



OPIUM AND OPIUM-SMOKING

JUSTUS DOOLITTLE

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SOCIAL LIFE OF THE CHINESE :

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THEIR

RELIGIOUS, GOVERNMENTAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND BUSINESS
CUSTOMS AND OPINIONS.

WITH SPECIAL BUT NOT EXCLUSIVE REFERENCE TO FUHCHAU.

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FOURTEEN YEARS MEMBER OF THE FUHCHAU MISSION OF THE AMERICAN BOARD.

With over One Hundred and Fifty Illustrations.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Opium reduced to a Liquid before Smoking. — Difference between smoking Opium and smoking Tobacco. — Manner of becoming addicted to Opium. — Custom of treating Customers and Friends with Opium. — Baneful Effects of Opium various. — Costly and destructive to one's Business. — Injurious to one's Health. — Opium-shops more numerous than Rice-shops. — Inquiries for foreign Medicine to cure the Habit. — Bewitching Influence of Opium. — Opium worse than ardent Spirits in its Effects. — Chinese Opinion in regard to Divine Providence. — The Gospel and Opium both foreign to China. — Opium an Obstacle to the spread of the Gospel. — Difficulty of breaking off the Habit. — Noble Sentiments of Tan Kuang. — Opium and the Gospel both legalized. — Duty of Christendom.

Opium is reduced from a solid to a liquid form by boiling it with water before it is consumed by the Chinese. This process for the retail market requires considerable skill and care. When prepared for smoking, it looks very much like thick, dark-colored molasses. It is often sold in very small quantities — as small as one hundredth of an ounce. An ounce of this prepared opium is worth about eleven hundred cash. A hundredth part of an ounce is sufficient for a beginner, who can smoke but a few whiffs. After becoming accustomed to it, the smoker can use from one twentieth to one third of an ounce daily.

There seems to be a great ignorance prevailing among some intelligent people in Western lands in regard to the manner in which the Chinese smoke opium. It has been said that the people of the East smoke opium as the people of the West smoke tobacco. This is a great mistake.

One can smoke tobacco while standing, walking, or lying down, and while engaged in the prosecution of many kinds of business ; but the smoker of opium invariably lies down, and gives his whole attention to the process while inhaling its fumes.

The tobacco-smoker usually emits the smoke from his mouth, but the inveterate opium-smoker seldom emits the smoke from his mouth — generally through his nostrils, after ‘swallowing’ it, as the Chinese say — after inhaling it into his lungs. Beginners emit more or less of the fumes from the mouth. Some inveterate smokers, it is affirmed, by practice acquire the power of retaining or absorbing in the system a considerable portion of the fumes, emitting the rest through the nose.

Tobacco can be lighted by contact with a coal of fire, or with any thing already ignited, but the opium-smoker always uses the steady, constant flame of a small oil-lamp. The opium is introduced into the bowl of the pipe through a small orifice in the projecting point of the bowl. He holds this point steadily in the flame of the lamp until the opium within is ignited and partially volatilized. During this lighting process the smoker gently inhales the fumes which arise from the burning opium, the suction of his mouth always causing some of the flame of the lamp to enter the orifice of the bowl.

The reader, from this account, will readily perceive that the manner of smoking the liquid opium is very different from the manner of smoking tobacco. Pictures which appear in books intended to illustrate the manner of smoking opium among the Chinese are oftentimes little better than caricatures on the manner of smoking the drug, at least as practiced in this part of the empire.

If one smokes opium at stated intervals, as every morning or every

evening, or once regularly in two days, he acquires in a short time the habit, so that he must smoke it at just such a time, or suffer the disagreeable consequences of not smoking. This condition causes an incessant thinking about it, and a longing or hankering after it, which in a great degree incapacitates the victim for effort, intellectual or physical, unless he has recourse to the drug again. The habit becomes fixed in a period of time varying from ten or fifteen days to one or two months, according to the constitution of the person and the circumstances of the case. It is not determined so much by the quantity he consumes as by the regularity of his resorts to the pipe. If he smokes at irregular periods, as once in a week, and then once in a day, and then goes for a longer or shorter period before he smokes again, he will not feel this ardent and intolerable longing. He does not become addicted to the vice ; he is still his own master.

