

Work Abroad.

THE EARTHQUAKE.

In the year 1894 the black death ravaged the city of Hong-kong, and set her population of 211,000 souls trembling at its awful presence. When I reached the city of Canton in the middle of January last, the city was in a state of panic. The streets were deserted, the lumber yards and other busy centres were wrapped in an ominous silence, the railway stations were crowded, and the populace were fleeing from the presence of the scourge at the rate of several thousands a day, an exodus which rapidly reduced her magnificent population of 800,000 souls to half that number, of whom 15,000 went down to the city of the dead.

These are both British cities, and they stand at two of the ends of one of the blackest roads that ever ran outside of hell. Hong-kong is the principal commercial entrepot of Southern China, if not of Eastern Asia. The chief objects of trade are opium (imported), and tea and silk (exported). Mark that word "OPIMUM," and the bracketed word, "imported." Imported from whence?

In the year 1840, three years after the ascension of the Queen to the throne, the Governor of Huk-wang, Lin Tso au, was ordered by the Emperor of China to proceed to Canton, the inside of the threshold of which Hong-kong is the outside, a city under Chinese control, with full powers, powers never before conferred on any private subject, to stop the opium traffic. At that time it was reported in Canton that the Emperor when recounting the evils inflicted on China by opium, paused and wept. Then turning to Lin he said, "How, alas! can I die and go to the shades of my imperial fathers and ancestors until these direful evils are removed?" Lin went out from that interview to Canton, shut all the British merchants up in their residences, confiscated the opium they had been engaged in smuggling into China, and destroyed 20,283 chests, valued at about \$11,000,000. The opium war ensued. The British were victorious, and the opium was crammed down the Chinese throat.

On the 27th of May last, Mr. Benjamin Broomhall, in a public meeting in London, showed that during the sixty years of the Queen's reign, the export of opium from India to China had been at the rate of HALF A TON FOR EVERY HOUR OF THE DAY AND NIGHT. The total revenue arising has been £254,000,000, in round figures. Now the hour of retribution has come. Hong-kong is the chief entrepot into China, Bombay is one of the chief exporting cities of India for China's awful curse of opium. From Hong-kong to Bombay, a distance of 3000 miles, as the crow flies, and much more if one follows the course of commerce, the plague leaps. It lays its ghastly hand on Bombay. The iniquitous

profits of many years are consumed in a few months in fighting that dread foe and in driving it from the city.

But Bombay is not alone as the chief exporter of opium. Calcutta, her great commercial rival, and the capital of India, sends an important contribution to that diabolical lump of half a ton of opium for every hour of the day and night during sixty long years. What a stream of seething rottenness! It is Calcutta that God is now dealing with. On June the 12th late in the afternoon God looked on the City of Palaces, and the earth shook. Psalm 104 : 32. In five minutes time one crore of rupees in household property was in ruins. But God did not stop his hand there : He shook all that corner of India which shoulders China, up into Assam and the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra.

"Be not deceived : God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." What is true of the individual is true of the nation. India has been sowing "half a ton of opium for every hour of the day and night during sixty years of the Queen's reign" into helpless China. Now in this year of Jubilee, when all the empire is rejoicing over the reign of the noblest, the purest, the most constitutional monarch the empire has ever known, India's joy is mixed with many tears. The plague has been gnawing at her vitals in Bombay and Karachi, the famine spreads over her north and central provinces the pall of death and woeful suffering, and now, on her whole north-eastern border, the only part of her vast territory that touches China, the land which she has wronged above all others and irreparably, she is shaken with an earthquake the magnitude of which has not been equalled in the modern history of the land. Railways are torn up, great towns are levelled to the earth, villages are hurled down mountain slopes, river banks subside and let in the destroying flood, the tea gardens lose fifteen million pounds, and the entire country included in an irregular ellipse of about four hundred miles or more in extent, with Calcutta as the conspicuous centre, (though not the geographical) is shaken into panic.

In Calcutta began that series of prevarications, falsehoods and perjury which culminated in Bombay, and culminated in the report of the Opium Commission to both houses of parliament in the year '96, one of the most prodigious prostitutions of truth ever known in the history of parliamentary commissions. In this year of jubilation God has chosen those two great metropolitan centres and has laid his hand of rebuke heavily upon them. They are the ears of India. Shall we hear and heed God's word to us? Haggai 2 : 6, 9.

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