which reaches to heaven furnishes better guarantees for public and private morality, than one which

The opium trade
treason
against
Christian
civiliza-
tion.

(4) Eng-
land's
honour at
stake.

⁷ Debate on the Gates of Somnath, quoted in "Chinese Recorder," February, 1869.

⁸ "Friend of India," May 8th, 1873.

does not rise above the earth.”⁹ And this Great Britain whose opium policy we have been considering, professes this very sky-aspiring faith. Has public morality shone brightly through all the intricacies and phases of that policy? That flag

“Which may sink on a shot-torn deck,
But never float o’er a slave,”

floated for years over opium clippers and receiving ships engaged in a contraband trade. The “meteor flag of England,” ennobled and reconsecrated by England’s slave-trade policy, leads the van by natural right in the work of emancipation. It has been seen on the West and East coasts of Africa, and slavery has received its death-blow. It has drooped in sorrow and regretful pride, folded round the coffin of Livingstone dead for Africa. But not till some great act of reparation has atoned for the past, can that flag float in pride over Chinese waters as the representative of a great Christian nation.

Act now
or never.

And now for all these reasons,—political, moral, religious,—prompt action is required. A few years more, and the opportunity will have passed by. Mr. Macdonald starts the theory that “in less than twenty years China may possess a numerous fleet of steamers, officered by Americans and French; and that then the instinct of self-preservation may move the nation to demand, and the Government to order, the total prohibition of opium. The

⁹ Cooke’s “China.”

world will look on with applause at our being checkmated in the far East; our prestige in India will be shaken; and we shall at last pay the penalty for this, after slavery, the greatest crime against humanity chargeable to the account of our boasted Anglo-Saxon race.”¹ All this may be treated as chimerical; but it is more than probable that China, though still plagued by opium, may yet require no longer the foreign drug. England will perforce cease to import it. She will withdraw from the trade with chagrin, without honour; stained with the doubtful deeds of the century; and without the least hope of retrieving her honour before the eyes of this great Chinese nation.

2. *What then must be done?* I answer—

(a) The two Governments of England and China must, if possible, *act in concert*, and the consent of other Treaty Powers must be secured. Tentative negotiations on the subject might be made immediately. Precipitate action on the side of India, under the present circumstances of that country, would inflict there a serious blow, and would irritate without necessarily benefiting China. But preliminary inquiry and suggestion need not be delayed. It will be a difficult task to persuade the Chinese of our honesty. They will take up and use against us our old retorts and insinuations. And our present large gain from the trade, *if the argument be used and pressed without loss of time*,

What must be done?

(1) *Negotiate immediately.*

Are the English honest?

¹ “The China Question.” By J. R. Macdonald, F.R.G.S.

will be a strong proof of disinterested honesty of purpose.

Commissioner Lin's plan of action.

Commissioner Lin's brief sketch of the means to be adopted for the extirpation of the evil may even yet be realized. "We," he says, in his letter to the Queen, "we in this land will forbid the use of it, and you in the countries under your dominion will forbid its manufacture."²

Hwang Tseo-tsze's plan.

A memorial of Hwang Tseo-tsze, President of the Sacrificial Court in 1838, suggests one year of grace for Chinese opium smokers (a time quite long enough for the abandonment of the habit by all who are in any way curable); and he proposes that after the expiry of this period, the severest penalty of the law should be inflicted on those who still offend. This old memorial *in the hands of a vigorous Government*, and seconded by *non-opium-smoking Mandarins*, might yet be of use.

The opium interest in China very strong.

It must not be forgotten that there exists a very large and almost daily growing *Chinese opium interest*. By the prohibition of the importation, growth, and use of the drug, however high above the hubbub may sound, as sound it will, the approving verdict of the nation generally, there will yet be a loud under-current of discontent, and probably the outbreak of violence on the part of the thousands of merchants and myriads of retail dealers whose gains will be gone.

Can we perform our part?

