

would be hard to give an adequate idea of what was seen. Had Danté been able to visit Chinatown, San Francisco, he would have added yet darker strokes of horror to his *Inferno*. We went from tenement house to tenement house; we dived into cellars dug beneath cellars—as it were, inverted stories; and everywhere we saw the same scenes of misery and degradation. We made our painful way behind our guide, who carried a candle, into dens where daylight never entered, where one pure breath of air never penetrated, where the stench was something between a charnel-house and a wild beast's lair, but yet where human beings were, as it were, packed away. The Chinaman of the lower or lowest class needs only space a little bigger than a coffin. An ordinary room will be divided into bunks, and within one of these bunks he will stow himself, together with his luxuries, and in some cases with the meagre necessities of his existence. Sometimes, as in the case of certain cigar-makers, he carries on his trade where he lies down to smoke his opium pipe and sleep. In every little compartment there is a lamp on the mat—as it were in bed with the occupant—and he is seen putting the opium on the pipe with a wire. Then he kindles it by means of the lamp; then he inhales; and in a few seconds the smoke comes through his nose. After a certain number of whiffs he lies off to sleep. Frequently two men occupied the same bunk, the one lying down, the other with his legs crossed. Pieces of meat, the entrails of animals, dried fowl, hung up in the midst of filth, over cesspools, contiguous to slops of the most loathsome character. One of our party, a pretty strong man, began to feel seasick, and it was only by an effort of will that he repressed nature's protest against such scenes and such smells. Each man either cooks himself, or is one of a little band, one of whom cooks for the rest. An open stove of a crude sort is placed either at the door or near the window—where there is one—a pane of which last has been broken through to serve the purpose of a chimney. Walls, ceiling, sills, posts, window frames—all are covered with soot, hanging like thick layers of fungi. The marvel is that more fires have not originated in Chinatown. Dens where criminals lived were visited, and here men were seen whose pig-tails had been cut off in prison. These were now spliced. The criminal, like the rest of the lower class of Chinese, enjoys his opium pipe.

We visited the lodgings of cooks and found from sixteen to twenty, all in one room. These cooks are employed in private houses during the day and come here at night to play and sleep.

The opium dens proper are not forgotten. These places are like the tippling-houses of the old style, where men went and soaked in alcohol. The opium-smoker comes to one of these places, and for a couple of bits or more gets all the opium-smoking he wants. If he is poor or economical he is furnished with a pipe; if rich and extravagant, by paying a little more, he can have pipes and prepared opium furnished him as he wants it.

A few words may be devoted to a description of the manner in which this fatal drug is used. It is wholly unlike tobacco-smoking. The stem of the pipe is about the length and thickness of an ordinary flute, the end that goes into the mouth being flattened to suit the lips. At the other end is a bowl of terra cotta about half the size of a breakfast cup. Through the middle of this runs a small hole, which communicates with the flute-like tube. The opium is a dark, gummy paste which, before being smoked, is prepared as follows: the smoker, or the waiter on the smoker, takes, on the point of a long needle, a piece of opium about twice the size of a pea, and roasts it, so to speak, in the flame of a small lamp. This, I was told, was to the end that certain poisonous properties should be got rid of. The next thing—the opium so prepared is placed on the hole of the terra cotta bowl, made like a cone, through which a hole is pierced. The opium so arranged is then brought in contact with the flame of the lamp. Three or four inhalations, and the little cone has disappeared. But no smoke is seen for the present. It remains either in the mouth of the smoker, or he has swallowed it. In a few seconds, however, the smoke is blown out of the nostrils. The smoker, if he has no attendant, then commences the same operation, which is repeated until he has had enough. Twelve pipes is a usual indulgence for smokers. They always smoke lying down. Sometimes on the right side; sometimes on the left side. This is the position most favorable to the full enjoyment of the drug.