

written on opium and the opium traffic. His object is to show that the moderate use of opium is not more deleterious than the moderate use of alcohol, that its excessive use or abuse should rightly be compared with the excessive use of alcohol, and that the pictures of the two should go side by side; that the effects of the excessive use of opium should not be taken as constituting a true likeness of what it produces when used in moderation, and that so used it is often beneficial.

There is much truth in all this, but neither is it the whole truth. We know that many substances, among which opium takes a prominent place, have the effect of enabling men to go through much fatigue and labour of the most depressing and exhausting kind, without for the time feeling its effects. Alcohol, too, has the same influence, but in a different degree; but there is probably an essential difference between the two processes. Opium, as we take it, has the effect, first of all, of quickening the circulation, but if taken by the uninitiated in more than the smallest appreciable quantity it dulls sensation and lowers all forms of vital activity. But if not carried too far, this condition is not incompatible with great and prolonged exertion, coupled with diminished or retarded tissue-change. But *ex nihilo nihil fit*, and opium is not food, so that, sooner or later, the bodily loss requires to be made up somehow. So, too, of alcohol, but in a different degree; the stimulant effects of alcohol are more marked than those of opium. By its action on the cutaneous capillaries, more immediately apparent than that of opium, it gives a sensation of heat, and may often do good by diverting blood from the portal system, especially in malarious regions; but, if it acts more

speedily than does opium, its effects sooner pass away, and the reaction being more sudden, is felt more acutely accordingly. Both are useful in their way, but their place and power are not identical. Moreover, if we mistake not, out of alcohol some force must be developed—all the alcohol which is consumed is certainly not eliminated as alcohol; and, if it undergoes any chemical change at all, the change must be of such a nature as to develop force in some form. In point of fact, the use, or rather the abuse, of the two would seem to necessitate different conditions. We can hardly imagine northern races, compelled by the rude necessity of life to maintain an active existence, taking to the excessive use of opium. But to races living under different conditions, especially those whose idea of eternal happiness is eternal stillness and rest, we can easily imagine that the use of opium in excess would be especially seductive. But here we tread on the ground already indicated. Between the use of opium as an aid and support during excessive and prolonged labour, and its abuse as a means of procuring a temporary and passing sample of the great rest promised to all true followers of Buddha, there is a great gulf—great, indeed, as that which exists between the use of alcohol as an aid to digestion and a grateful filip during hard, mental, or bodily labour, and its abuse by one who gets drunk for the sake of getting drunk, and to whom the form of alcohol is immaterial so long as the desired effect is attained.

There is, however, one point which we have never seen cleared up to our satisfaction. We know this—that men may go on all their lives taking their glass or two of wine every day, never desiring more, and never acquiring the habitual craving for alcohol. They miss