

don. China proposes in addition to thirty taels import duty, a uniform rate of eighty taels for internal transit dues. The noble earl objects, proposes seventy taels (April 1883), and insists that *China must guarantee not to hinder the trade* by imposing further taxes inland. O shameful sight! a mighty Christian nation haggling with a weaker heathen government for easier terms on which to debauch its people! Tseng claims (September, 1884) that China may raise the tax on opium to any figure she may think proper as soon as the drug shall have passed into Chinese hands. And why not? Not until July, 1885, was the agreement finally signed, to be in force four years. It came into effect February 1, 1887, more than ten years after the Chetu Convention. The import duty remains the same, thirty taels. But the fluctuating taxes formerly levied inland (the Lekin) are now fixed at a uniform rate of eighty taels, and these dues also England allows China to collect at the ports; but China stipulates that British opium may pass inland, unlike other goods, exempt from taxes, and that local licenses to sell shall be at the same rate as for native opium.

The new arrangement has been hastily called a "settlement" of the vexed question. A total revenue of about \$1.10 per pound, all due at the ports, brings a little more money than formerly into the treasury at Peking. But it also hastens the physical and moral ruin of multitudes. Nine and three quarter million pounds were imported in 1887, an increase of nine per cent, on the average yearly amount from 1882 to 1886 under the former arrangement. The trade has now clearer official sanction. The authorities provide safe and cheap storage at ports, and untaxed transit inland. And the cancer is to strike its roots deeper into the nation's heart. In proof of this, read the Customs reports for 1887, how at various ports the new rule "benefits the trade"; how the trade "acquires stability" and "increased facility" and "great benefit"; while at Peking the opium partly "takes the place of silver as a circulating medium." The Shanghai commissioner reports: "Transit passes are respected and the native dealers are sending the opium to more distant markets than ever."

That missionaries do not magnify the evils of opium to excuse the slow progress of missions let Sir Thomas Wade, ex ambassador, testify: "The habit is many times more pernicious, nationally speaking, than the gin and whisky drinking which we deplore at home"—a stronger statement than missionaries make; still it is hard to decide which of the two habits produces the most misery. Forty-five million dollars spent in one year

(1887) for foreign opium, and half of it spent by people unable to buy both opium and good food, means a wide extent of woe. Mr. Eason, of the China Island Mission, says that in Yunnan Province half of the women and four fifths of the men are smokers. When Baron Kichitoven is quoted that in Si-chuan Province as much opium is used as anywhere, and that nowhere are the effects so little seen, it is not explained that the climate of the mountains is salubrious and that the people of the river valleys are wealthy. It is among the poor, who cannot buy both food and opium, that the misery is most seen. Here is the exact parallel to the drink curse,—work neglected, debts unpaid, cloths and bed in pawn, children and aged parents half starved. There are frequent instances of wives sold to provide opium. In some parts of Huchow, Chikiang, opium-ruined vagabonds have been a terror to the farmers. In that part of the city of Shanghai under the municipal control of the Europeans more than 1,200 opium saloons were licensed in 1887. No wonder that the number of prisoners in jail was twenty-five per cent. greater than in 1886. The opium habit often co-exists with alcoholism in the same individuals. All vices thrive within the opium dens. Especially does the opium mania burn out of the man all capacity for truth. A professional burglar would be received to church membership in China as soon as would an opium user.

Foreigners, shielded by British civil or military officials, smuggled opium into China for seventy years. After two wars and the payment of vast indemnities the traffic was legalized, as the Grand Secretary, Li Hung-chang, said in 1881, "not from choice, but because China submitted to the adverse decision of arms." Yet apologists say that China's concessions have been voluntary. As well call the delivery of one's purse to a highwayman voluntary. That the Chinese submitted at all graciously only illustrates their proverb "The legless man who meets a tiger might as well make a present of himself." After 1867, for twenty-five years, British influence prevented China from raising the duty even to a partially prohibitory rate. Finally in 1885-7 a new arrangement was made which friends of China hoped might be somewhat of a check to the trade, but which in the working seems to be rather a strengthening of evil. But it is an arrangement for four years only and the question will be re opened. Meanwhile let the Christian world continue in prayer that God may touch the conscience of all concerned. Parties to the great sin are not only opium merchants, but the Indian officials who, in Bengal, by subsidies, assist planters of the