Some originally resort to the drug in order to cure the toothache, or headache, or dyspepsia, under the advice of friends. The pain is usually relieved for the time being, but at the expense of acquiring the habit of smoking opium. When this habit has fastened itself on the victim, the usual quantity will not long assuage the pain as at the beginning, and, in order to relieve it, larger and still larger quantities must be used from time to time.

Friends often invite each other to smoke opium as preliminary to the discussion of business matters, or at intervals while engaged in ordinary conversation. It has become the popular way of 'treating' among some. This fashion of inviting guests or friends among the higher classes to smoke the opium-pipe has, perhaps, attained at this place the same popularity, though not the same universality, that the custom of inviting friends who called to drink wine, or rum, or bran-

dy, as a token of hospitality, attained in the United States some thirty or forty years ago. It corresponds also very much to the practice now common among many foreign residents in the East, as well as among many Englishmen and Americans in their native countries, to offer wine, or something stronger than wine, to guests.

Opium-shops are always provided with platforms, which the buyers of the prepared drug may occupy while consuming the quantity purchased. Here two friends often meet, and, reclining on these platforms, facing each other, with the burning lamp and apparatus between them, and their heads resting on pillows, treat each other, usually each preparing for the other to smoke the pipe which is furnished for their common use. Most of the poor, and many of the middle classes, prefer, for convenience sake, to consume the opium at the shop where it is purchased. In the case of some of the middle class, and of most of the wealthy and the higher classes of Chinese, the opium is bought at the retail shops already prepared in a liquid form for smoking, and taken home to be consumed. Sometimes, however, they procure the drug in the solid form, and prepare it by boiling in their own houses. Perhaps one half or more of the quantity imported and used here is thus consumed at the homes of its buyers. Many officers, merchants, literary men, the wealthy, and generally all those who have their time at their leisurely disposal, buy the drug by the ball or in smaller quantity, and prepare it at their residences, where they smoke it whenever they please.

Extensive native mercantile firms sometimes keep it on hand for their large customers or their personal friends who may call. The best Chinese physicians oftentimes depend on being invited to a smoke at the houses of their patients, and take it unkindly if not

'treated'. The official employés connected with mandarin establishments, such as policemen and constables, of which class there is a large number, delay or decline to proceed to the transaction of their business unless first treated with opium when called to one's house, even on the most urgent and important affairs. Many wealthy private families keep the opium-pipe and fixtures in readiness for the demands of fashion. They not unusually have a room which is devoted to the smoking of the drug, being provided with a bedstead or platform for the convenience of smokers.

The baneful effects of opium-smoking are many and various — social, moral, mental, physical, and pecuniary. It is not designed to dwell at length on the evil influences of this vice.

In the first place, opium-smoking sensibly and unfavorably affects one's property and business relations. It is comparatively a very costly vice, the expense being graduated by the circumstances of each case, ranging from a dollar or two to ten or fifteen dollars per month, even in regard to persons not of the highest and the most wealthy classes. The lowest mentioned rate, taking into consideration the low price of labor among this people compared with the price of labor in Western countries, is relatively large and burdensome. With all smokers, however, the effect of this vice on their pecuniary standing is by no means to be estimated by the actual outlay in money for the drug. Its seductive influence leads its victims to neglect their business, and consequently, sooner or later, loss or ruin ensues. As the habit grows, so does inattention to business increase. Instances are not rare where the rich have been reduced to poverty and beggary as one of the consequences of their attachment to the opium-pipe. The poor addicted to this vice are oftentimes led to dis-

pose of every thing salable in the hovel where they live. Sometimes, even, men sell their own children and their wives in order to procure the drug, and finally end their career by becoming beggars or thieves. In order to understand the EXPENSE of this vice, the Western reader needs perhaps to be reminded that the vast majority of the Chinese are generally poor, and that wages are invariably low. It oftentimes, and even usually requires as much time and toil here to earn a dime, as in America it requires to earn a dollar.

