

THE STORY OF CHINA'S FIGHT AGAINST OPIUM: REPROACH TO BRITONS

[From the Presbyterian Record.]

"Canada may choose the manner—and the measure—in which she will share the burden of empire defence, whether naval, or military, or both; but she has no choice as to the burden of empire shame. That burden, whatever the blame, must be borne by all."

The SHAME—beside which other national shames grow pale—is that China, a heathen empire, has been trying for nearly two centuries to save her people from opium, which has done so much to ruin them, and that Britain, a Christian empire, has been for the larger part of that time virtually compelling her to admit opium from British India.

The story of the shame has two ends, India and China, the producing end and the consuming end.

The story of the India end of the shame is that the poppy plant, which yields the opium, was grown there long before the British rule, and has continued, Britain being responsible for it since 1773.

Its cultivation is prohibited throughout British India, except by license. The British India Government grants licenses, which yield millions to the revenue.

Poppy may be grown without a license in the Native States in the interior of India, but can reach the coast for export only by passing through British territory, for which a heavy tax is imposed.

In these two, and in other ways, the Government of India makes a net gain of twelve or fifteen millions of dollars yearly from the opium traffic.

The poppy juice thus grown by cultivators in India is sold to the Indian Government at a fixed rate, manufactured into opium in Government factories, and then sold to opium merchants, many of them Jews, and shipped abroad, chiefly to China.

The story of the "shame" at the Chinese end of it is in this wise. Opium from the poppy has been known in China for medicinal use for many centuries. The smoking of opium was introduced shortly after 1700 and rapidly spread. The first edict against opium smoking was issued from Peking in 1729, nearly two centuries ago, and the sale of opium for smoking became a criminal offence, though it was allowed for medicinal purposes.

But the illegal importation and sale and smoking of opium steadily increased for nearly half a century, until Britain appears upon the scene in 1773—140 years ago. Since that time Britain's treatment of China has been one continuous, cruel wrong.

This period divides into two parts, the first, nearly 90 years, from 1773, when the British East India Company adopted opium as a monopoly, until the treaty of Tientsin in 1869, when China was forced by Britain to legalize the importation of opium to the ruin of millions of her people. The second period is the half-century since that time.

In the first-named period, the cultivation of opium by the B. E. I. Company and shipping it to China, increased so rapidly that China in 1796 passed a law prohibiting the importation of opium for any purpose. This reduced it for a time, but again it increased, and China was practically helpless, while the armed clipper ships of the British East India Company carried it to the Chinese coast and smuggled it in defiance of the law.

At length the emperor, alarmed at the growing evil, sent Commissioner Lin to Canton in 1839, where he surrounded the quarters of the opium trading smugglers, and compelled them to deliver up the nearly 3,000,000 pounds of opium lying in British ships, and destroyed it.

These were contraband traders, breaking the laws of China, but for this act Britain went to war, a war which Dr. Arnold said was "so wicked as to be a national sin of the greatest possible magnitude," and of which Gladstone said, "a war more unjust in its origin, a war more calculated to cover the country with permanent disgrace, I do not know and I have not read of. The British flag is hoisted to protect an infamous contraband traffic, and if it was never hoisted, except as it is now hoisted on the coast of China, we should recoil from it with horror."

This was the "opium war" of history. Helpless China was compelled to yield, and the war ended with the treaty of Nanking in 1842, by which China had to pay six millions of dollars for the opium destroyed, twelve millions for the expenses of the war, and three millions in other ways to make up losses to British subjects, besides ceding Hong Kong to Britain.

For the next sixteen years, opium poured in faster than ever, though still illegal. Hong Kong became a vast opium shop, and smugglers ran it into the country in ever-increasing quantities, until in 1858, the sale of Indian

opium in China, smuggled in contrary to law, had reached ten millions of pounds annually.

All this time the British foreign office, through its representative, was urging China to legalize the traffic, and get revenue from it, but in vain. The Emperor Tao Kwang replied:

"It is true I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison. Gaining and losing, for the most part, profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes; but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people."

This emperor is said to have lost three of his sons through this vice and to have died of a broken heart in consequence.

Sixteen years after the "opium war," an incident led to another war. A Chinese boat called the Arrow, flying the British flag was captured by the Chinese in the act of smuggling opium into a Chinese port. The British declared war, which was, for the most part, merely a barbaric slaughter of unarmed people. China had to yield, and the treaty of Tientsin, ratified in 1860, legalized for the first time the importation of opium into China.

She has long tried to keep out this terrible evil which wrought such havoc among her people, and at last had to yield to the power of Britain and make legal its admission, for the sake of a few dollars' gain to the Government of British India. At the same time she had to pay additional indemnity in money and territory.

Of this war, known in history as the "Arrow war," Lord Elgin, who was compelled by his position to take a leading part in it, said: "In our relations with China we have acted scandalously."

A feature of this treaty of Tientsin was that while one clause of it compelled China to legalize the importation of opium, another clause compelled her to permit the teaching and profession of Christianity. The same treaty legalized for the first time the importation of opium and of Christianity.

