

OPIUM.

The women of India have long suffered in silence in consequence of the opium vice. But at last they have found a voice—a messenger—in the person of an Indian Christian gentilewoman, Miss Soonderbai Powar. She has left her native land to plead the cause of her country with the people of Great Britain.

At Lucknow, on October 6th, 1891, the extraordinary spectacle was presented of Mohammedan women coming together in a semi-public meeting to express their hatred of the opium traffic. One after another these women, accustomed only to the seclusion of zenanas, stood up to charge Soonderbai Powar with their messages on the misery caused by opium. One woman said that her brother had a wife and four children to support. He earns two annas (threepence) a day. He spends one anna in opium, leaving one for food for five people. They have one poor meal a day. Another woman said that such families could be found by thousands, and that no human being could describe their sufferings.

It is not too much to say that the opium traffic, forced upon the unwilling Chinese, is the most flagrant crime of which the British nation has ever been guilty. How can God's blessing rest upon England while this great national sin is continued? It is estimated that 10,000,000 of Chinese are slaves to the opium pipe, and the deaths from opium suicide are put down at the frightful total of 160,000. Physically, mentally and morally, the effects of opium smoking are degrading; so paralyzing indeed, that all sense of truthfulness soon disappears. The Chinese see in this evil no degradation and ruin of their people, and there is every reason to believe the Chinese government is honestly in earnest in endeavoring to suppress the evil.

Enormous quantities of opium are being smuggled into the United States through the English colonies; and from America opium is largely imported to England in the form of cigarettes strongly impregnated with the drug. Millions of these are being sold with the result that the purchasers of these cigarettes are gradually getting not only addicted to the tobacco habit, but are also in the grasp of the opium fiend.

It is stated that hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of prepared opium has been smuggled into the United States since the passage of the McKinley Bill. The opium is brought in its crude form from India and China to Vancouver, B.C., and consigned there to Chinese merchants and opium boilers. There are twelve or fifteen extensive boiling establishments in Vancouver, and several down the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, engaged in reducing great quantities of opium to a prepared state for smoking.

Let the prayer of our united Israel be, that Christian nations will speedily abandon this complicity in evil, and that the universal Church may awake from its dreams of security, and look about for advance steps to be taken for the "utter destruction of the liquor traffic and the opium trade."