In the second place, the smoking of opium injures one's health and bodily constitution. Unless taken promptly at the regular time and in the necessary quantity, the victim becomes unable to control himself and to attend to his business. He sneezes. He gapes. Mucus runs from his nose and his eyes. Gripping pains seize him in his bowels. His whole appearance indicates restlessness and misery. If not indulged in smoking and left undisturbed, he usually falls asleep, but his sleep does not refresh and invigorate him. On being aroused, he is himself again, provided he can have his opium ; if not, his troubles and pains multiply. He has no appetite for ordinary food ; no strength or disposition to labor. Diarrhœa sets in of a dreadful and most painful description, peculiar to opium-smokers ; and if still unable to procure opium, the unhappy victim not unfrequently dies in most excruciating agonies. Few, comparatively, recover after the diarrhœa has become virulent, unless they have access to opium, and not always then.

The Chinese, in describing the effects of opium-smoking on the individual, dwell with peculiar emphasis on the weakness and indolence which it induces. The victim is described as unwilling, and usually physically unable to perform any thing requiring muscular strength

or mental application, except under the excitement of opium. His habits of sleep are changed, it being impossible oftentimes, owing to the overwrought mental excitement induced by the drug, for him to fall asleep in the early part of the night, as others do. Frequently it is nearly or quite morning before he is able to compose himself to rest, waking only late in the forenoon or early in the afternoon. The Chinese have a common saying that the smoker of opium 'makes the day night, and the night day', alluding to his unnatural hours of waking and of sleeping. His features almost always become strikingly changed, being of an unhealthy, pallid, death-like cast. His shoulders not unfrequently become permanently elevated above their natural level, much as when one shrugs them up, at the same time drawing down his head. Such an opium-smoker is expressively described as 'having three heads', from the high and unnatural appearance of his shoulders. His eyes become glaring and without expression. Most inveterate smokers become spare and thin, owing in part to the direct effects of opium on the human system, and in part to the fact that nutritious food is taken in less quantities and at more irregular intervals, through loss of appetite, than is usual in the case of persons not addicted to this habit. They are styled 'opium devils'.

Men of naturally strong constitutions, and possessed of sufficient property to support them without vexations care and personal labor, may indulge in this vice with comparative impunity for a considerable period. Such sometimes live to a good old age ; but the longer they smoke, the larger is the quantity required to keep them up. Freedom from care and hard labor, as well as plenty of opium, are requisite in order that the smoker may continue in health and attain a respectable longevity. There is not so much shortening of the lives of rich men who have become victims of this habit as is often asserted, and

as seems very natural to suppose, though, doubtless, the lives of such men are in fact considerably shortened by the use of opium. They often live to old age, notwithstanding the effects of opium on their physical systems. The greatest destruction of life from this vice in China is unquestionably seen in the poorer and the working classes. These are not able to increase the amount of opium in proportion to the need of an augmented supply, and therefore they soon feel the effects of a limited amount on their health. Besides, when ill, they are not only under the necessity of going without the drug, but are often unable to procure physicians and medicines as aids to recovery. In such cases, their previous use of opium renders their illness the more dreadful and intolerable. It has been estimated that the lives of the poor who become slaves to this seductive habit are cut short by it from five to fifty years.

The vice of opium-smoking has long since become a gigantic obstacle to the welfare and the prosperity of this people. The consumption of opium is rapidly on the increase in this city as well as in other parts of the empire, and its ravages are becoming more manifest and more awful. Shops where the drug is offered for sale are becoming more and more common. Its unhappy victims are becoming more and more numerous. The nation is becoming poorer and poorer.

The Chinese here have a current saying that 'Opium-shops are more numerous than rice-shops'. In a certain neighborhood, three or four years ago, there were twelve shops where opium was retailed, and seven shops where rice, which is the 'staff of life' in this part of China, was sold. The number of opium-shops in the city and suburbs is estimated to amount to several thousands. While estimates given by the natives differ greatly in regard to details, they substantially agree

in showing the vast number of people who have become slaves to opium.

