

## THE OPIUM INIQUITY.

"One day a young man came into my preaching hall. His name was Tong. He had been a slave to opium smoking for five or six years, but he had been impressed at our preaching services, and he joined our inquiry class. He at once determined to give up the opium. I watched his struggles day after day while he was in the fierce grip of the opium demon. One day he would smash his pipe to pieces, and the next day he would buy another. I have seen him come to our preaching hall, crying bitterly, as he has confessed to me his sin and weakness. He would go, perhaps, for a week, or a few days, without touching his pipe; but he has told me how he has felt himself carried almost involuntarily in a half dream to the fatal den. The intolerable craving and gnawing hunger for opium, added to the remorse which he felt, caused him great bodily and mental suffering. Finally, however, the power came, as we hoped, to drag himself free from the drug. He went two weeks without a taste of the pipe. Altogether he seemed to be a changed person, and in two months I had hoped to admit him to Christian Baptism. Every evening he would come into the preaching hall and attend the services; and he would spend his spare time in reading the Scriptures, and in conversation about good things. But, alas! he was seen to grow weaker and weaker every day. His eyes were sunken, his face had a deadly pallor, his gait was unsteady, and his appetite for food was gone. He told me one day how his friends and fellow-workpeople had been begging him to return to the opium pipe for relief, and how nearly he had yielded. Remember these are the usual effects in China of a confirmed opium sot breaking free from this noxious drug. He went for two or three weeks, I say, without any taste of the drug; but he was getting weaker and weaker and completely emaciated. After a short conversation with him, in which I exhorted him to courage and patience, he said, 'Well, *sin-shamp*, I am determined what to do. I know that to return to the pipe will prolong my life for perhaps a month or two, but the end must come. Sooner or later it must be death, and I am resolved what to do.' He stood up and said 'I am resolved what to do. Come what may, I will never smoke again; and if I die—well, better die than sin against God.' But one Sunday soon after, we missed him from his place. It was the first Sunday which he had missed attending our chapel for two months. I became anxious about him. We went to his home; he was not there. We went to his workshop; he was not there.

His fellow workpeople began to laugh and jeer, and one pointed the way to the den called 'Heavenly Joy.' We passed along a narrow back street, full of dark dens of vice, and at last we came to the opium den. We pushed aside the grimy curtain which concealed the room from passers-by, and entered the place, amid dense fumes of stupefying smoke. There was nothing to be heard but the spluttering of the opium pipes; for, you know, there is that advantage which the opium den possesses over the liquor shop—you hear no noise; you hear no brawls; everything is quiet as death. There at the corner of the room was our lost sheep. His eyes fell as we entered. We approached him, and with gentle remonstrances besought him to return to us. But, alas! the fiend with him was too strong. He turned upon us with wild eyes and awful imprecations, cursing us and the very God that we hoped he had learned to love."

Those who have themselves gone through desperate struggles against some besetting sin, yet one not so strong as the opium habit, will not be able to think lightly of the British policy to which such death struggles are directly due.

The principal official argument by which this ghastly trade is maintained is that the Indian Government cannot do without the revenue which it brings. Where is the morality of that position? That is the argument of a robber who pleads that he needs his victim's money, and is determined to have it even at the cost of the victim's life. Thus it has come to this, that in the matter of its revenue, the great Empire of India is ruled by a "Christian" Government on the moral level of the thief and the assassin.—*Mr. Masters, Wesleyan Missionary, in Friend of China.*

A young lady, in a time of religious interest, sat down and wrote out all the reasons she could think of to help her to decide whom she would serve. She wrote: 1 "Reasons why I should serve the world." 2. "Reasons why I should serve the Lord." She was surprised that she could find no satisfactory reason for the first and urgent ones for the last. She acted upon her reason, gave herself to God and was blest.

Fancy not that you lose your pleasures when you lose your sins, and that lying to God will be an irksome task. No; blessed be God! thousands can declare that they never knew what it was to be redeemed from misery till they were redeemed from sin.