

AN OPIUM EXPERIENCE.

THE following letter, which appeared in the *Spectator* of 14th October, vividly describes some of the characteristic features of the opium habit.

"SIR,—When working for my graduate's degree in medicine, at Aberdeen, in 1868, I contracted the habit of taking opium. I began by small doses of laudanum as a remedy for tic-dental in its origin, and which was quite cured by the dentist in due course. I continued the laudanum because it made my brain clear, kept me warm in the cold weather of that winter, and because I liked it. I began it on my birthday, January 3rd, and by the middle of April I was taking thirteen grains of opium a day. I said quite airily to a friend who lived with me that I should break it off in one night, and should select the night when I travelled home to London. I believed I could do so; I little knew the hold the drug had on me!

By the time we reached Perth, I was very nearly raving mad. I broke my journey there, and managed, by some sort of falsification of facts, to get enough laudanum to carry me on to Edinburgh. There I told fresh lies, and replenished my stock of laudanum. Again, at York, I got some more, and, arrived in London, I went in for a perfect opium debauch. I went home, and for a month I was happy, but had sadly increased my dosage—happy, till one day I realized that my word was no longer a symbol of truth, and the moral nature I had not quite drowned leapt up in the dark and called me "liar!" to my face.

Then I awoke, and for the first time in many a day I prayed: Then also came the resolve, the determined resolve, come what may, to be done with this damnable tyranny.

At six o'clock that evening I took a hearty meal of meat (principally) and a little (very little) red wine. It was June 10th, 1868. I had determined to walk into the summer night, walk till I died if necessary, and walk till I won my battle, if I lived through the ordeal.

I left my watch at home that I might not pawn it for opium; I took no money with me; even as I left home and struck across the downs I felt the craving coming on (the hour for my penultimate day-dose was at hand), and I knew my temptation was with me, and realized how long and bitter the struggle was to be. The craving seemed to me to be a palpable shape that walked beside me—a presence that outran me and lost me and came back to me like a faithful dog, that would not lose or leave me that I could not leave or lose! Sometimes I sang, sometimes I raved and swore, sometimes I prayed and wept, but never once, thank God, did my resolution falter.

Much of that night I cannot remember. Dim things came back to me at times—such as a fall I had once, hurting my knee. I think I frightened some one who asked me some question, and I believe I can recollect that I myself grew at one time full of fear—fear of hurting myself, not others; and then I suffered thirst—such thirst, such awful thirst—but I must have slaked it somewhere, for in the morning my clothes and necktie were all wet, and so was my hair. At seven in the morning of the next day I found myself leaning on a gate and looking out on the landscape before me with a sort of curious wonder as to how I came there; my head dropped on my hands, I slept for (I think) only a few minutes, and awoke quite well.

Since that day I have never touched it, and have never been tempted to touch it. Of course, I am well aware that the doses to which I became accustomed were not very large; but I am

sure that they were on the increase, and having told my experience lately to a distinguished English physician, he begged me, for the sake of others, to put on record these plain and simple facts. This I now do, and if I do so anonymously it is only because I believe that no further good could follow the knowledge of my identity or name.—I am, sir, etc.—*Medical Missions*.

WHICH WILL YOU CHOOSE?

THE youngest among us are preparing an Indian summer of peace or laying the foundation of an unhappy old age. It is a long time ahead, but it is sure.

Unless we mellow and soften and ripen with years, unless we exercise a noble self control, and live for pure, high, generous aims, there can be no Indian Summer for the soul.

The aftermath is gathered from all that has gone before. The peevish, repining, discontented, perverse old man and woman of fiction and real life are often those whom fortune has hardened by lavish benefits. Only the deep, inner life, the tender, homely virtues of modesty and self-forgetfulness, can give this beautiful time of gleaning in God's latest harvest, when the stubble and the reaped uplands wear a golden light. Let us strive to be worthy of that time of rest that makes the little sheaf of old age as precious as the full barns of middle life.

There are characters we can predict early will have a loveless, lonely, wretched time when the burden of years is laid upon them, because of inward obstructions and unbridled passions and appetites. There are others whose faces, while still young, show what they will be when years put on the white crown. We say, "How beautiful she must have been!" discerning in the shipwreck of old age the remains of a vanished loveliness. There are others, plain in youth, who grow more beautiful as age advances. A new face has formed in the soul, and in time there it is, shaped and painted from the indestructible forms and colors that are subtly made out of ideals.

We think less often than we should of the old men and women we are to be if it is God's purpose to let us go down the slope of life. Day by day we should seek to live a little mellow sunshine for our Indian Summer, hiding it in the heart, out of that blessed way of living that thinks not of self-indulgence, but gives all it is, and all it hopes to be, to God and his suffering world.—*Christian Register*.

A TERRIBLY TRUE MOTTO.

That the pleasures of sin are purchased at great cost, even those who indulge in them confess. The price they pay is power to enjoy freedom of thought, all consciousness of rectitude, and of deserving the respect of their fellowmen, courage to face the truth concerning the present or the future, and a frank recognition of the facts of life as they are. All this surrender of manhood was very tersely expressed by the manager of a ball for abandoned men and women in New York City a few weeks ago. He furnished the motto to be hung over the ball room stage. It was this: "*Don't think.*" Pleasure that stifles though is gained at the cost of life. "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?"

Tell your friends your thankful feelings towards them; they like it. Tell God that you are thankful to him: and God likes it, for he says so.