One of the most common inquiries made by confirmed smokers, as well as by young beginners, of those foreigners who express a hatred of the vice, and who urge them to break away from it, is, 'Have you medicine which will cure it ?' The Chinese entertain the opinion that since the drug comes from a foreign land, foreigners must know some infallible remedy which will counteract its bad effects, or destroy an acquired taste for it. Accordingly, the Chinese have opium medicines in abundance, professedly of foreign origin.

Some six years ago I observed some six different kinds of advertisements, or placards, each in large numbers, posted up in conspicuous places in the streets, pretending to teach men how to cure the habit of opium-smoking, or telling them where they could find the necessary and infallible medicines. The pompous title of one would lead the public to infer that the medicine advertised was prepared in accordance with an American receipt ; another according to a receipt obtained from Manilla ; another from India, etc. On one of these placards were large English capital letters, arranged without meaning, in the ordinary style of Chinese writing — that is, in rows from the top to the bottom of the sheet. Such letters were used, doubtless, in order more successfully to impose on the common people, who might be supposed to be more easily duped by the display of foreign characters. Another had what was intended to be an imitation of a sentence written with English letters in the running-hand, taken from a Christian almanac published by a missionary here. The original design of this sentence was to illustrate the way Chinese words could be represented by the use of English letters. Here it was evidently used as a

kind of certificate of the value or genuineness of the medicine advertised. Few Chinese can read English here, and the sentence probably produced its desired impression on many of the people. These facts show two things — the great demand for opium medicine on the part of the victims of opium, and the readiness of some Chinese to engage in the manufacture and the vending of quack nostrums, hoping to make money out of the vicious habits of their fellow-countrymen.

There seems to be a bewitching influence connected with opium-smoking which renders it almost impracticable to break away from the habit when once formed. The peculiar pains and sensations which accompany attempts to desist from smoking it also have, doubtless, a great influence in discouraging such attempts. Some missionaries and physicians in other parts of China seem to think that many victims have been reclaimed from this vice by the aid of certain medicines, but benevolent efforts to overcome the power of the habit in individual cases have not here been attended with very encouraging success. Few have the fortitude to bear up against the fascinations of the pipe and the agonies induced by efforts at reformation, even with the aid of foreign medicines, long enough to become thoroughly cured. They usually, after a short trial of abstaining from the drug, have recourse to it again, although they know that every indulgence with the opium-pipe but rivets the chains of their bondage the tighter.

A strange infatuation impels annually many of the Chinese who have never smoked this drug to begin its use, and, after they have been bound fast in the fetters of the habit they have induced, they seemingly arouse themselves to the fact of their thralldom. They know perfectly well that if they smoke regularly the bewitching pipe, they will certainly soon come within its power, and yet many yearly volunta-

rily become its fresh victims. With their eyes open to the inevitable consequences of indulgence, they blindly do what will enslave them for life.

Some have attempted to compare the evils of opium-smoking in China with the evils of drinking intoxicating liquors at the West. But these vices are so different in some of their principal effects as to render a just comparison exceedingly difficult. The one is soothing and tranquillizing, the other excites and often maddens. Ardent spirits are often taken to stimulate to the commission of violent and bloody deeds ; but opium is never smoked for such a purpose, nor with such an affect. Were the subject of the comparative evils of opium-smoking and liquor-drinking, as seen in China (where the use of Chinese whisky or samshu is universal among all classes), to be submitted for decision to intelligent Chinamen, the verdict would be given with promptness and startling energy against opium. It would be unanimous in the condemnation of opium as being the producer of an immensely greater amount of misery, sickness, poverty, and death than Chinese liquors.