But for Chinese honesty and efficiency we are not so much responsible. Is our part of the pro-

² "Chinese Repository," vol. viii. pp. 11, and 497—593.

gramme practicable? I reply, *first*, that the very numerous objections to the idea of the prohibition of the growth of opium in British India *might find their counterparts in the history of the abolition of the slave-trade*. I find in an article on Chinese Government, in the "Chinese Repository" for May, 1840, the following curious passage about opium:—

"It has been said the remedy, then, is not with the Chinese, and if neither the East India Company nor the British Government interfere the British public must be appealed to; the cry of 'no opium' must be raised, and made as loud as the cry of 'no slavery.' Should it be so. Were even English legislators to prohibit on moral grounds the growth of opium in their possessions, and its introduction by British subjects into the Chinese empire, we know from experience what the result would be. The experiment has been tried with the trade in slaves. That trade has been abolished by Act of Parliament for upwards of thirty years. It has been declared a felony since 1816, punishable by fourteen years' banishment or five years imprisonment. And we are informed that there is as much (if not more) trading in slaves, and that of a more distressing nature than there was before all this was done." And the writer appears to conclude that the evil of opium will cure itself; until the demand ceases the supply cannot be stopped.

Analogy of
the slave-
trade.

Antiquated
arguments
against
England's
slave-trade
policy.

How obsolete are such arguments now! Sir Bartle Frere, in his recent Memorial on the Sultan

Sir Bartle
Frere's
opinion.

of Zanzibar, remarks, "Specious arguments have been urged for withdrawing from all attempts to stop the slave trade, and 'leaving it alone to cure itself;' and our cruisers have been charged with enhancing the sufferings of the slaves by increasing the difficulties of the passages. I am satisfied that *there is not a shadow of foundation for the argument.* I never heard a single fact or argument which would justify the faintest hope that if slavery or the slave-trade were let alone, they would cure themselves in any number of ages."

England has gained not lost by her Emancipation and Slave-Trade Abolition Policy.

Now, who would be hardy enough to declare that British Slave-Trade Policy, her £20,000,000 sacrificed in the West Indies, her West African squadron kept up for so many years at great expense, her recent expedition to East Africa, have been other than vastly beneficial to the human race, and wholly redounding to the honour of the British flag? England, by her Emancipation Policy, has reaped bright honour and great substantial advantages, whilst the human race at large has been blessed.

Will not gain in the end result from a reversal of her Opium Policy?

Is it not possible that objections to vigorous action in a reversal of England's Opium Policy, will be found eventually to be equally specious, and the cry of alarm to be equally groundless?

(b) I reply *secondly*, that opium growing and importation have, as a matter of fact, been prohibited in British territory already.

The growth of the poppy has

Sir Stamford Raffles, when Governor of Java, limited the importation to 300 chests (a large

reduction), and without exciting hostility on the part of the Javanese or creating smuggling.

been restricted, and prohibited.

The cultivation of the poppy was prohibited in Bengal by Reg. vi. of 1799, sec. 3, and in the North-West Provinces by Reg. xli. of 1803, sec. 2. Lord Cornwallis, Lord Teignmouth, Lord Wellesley, and Lord Minto, "circumscribed the produce within the narrowest limits, confining the cultivation of the poppy to two of our provinces, and actually eradicating it from districts where it had been previously cultivated. The growth of opium has been effectually discouraged in the Western Presidency; and in Sindh it has been prohibited."³ Is the same policy impossible in other parts of our Indian dominions? Malwa opium, grown in the dominions of the Maharajah Holkar, might practically be prohibited by an increased transit duty.

On the varied and difficult questions connected with the problem of restoring the revenue thus cut off, and of compensating the ryots for the annual advance granted under Government monopoly, I will not venture to enter into detail. There was an interesting letter from Mr. E. C. Bowra in the "Times" of Dec. 20th, 1873, suggesting that the regulations of the Treaty of 1858, by which the exportation of grain from China was prohibited, might, by judicious representation to the Chinese authorities, be relaxed in the interests of Bengal. Supposing this plan feasible, and the mutual benefit of such a proposal ascertained, it

How shall the deficit of Revenue be made up?