The Chinese naturally associated the two, and for half a century missionaries have been met with the answer—"You foreigners exhort us to virtue! First take away your opium and then talk to us about your Jesus." And still more awful was the term—"Jesus opium"—frequently applied to the drug.

And what of this half-century since the treaty of Tientsin. It has simply emphasized the record of shame. That treaty had a clause permitting revolution in China. At the end of the first ten years the Chinese Government made a plea to Britain for leave once more to prohibit opium.

Space forbids giving that plea, but in beauty, pathos and lofty sentiment, parts of it greatly excel. It pleads with Britain to permit China to keep out the "deadly poison," which is ruining her people, and to substitute in India the cultivation of cereals and cotton in place of opium. We quote from it a single clause:

"To do away with so great an evil would be a great virtue on England's part; she would strengthen friendly relations and make herself illustrious. How delightful to have so great an act transmitted to after ages."

And what was the result of this appeal? After months of waiting and repeated requests for an answer, the Chinese Government was told by the British representative that no answer

had been received from the British Government, and none need be expected.

Small wonder if China, in despair, should turn to the cultivation of the poppy at home, to try and kill out the importation of it by competition, thinking that when this was done she could easily deal with the growth of it at home.

And so the sad story goes on, with repeated vain efforts on the part of China for relief, and no single ray across the dark cloud on Britain's honor, until 1906, half a dozen years ago, when once more China made her appeal.

This time, Britain, with the Orient awakened, dared no longer refuse, and a treaty was drawn up, beginning in 1908, by which the importation of opium from India was to be reduced by one-tenth yearly, ending in ten years, provided China would reduce the growth of native opium at the same rate.

There was this additional feature, that Lord Morley, Secretary of State for India, referring to the possibility of China doing her part more quickly, stated in Parliament the "any deliberate proposals from the Chinese Government would meet with sympathetic consideration," meaning—as he afterwards stated—that Britain would also do her part more quickly.

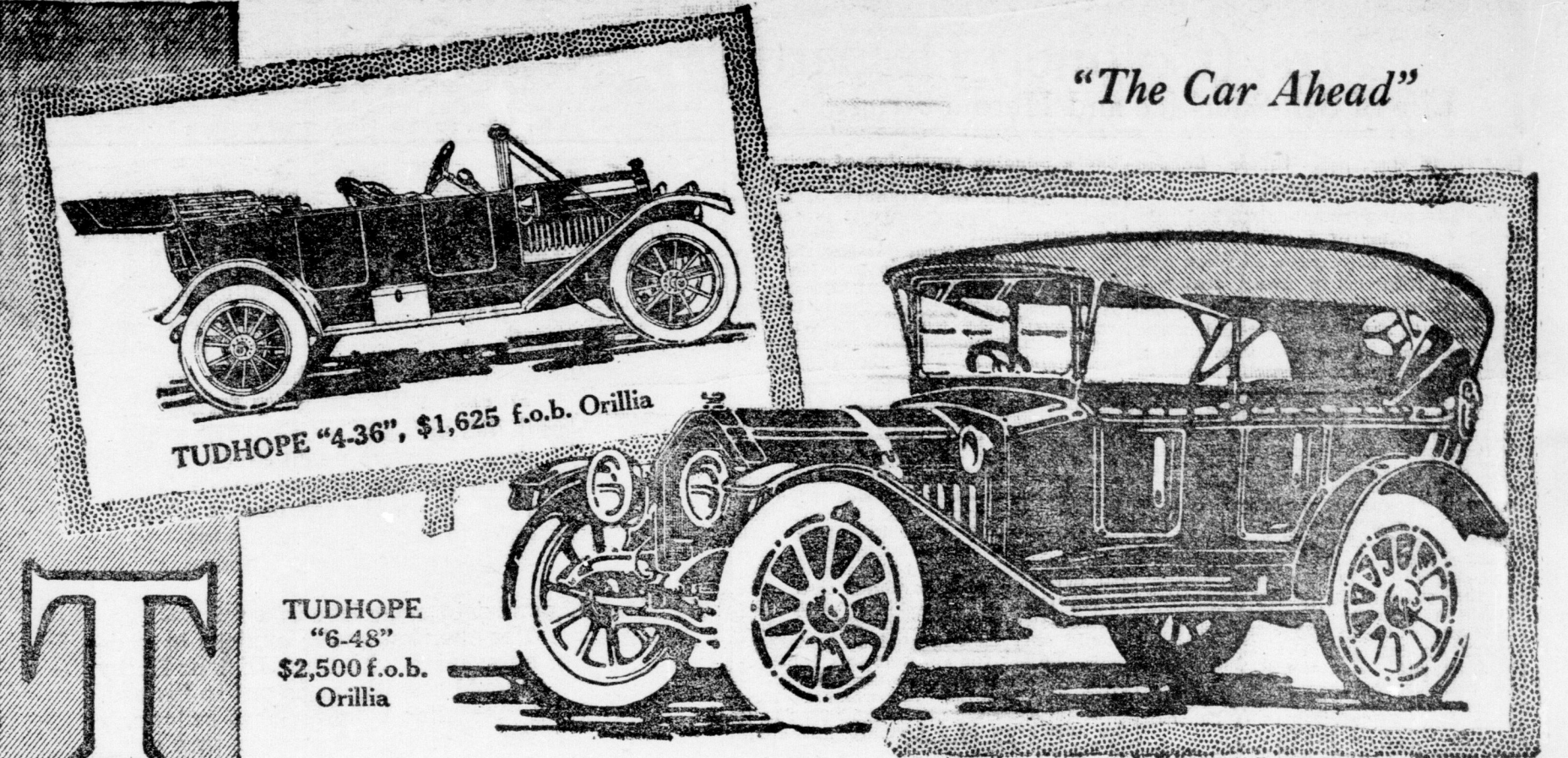
China set to work and in three years had stopped in very large measure the native growth of the poppy. So vast a reform in so short a time has never been known in the world before. And now China is pleading with Britain to meet her with the "sympathetic consideration" before mentioned.

