

a few moments among the interminable wildernesses of wharves—and then caught up a pen—

"It's all Greek to me, Pettifogg, but if you say it's all right, here goes!"

He had executed with a drunken flourish, a capital M., when suddenly, like other pens in those days of tricky spirits, his pen flew from his hand, and what was very curious, caused an ink-spatter on the forehead of Pettifogg, very like the letter R. Both parties sprang to their feet in astonishment, and confronted—no disembodied spirit—but Mrs. Martin Meeker, who looked upon them not the least abashed, and proceeded further to tear into bits the document to which her husband had commenced his signature. Perhaps she did not quite understand its significance—though she did understand the character of Pettifogg too well to trust any instrument of his preparation. It was a confession of judgement, which would have authorized a foreclosure on the instant of its completion.

High words followed. Now Martin Meeker had no great objection to a domestic broil, but he would allow no third party the privilege of abusing his wife. That was a part of his marriage rights, of which he claimed a monopoly—so Pettigrew Pettifogg, Esq., Counsellor and Attorney at Law, was—not very gently or ceremoniously—ejected from the premises. It was a most unlooked for conclusion to his day's work, and he departed full of vindictive fury.

(To be concluded in our next.)

The Force of Habit—Opium Eating and Laudanum Drinking.

(From the Journal of Commerce.)

We are all more or less the creatures of habit, and there are few individuals who have not some habit which in their cooler moments, they regard as pernicious, but which, to a certain extent, has become almost indispensable. Look for example at the thousands and tens of thousands, who indulge in tobacco chewing and snuff taking, not to say segar smoking. All these habits, when practised in moderation, are comparatively speaking harmless. But the difficulty is to keep within the proper bounds. There are many inveterate chewers and smokers, individuals who not only enjoy tobacco, but to a certain extent live upon it. To be without it is to be miserable.—And yet the habit of chewing, as well as that of smoking, may be considered as of little consequence, when compared with the practice of eating opium and drinking laudanum. The indulgence of tobacco is moreover a fashionable appetite. It is a popular fancy, and no discredit is attached to it. It is indulged in openly, without any restraint, or the slightest sense of shame. But not so, opium eating and laudanum drinking. These are nourished in secret. The appetite is craving and fiend-like, and unless it be indulged, the victim writhes in agony. It is fomented by various causes. Sometimes the use of opium or of laudanum is induced by some terrible bodily pain, which the narcotic is calculated to soothe and temporarily subdue. It is found necessary, too, in many cases, constantly to increase the dose, so that in time, two ounces of laudanum daily are consumed. Nay, a druggist who resides in the south-western part of the city informs us, that he has, at least, ten regular customers for opium and laudanum, some of whom consume incredible quantities.

They have reached such a condition by indulgence, that they fancy they cannot live without the use, either of the gum or the liquid preparation. Some of them, too, are in very needy circumstances, and thus expend a very large portion of their daily earnings in obtaining and satisfying this want. At times, he says, they will rush into the store, trembling, sallow, and in utter misery, and the moment they obtain the narcotic, they swallow it with wild avidity, as if life itself depended upon the movement. The extent, indeed, to which opium is used in some form or other, is almost incredible. We are assured, moreover, that the habit is rapidly on the increase, and that not a few individuals resort to the drug in the spirit of the Chinese, and with the object of stimulating themselves into a sort of earthly elysium, only to wake and find themselves wretched.

An article in the recent number of the Journal of Physiological Medicine details some curious facts in relation to the uses and effects of opium. It is stated "that if the drug be taken in comparatively small, and frequently repeated doses, it produces excitement and pleasurable feelings before it occasions stupor. The capability of receiving excitement from it, is probably increased by habit, somewhat in the manner that alcoholic liquors give most pleasure to those who are in some degree habituated to them." Mr. Madden, in his travels in Turkey, gives a brief description of the opium eaters of Constantinople.

The coffee houses in which they assemble, are situated in a large square, and on the benches outside the door, they sit and indulge in the reveries to which the drug gives rise. He states that their gestures were wild, their features flushed, and their talk incoherent.—some, however, addressed eloquent discourses to the bystanders, and others appeared to be enjoying the most beatific ideas. Mr. Madden was himself desirous of experiencing the effects. He first took one grain of opium, but an hour and a half elapsed without any perceptible effect. The keeper of the coffee house wished to give him two grains more, but he only consented to half this quantity. However, he subsequently took an additional quantity of two grains, and then he became sensibly excited. Everything now appeared enlarged in volume—there was a sort of curious expansion of mind and matter. But Mr. Madden discovered that the pleasure was chiefly derived from external objects, and that when he closed his eyes the same feelings were no longer excited.

He now determined to make his way home as fast as possible, but as he went he feared to commit some extravagance. He was hardly sensible that his feet touched the ground, but seemed to slide along as if propelled by some invisible agency, which rendered his body lighter than the air. The moment he got home he went to bed, but the same delightful visions filled his mind all the night. The next day, however, he rose pale and dispirited, with headache and feebleness, so that he was all day confined to his sofa. Mr. Madden speaks of the practice as exceedingly injurious to the opium eaters themselves—they lose their appetites—become feeble and tremulous—their necks wry, and their fingers contracted—they are perfectly miserable until the hour arrives for the gratification of their indulgence. Dr. Oppenheim, a German writer, makes a similar statement—"the habitual