The export trade in grain between India and China.

³ "Parliamentary Papers on Opium," p. 54.

must yet be borne in mind that the drought which has been withering Bengal extended to several of the central provinces of China; and but for the import of rice from abroad (one of the few things which the Chinese readily admit to be an advantage gained from foreign intercourse), prices would have risen probably to half famine rates. Siam also, China's great foreign granary, is threatened itself with famine. Droughts, as Sir Bartle Frere observes, are like typhoons. But the resemblance is not merely true as to the periods of recurrence; it is also true as to the sweep of the famine storm. A drought which has its centre in India is almost sure to scorch China with the tail at least of the cyclone. So that were India's opium lands used for grain, she might find at least as good a market in China, as China in India, *cæteris paribus*.

Opiumland
is grain
land.

(c) I will remark further that *opium is grown not on some peculiar soil suited only to that crop, but that it monopolizes the richest and best grain lands of India*. The disappearance of the poppy, therefore, does not mean waste of land, but the utilization for food purposes of hitherto wasted land in this respect. "On the whole," writes the "Friend of India" of Jan., 1873, "except in seasons of famine in Upper and Central India, and in years of extremely bountiful harvests in England, we may expect the *wheat trade* to go on growing in a way to benefit the peasants;⁴ and a remark on which

The *wheat*
trade of
India.

⁴ "The export of wheat through Calcutta rose in 1870-71 from 203,645 cwt. to 346,967 cwt."—"Friend of India," Jan. 16th, 1873.

we ventured during the Crimean war may yet be realized—the Doabs of the North-West may engross the trade which has so long enriched the great plain of Southern Russia.” In the same serial of Jan. 30th, 1873, we read that “The *rice trade* is constantly increasing, and *everything should be done to develop it.*” Rice exports to Great Britain, the Continent of Europe, the Persian Gulf, and British Colonies, show the following rates of increase:—

1869-70.	1870-71.	1871-72.	1872-73 (9 months).
Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.
10,614,644	16,087,813	18,311,285	15,692,340 ⁵

In the North-West Provinces, however, whilst sugar-cane and indigo continue to spread, the cultivation of rice shows a tendency to decline.⁶ These remarks refer directly to the utilization of the tracts now occupied by the poppy. But with reference to the general question of the resources of the country, with a view to the great shock and strain resulting from the abandonment of the opium trade, the *tea trade* of India, now but in its infancy or early youth, must not be omitted.

In 1869-70 China sent 140,000,000 lbs. of tea to Great Britain.

„ India sent 15,000,000 lbs.⁷

⁵ Sir R. Temple's "Budget Minute."—See "Friend of India," April 3rd, 1873.

⁶ "Friend of India," May 29th, 1873.

⁷ "The China Question." Macdonald.

But the Indian tea trade is fast increasing. The exports were—

In 1871 . . .	15,457,000 lbs.
In 1872 . . .	17,000,000 lbs.*

“India tea is as a rule far superior to that made in China. It is hardly too much to say that 20,000,000 lbs. of India tea are equal in tea-making power to 25,000,000 lbs. of average China tea.”⁹ See Note E, Appendix.

Mr. Macdonald's scheme.

(d) Mr. Macdonald recommends the Indian Government to renounce all further cultivation of the poppy. “The infamy,” he says, “has already existed too long. Let the Government start the first year by imposing an export duty of 600 rupees per chest at Calcutta, as at Bombay, till it be seen whether private cultivation increases the cultivation of opium in Bengal, or diminishes it.” He advocates, in fact, the immediate abandonment of the system of monopoly of cultivation on Government land. This would prove, however, a dangerous experiment, for it would lead almost inevitably to the consumption of the drug on a large scale in India. “After this experiment has been tried,” continues Mr. Macdonald, “let the export duty on opium from India be annually increased at a regular graduated rate, calculated so to raise the price as to lessen the production several thousand chests a year. Thus, in the course of a

* “Indian Budget.”—“Friend of India,” April, 1873.