There is lying in Chinese ports forty millions of dollars' worth of Indian opium, the property of opium merchants, chiefly Jews, which the Chinese are trying to keep out of their country, and appealing to Britain not to force upon them. The British nation, its churches, its statesmen, its societies, its newspapers, have long protested against the dishonor and the iniquity of the traffic; practically the whole civilized world points the finger of scorn, and still the Chinese are pleading, thus far in vain, that Britain will meet her halfway, as was practically promised, and not continue for the ten years the ruin of China's people.

The part of India's revenue raised from opium is only seven per cent of the whole revenue, and could easily be made up otherwise, and even if Britain were to make up the deficit, it would only cost her the price of two or three dreadnoughts to stop at once the age-long wrong she has inflicted on a helpless people. It is her last chance to do anything towards righting that awful wrong. If it be continued for the ten years, it will cease of necessity, and she will never have another opportunity. Moreover China is starting on a new national career, and delay will work more lasting ill than ever before.

Let Canadians join with governments, societies and churches, the world over, in agitation and in prayer, in the hope that a world-wide public opinion and the rulings of Providence may compel an end of the wrong.

Meanwhile, there remains the fact that the dark, sad story of China's effort to free herself from the terrible evil, and Britain's forcing it upon her, is one of the longest, saddest, most dishonorable and righteous wrongs in the dealings of nation with nation in all history. Taking the numbers affected and the length of its continuance, it is the world's biggest, blackest, national crime. Siberia does not equal it; neither Russia nor Turkey can parallel it; and our own Empire is responsible for it, and still declines to right what remains of the gigantic wrong; and Canadians are shaming in the shame of it. If the mills of God grind sure, there is a day of reckoning yet for our great Empire.



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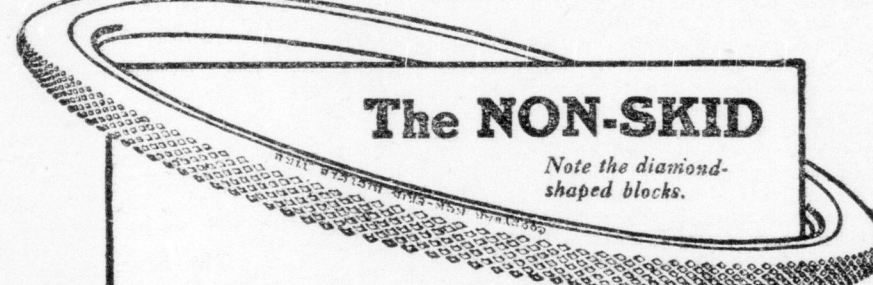
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Churchmen should remember that, just the parable of the Prodigal Son. He sat up, leaned on his pillow, and gazing at me, said, 'That's as witty a little thing as ever I heard of my life: where did you get it?' "Here," added Mr. Handley, "was a freedom from critical prejudice which might have been the envy of Van Manen."

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

There is a gem in an article in the Hibbert Journal by Rev. Hubert Handley, vicar of St. Thomas, Camden Town.

He says, "I once read to a poor old man in pain in a Westminster garret

MINARD'S LINIMENT RELIEVES NEURALGIA.

"Senator Bluff seems to think this country is going to the demitition bow-wow." "Nonsense. The Senator has erroneously involved this country in his



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THE FOLDED FLOCK.

I saw the shepherd fold the sheep, With all the little lambs that leap.

O Shepherd Lord, so I would be Folded with all my family.

Or go they early, come they late, Their mother and I must count them eight.

And how, for us, were any Heaven If we, sore stricken, saw but seven? King Shepherd, as of old Thou'lt run And fold at need a straggling one.

The late Joaquin Miller, says a writer in the Christian Register, was indifferent to books, but was fond of newspapers. "He scanned the newspapers with avidity and made copious clippings. He preferred communing with nature to books. The only volume in his den was a Bible." "How do you think that I can achieve the greatest popularity in society?" asked Mrs. Millvins. "Let your money do all the talking for the family," advised in a new social secretary."—Buffalo Courier.

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