

mouth-piece, and is made of earthenware. It is round, some two inches wide, and covered over, except in the centre, where a small pin-hole communicates with the hollow stem. With a steel needle, ten inches long, a portion of opium, scarcely as large as a pea is taken up by its own adhesion, and is thoroughly burnt and melted in the flame of the lamp. A dense acrid smoke is emitted during the process. By then inserting the point of the needle into the pin-hole of the bowl, and pushing it downwards with simultaneous dexterous twists, the opium is made to adhere in a little pyramid on the surface of the bowl and just around the pin-hole. The needle is withdrawn, and the pipe is considered charged. It is then politely and generously handed, by the one of the pair who has prepared it, to his chum, whose eager looks have been fixed upon the whole operation. The opium upon the bowl is held by the recipient to the lamp, and John seems at once transformed into a bellows, a high-pressure steam-engine and a volcano. From mouth and nose (and it seems as if from eyes and ears also) puffs and snorts and clouds of smoke are seen and heard to issue, without any cessation, until the opium is exhausted. This only signifies a period of about half a minute, and then John takes a short rest before filling for his friend. They keep this up until they become so stupefied as barely to be capable of walking home, where they sleep a deathlike, dreamless sleep for hours.

It must not be supposed that opium smoking is universal among the Chinese in America. Like dram-drinking among Anglo-Saxons, it has a strong hold upon a large portion of their population, while its practice is deplored and shunned by the best of them. The slave of gin, or Canadian whiskey, is wonderfully like the Chinaman whose soul is bound in the shackles of the opium demon. In season and out of season they both crave for their poison. A lady in Victoria had, as is the custom, a Chinaman for a domestic.

She told me that he was a good "boy," yet at times he seemed stupid and sleepy, although he always stoutly denied that he used opium. It was at last accidentally discovered that he had stealthily established his lamp, hiding it, not under a bushel, but under the floor of the kitchen. To an excavation in that region he habitually retired to solace himself amid the cares of cooking, washing, and ironing.

I went the same night to a Chinese theatre, and saw part of a play. It may have been a modern play, it may have been one of the oldest in the world. We must not forget that this inscrutable race flourished several thousand years ago in about the same stage of civilization as to-day. When Greece was deriving her latest sensations from the drama of *Æschylus* or *Sophocles*, and

"The lofty grave tragedians taught
In chorus or iambic ;"

when in later days the voluptuous myriads of Imperial Rome thronged the Coliseum, to applaud the death-struggles in the arena after the edict had gone forth "*Christianos ad leones*," perhaps the same race was performing the same play, in the same dress, the same jargon, but, I can only hope, with a better orchestral accompaniment. At this theatre there are said to be sixty professionals on the permanent staff as actors, musicians (!) or otherwise employed. The actors are educated at a theatrical college in their native land, and succeed in producing results certainly highly artificial, while free from any appearance of the art which should "hold the mirror up to nature." The building is airy enough, and is capable of affording seats for 1,100 persons. The stage strikes one as spacious, but it may be on account of the absence of scenery. A door upon the right allows the actors, and apparently half the audience, to pass out at the back after walking across the stage. Another door upon the left is the means of ingress for the performers. Upon the stage, well back, and