⁹ “Produce Markets’ Review.”—“London and China Express,” January 9th, 1874.

generation the noxious trade might be reduced to very small limits, or extinguished altogether." I would venture to hope that this estimate of time is too liberal. If native opium is grown unchecked in China, and the Indian drug is thus raised in price, the Indian drug must soon be out of the market altogether. If, on the other hand, the Chinese Government is both willing and able to concert plans for combined action, and if stringent prohibitory edicts against native growth and *native use* of opium are issued and enforced, the foreign drug will also be at a discount: the plague may last a generation before it is eradicated; but this period is, I trust, unnecessarily long for the extinction of this great blot on England's honour. The experiment as to how far a rise in price of the foreign drug will hasten the adoption of the native in preference, will possibly receive an early trial, for all the Government monopoly districts have been in peril from the drought, save the small portions irrigated by canals." ¹

Too long a time allowed by him.

Opium districts imperilled by the drought

Mr. Macdonald dismisses the general question of the deficit in revenue with these words, "The Indian service is not so deficient in brains as to be unable to devise means wiser than this opium trade for making India pay the cost of its government." Somewhat flippant language perhaps for so momentous a subject; but true, one would hope, nevertheless.

Whether India is to be governed "as a farm or ^{A problem to be solved}

¹ "Times," Nov. 14th, 1873.

by *patriot-*
ism and
wise states-
manship.

as an empire," whether this great gap in her finances is to be made up by internal improvement or by external commerce, or by the two naturally combined, I will not venture to dictate or suggest. But now that the Income Tax is abolished in India during times of peace, it will require all the resources of wise statesmanship so to regulate taxation, should opium be abandoned, as to refill the impoverished Government Treasury without in any way increasing the burdens of the already heavily-burdened ryots, who must be, in the transition of crops, losers to some extent. The richer classes, who escape so easily by the abolition of the Income Tax, must help liberally to bear the strain. The "Friend of India," when discussing the Income Tax, speaks thus:—"Direct taxation is not pleasant, but looking at opium, periodic drought, our military position, and the burdens heaped on the agricultural classes, and the salt tax on the starving labourer, can India do without it?"²

The practical question.

But the really practical question is this: Has the trade in opium been productive on the whole of benefit or of injury to India and to China?

Is the opium trade injurious?
Yes.

My conclusion is, that it has been productive of great evil in the past, and that it is increasingly injurious to both countries. Is this conclusion

If so there must be some means whereby to abandon it.

just? Is it sustained by the narrative and statistics which I have brought forward in proof? If so the remedy cannot be far off.

² "Friend of India," Jan. 6th, 1873.

(e) A moral obligation, when yielded to and acted upon, will by the very vigour of that action create ways and means; or, by the sure working of the moral government of the world, remedies and expedients will spring to light round the path of the reformer.

Lord Elgin, when passing up the coast of China on his way to T'ien-tsin, was conversing with a well-known Christian lady on the subject of the opium trade. He expressed his opinion that of *two evils* legalization of the trade was likely to be productive of less injury than the continuation of the contraband sale. "My Lord," was the reply, "surely for a Christian country there must be some other alternative than the choice between two moral evils."

APPENDIX.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Note A.
*Chinese
dread and
hatred of
Opium il-
lustrated.*

NOTE A.—In illustration of the *Chinese* view as to the physical and moral effects of opium I mention the following narrative which has reached me first hand. “A Chinaman, who died recently, summoned his son before him. This, said he, is my dying command to you. Touch not opium. If you smoke the drug, you may worship me after my death, you may tend and beautify my tomb, you may perform correctly and liberally all funeral and ancestral rites, but I shall take no pleasure in what you do, and calamity will overtake yourself and the family. If, on the other hand, you abhor and renounce opium, I can well overlook and pardon negligence as to my tomb, the sacrifices and offerings.”