The Chinese seldom discuss the evils of opium-smoking without excitement, nor do they often refer to the subject, in conversation with those foreigners who can understand them, without manifesting apparently a very cordial and sincere hatred of the drug, frequently denouncing it in the most emphatic terms. They are well aware of the destructive and baneful influence of opium consumption. I desire to protest against the justice and the truthfulness of the sentiments which some foreigners assert in regard to the feelings and the views of the Chinese on the effects of the use of this drug. They do not regard it as a harmless, innocent luxury. They are not ignorant of its

monstrous and its numerous evil effects ; indeed, they acknowledge them, and depict them in a manner not to be excelled by foreigners. But, after all, they continue the use of that which they appear heartily and sincerely to reprobate. To the question, Why the Chinese continue the use of opium when they are fully aware of its evil effects on the habits, health, and wealth of its victims, and consequently on the social condition and welfare of the empire, an intelligent literary man — reverently pointing upward with his thumb in a manner peculiarly Chinese — once uttered substantially the following sentiments : ‘THE MASTER AND GOVERNOR MUST HAVE A MEANING IN CAUSING IT. HE MUST INTEND TO DESTROY THE NATION. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY OF ACCOUNTING FOR THE LOVE OF THE CHINESE FOR OPIUM. THEY KNOW ITS BANEFUL EFFECTS PERFECTLY WELL, BUT STILL ARE EXCEEDINGLY FOND OF SMOKING IT. HE MUST PURPOSE OUR NATIONAL DESTRUCTION’. Providence does indeed seem to be making use of this drug in humbling this proud nation ; not by causing the natives to smoke it any more than He causes foreigners to introduce it, or their countrymen to purchase and retail it, but by allowing them freely and joyfully to smoke it in the gratification of a vitiated taste, in the same sense that He allows foreigners to produce and import it in their desire to become rich, notwithstanding the miseries they are instrumental in producing.

Good men in China deplore the use of opium as an extraordinary and most gigantic obstacle to the reception of the Gospel, and the spread of it among the Chinese. The beneficent religion preached by men from Western lands and this demoralizing drug are placed by the vast majority of this people, in the same catalogue — viz., articles introduced by foreigners. Missionaries, while denouncing the evils of opium-smoking, and entreating the people not to indulge in the

vice of using it, are very frequently met by the reply, You foreigners bring it to sell, and now you exhort us not to use it. If you do not wish us to smoke it, why did you import it ? If you did not bring it to sell, we could not buy it, and therefore should not use it'. Missionaries were often regarded by the Chinese at first as a party to the importation of the drug. The British consul stationed here before the large increase of foreign trade in 1853 was very generally believed by the common people to be appointed by his government principally for the purpose of indirectly fostering the opium trade, and of protecting the opium receiving-ships which were stationed in the River Min. Generally speaking, only those Chinese who are more or less personally acquainted with the missionaries know that they do not deal in the article. Probably those who have acquired considerable knowledge of Christian doctrines from the reading of the books published by missionaries are led to infer that the authors of those books, or the believers and the doers of the doctrines they contain, would be unwilling to engage in the opium trade. It is doubtless true that, by some good proportion of the Chinese who live at the consular ports, the missionaries are regarded as opposed to the importation and the consumption of the drug, because the use of it is the source of numerous and aggregated evils. It is, however, as undoubtedly true that the mass of the people in China at a distance from the consular ports have no such knowledge, and make no such distinction between preachers of the Gospel and importers of opium.

Besides the disadvantages and the prejudices under which the missionary labors, suggested in part by the above paragraphs, he feels that if no 'drunkard shall enter the kingdom of heaven', the same principle must exclude those who become and who die addicted to the vice of opium-smoking. A considerable proportion of those who

profess an interest in the Gospel are ascertained sooner or later to be victims of the habit, for whose conversion experience shows it is almost hopeless to labor, unless they determinedly desist from the use of opium. Some of the members of the native churches at some of the consular ports and some of the inland missionary stations it has been found necessary to discipline or excommunicate on account of their love for this drug. Besides drunkenness, lying, lewdness, and the long list of vices and sins incident to unrenewed human nature every where, and besides the numerous obstacles arising out of ignorant superstition and learned heathenism, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Tauism, the missionary to the Chinese must encounter the various and peculiar obstacles to the reception and the practice of the Gospel which attend and follow the prevalence of the vice of opium-smoking.

