

successful—and one begins to understand the discouraging immensity of the task which China has undertaken. Really, to “stop using opium” would mean a very rearranging of the agricultural plan of the empire. It would make necessary an immediate solution of China’s transportation problem (no other crop is so easy to carry as opium) and an almost complete reconstruction of the imperial finances; indeed, few observers are so glib as to suggest off hand a substitute for the immense opium revenue to the Chinese government. And nobody to accomplish all this but those sodden officials, of whom it is safe to guess that fifty per cent. have some sort or other of a financial stake in the traffic!

In the minds of most of us, I think, there has been a vague notion that the Chinese have always smoked opium, that opium is in some peculiar way a necessity to the Chinese constitution. Even among those who know the extraordinary history of this morbidly fascinating vegetable product, who know that the India-grown British drug was pushed and smuggled and bayoneted into China during a century of desperate protest and even armed resistance from these yellow people, it has been a popular argument to assert