Note B.
*Spirits and
narcotics
in England
and Asia.*

NOTE B.—“We have reached an age in which the progressive invasion of spirits and narcotics is an invincible fact, bringing with it results varying according to the population; here obscuring the mind and barbarizing beyond recovery; there fatally penetrating the foundations of physical life, and attainting the race itself.”—Michelet, quoted in the “*Edinburgh Review*,” April, 1873.

Note C.
*British ex-
ports to
China de-
clining.*

NOTE C.—The Board of Trade Returns for December, 1873, show a serious falling-off again in the exports of British and Irish produce and manufactures. Under the head of *Cotton Manufactures* we have the following com-

parative table of statistics, for the twelve months ending 31st December :—

	1871.	1872.	1873.
	Yards.	Yards.	Yards.
To China and Hongkong	469,080,335	402,077,775	349,950,270
	Quoted in "London and China Express," Jan. 9th, 1874.		

Note D.—My statement as to the present condition of the opium trade will not be complete without some sketch of the *official* view held in India on the subject. I give, therefore, extracts from Sir Richard Temple's exposition of the Indian Budget, published April, 1873. "For the year 1871-72 a surplus of £2,700,000 was expected, *owing mainly to gain in the opium department.* The surplus actually amounted to more than *three millions.* For the year 1872-73 the regular estimate shows a surplus of £1,354,000. *The surplus is attributable mainly to gain in opium.* In the Budget £7,700,000 were set down for opium receipts, but in the regular estimate there appear £8,677,000, or a difference of nearly a million. Of the increase more than one-third is in the Malwa opium, the revenue of which has amounted to £2,614,700, a sum *so high as to be almost without precedent.* The increase in the Bengal opium is not owing to the quantity, inasmuch as the number of chests is fixed, under our system, to within a very narrow margin; but owing to the prices rising beyond the rate assumed in the Budget. (This statement is somewhat at variance with that made by the "Times" Correspondent from official documents, in November, 1873.) It is not intended to sell more than 45,000 chests of Bengal opium in 1874; the estimate for Malwa is 37,000, and an average total of 80,000 may be expected for the Chinese market. The surplus from the Bengal crop, if any, will be devoted to forming a *reserve supply* of chests on which we may draw to make up the deficiency of the harvests. *The tendency of the last few months has been slightly towards decline, and the contingency of a fall in prices must be guarded against.*

Note D.
The views
of the
Government
of
India on
the *Opium
Revenue.*

We have a surplus on the four years (1871-74 inclusive) of more than six millions. *One main reason has been the prosperity of the opium revenue.*

OPIUM REVENUE.

1871-72.	1872-73.	1873-74.
Actuals.	Regular Estimate.	Budget Estimate.
£9,253,859	£8,677,000	£7,500,000

OPIUM EXPENDITURE.

(Advances to Ryots and cost price.)

1871-2.	1872-73.	1873-74.
Actuals.	Regular Estimate.	Budget Estimate.
£1,596,646	£1,818,000	£2,115,000

These paragraphs whilst they show that the Indian Government are not unaware of the uncertainty connected with the opium revenue, yet exhibit on the other hand the very great importance which they attach to this source of income, and their deliberate resolution to preserve and consolidate the trade. I confess that had it not been for the ground over which, in the review of the trade, I have been constrained to travel, I should have considered Sir Richard Temple's Minute in the light of a powerful argument in favour of the morality and excellence of the trade. I am now led to consider that document rather as a phenomenon of grave significance. Is it not alarming that the Government of India in Council shall congratulate themselves and bid the empire be of good cheer, because of the prosperity of a trade which (to say the least) half the Christian world condemns as immoral, because deeply and widely injurious to the human race?

Note E.
On the tea
growing
capabilities
of China.

Note E.—With reference to the possibility of developing the tea trade of the country, I may mention that the one province of Chekiang, in the green tea districts, has not one-hundredth part of the tea-producing land under cultivation; and yet from the port of Ningpo alone, in the year 1872, there was an increase of 10,000 peculs of tea exported. See "Customs' Returns."

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