

For the Abbé Raynal (tr. i. 424) writes, as early as 1770: "The Chinese Emperors have suppressed it in their dominions, by condemning to the flames every vessel that imports this species of poison." The Emperor Kiahng in 1796 issued an edict against it, and the prohibition was often renewed by imperial decree or high provincial authority (1799, 1809, 1820, 1836 and 1837) and the prohibition always based on moral grounds. "Severe prohibitory laws (1828) destroyed the trade temporarily and exasperated the British, who made some military demonstrations by sending armed vessels to Canton in 1831 and 1834. Meanwhile the contraband opium trade was fostered and the smugglers provided with armed ships."—*American Cyclopædia*. See also *British Encyclopædia*. In the *penal code* of 1830, strangling is the punishment for keeping an opium shop. In 1833 at Macao foreigners witnessed a case of its execution, the culprit being tied to a cross and strangled. That the prohibition of the importation of opium or planting of the poppy was only partly successful among a heathen people is not strange. But is the fact that Chinese minor officials often connive with native and foreign smugglers any excuse whatever for the relentless aim of the British Government to thwart the often expressed and humane wish of the heathen government?

A crisis came in 1839. The Chinese Imperial Commissioner Lin, at Canton, addressed a long letter to Queen Victoria, requesting her to interdict the traffic. He also demanded as contraband, 20,283 chests of British opium, and by command of the emperor utterly destroyed it. This annihilation by money-loving Orientals, for the sake of a moral idea, of ten million dollars worth of salable property will shine in history as a deed of sublime heroism.

The *British Encyclopedia* calls it "a sufficient proof that the Mandarins were in earnest in their endeavor to suppress the trade. The few foreigners who were present were deeply impressed to witness this deliberate and solemn work of destruction, which occupied twenty days and took place in the presence of a great multitude of Chinese officials and people. Soon after this the British renewed the attempts to smuggle cargoes ashore. The merchants complained that the wholesale confiscation of the opium was sudden and unfair! a vain plea, for the storm had been gathering for years and was foreseen by all whose eyes were not blinded by gold. The seizure was the chief point of the *casus belli*."

In 1840 England declared war. At its close China had to cede the oppressor the island of Hongkong and pay twenty-one million dollars. Twelve millions of this were for England's war expenses, three millions for debts owed by Chinese to British merchants, and six millions partial payment for the opium destroyed. This outrageous robbery was perpetrated in the Treaty of Nankin (1842) and ratified the year following.

That the enforced opening of the five "treaty ports" to trade gave a great impulse to commerce and missions no one denies, but these benefits blind Western eyes to the cruel injustice of the war. At that time Sir H. Pottinger, British Minister, strove to get China to legalize the opium trade; and the Emperor Two-Kwang made answer in these pathetic and now historic words: "It is true that I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison, but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people."

During the next fourteen years the unwelcome trade flourished, until in 1857, the *Arrow*, a smuggling vessel bearing the British flag, was fired upon. This furnished the pretext for the British bombardment of Canton. As if this were not enough, the English and French combined the next year and made an expedition up the river Pei-ho to Tientsin. Thus the capital