How noble and well worthy of being held in lasting remembrance are the sentiments of the aged heathen emperor Tau Kuang, uttered in 1842, relating to the proposition to legalize the trade in opium, made by Sir Henry Pottinger, the minister of 'her most gracious and religious majesty', Queen Victoria : 'IT IS TRUE, I CAN NOT PREVENT THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FLOWING POISON ; GAIN-SEEKING AND CORRUPT MEN WILL, FOR PROFIT AND SENSUALITY, DEFEAT MY WISHES ; BUT NOTHING WILL INDUCE ME TO DERIVE A REVENUE FROM THE VICE AND MISERY OF MY PEOPLE'. But his degenerate son, Hien Fung, who is said to have been himself a smoker of opium before he came to the throne in 1851, gave way in the fall of 1858 to the overwhelming pressure from the ministers of England, France, and America, strongly seconded, doubtless, by the want of an adequate revenue for the support of his tottering throne. He legalized, by his commissioners, the nefarious traffic, fixing the import

duty at thirty taels of silver per chest of opium. How much credit and glory should be awarded to the representatives of those Christian and civilized governments for the influence they exerted, directly and indirectly, officially and unofficially, toward bringing about this result, is a question not clearly understood by those who are uninitiated in state secrets. In a moral, benevolent, and Christian point of view, their sentiments and their actions certainly fall far below the views and the conduct of the heathen and the idolator, Tau Kuang.

For several years, according to the supplementary regulations, completed in Shanghai in November, 1858, trade in China in the drug has not been 'contraband'. In the expressive language of another, 'Opium is as much legalized as the Gospel'. Those who import opium are no longer to be included under the epithet smugglers, provided they pay the duty leviable according to stipulations of treaty. In the eye of the law, they are engaged in as honorable and respectable a business as those who import rice or cotton goods. The opium importer and the opium seller are now placed on the same legal platform as the Gospel messenger and the Bible distributor. The receiving-ships for opium are often moored by the side of tea-ships. The tares grow along with the wheat.

What will be the full practical effect of the legalization of opium on the Chinese is as yet, to a great extent, an unsolved problem, involving most momentous interests. Will the Chinese engage in the cultivation of the poppy more extensively than in previous years? Will they consume more opium than they would were it to continue prohibited? Will it be imported in larger quantities, and will it become cheaper than before, thus coming within the means of more people? These, and other questions relating to the cultivation, importation,

and consumption of opium, are often the subjects of reflection and discussion on the part of foreign residents. Some discuss the probabilities in the case, so that they may, according to the maxims of trade, invest or refrain from investing their capital in the drug, in order to make the greatest possible percentage on their money. Others discuss these questions because the religious interests and the social and the national welfare of the Chinese people are most intimately concerned in the practical results, present and prospective, of the legalization of the opium trade.

Ought not Protestant Western Christians to be willing to spend as much money annually in the missionary work in China as is annually made by Protestant Western merchants in China from traffic in opium ? If it is the policy of the governments of Great Britain and of the United States to protect their citizens in importing this drug and in trafficking in it in this empire, ought not Protestant Christians residing in those countries to be incited thereby to greater diligence and to more earnest efforts in providing the hundreds of millions of the Chinese with the Gospel, the heaven-sent antidote and remedy for the vice of opium-smoking, and for all the vices to which depraved human nature is prone ? How large a sum is yearly 'cleared' by foreign importers and foreign dealers in opium in China there is no correct data for ascertaining, but it is, beyond question, immensely larger than is yearly expended by Christians residing in Great Britain and in the United States for the evangelization of the Chinese. It is a sad, sad thought, that the principals, partners, employés, and agents of a few foreign mercantile firms in this heathen land annually realize a far greater amount of money from their traffic in this drug than is annually contributed by the millions of their pious fellow-

countrymen at home for the Christianization of the Chinese ! If the number of dollars and cents, or of pounds and pence, gained by the one party and expended by the other party, be the criterion of forming a judgment, a few hundred individuals, actuated by the love of Money, are annually doing very much more to demoralize and destroy the Chinese than all the millions of Christians in Christendom, constrained by the love of Jesus, are doing to benefit and save them.