

sterling be taken away from our revenue, the hands of the Government will be tied, improvement stopped, and the welfare of our fellow subjects in India will be interfered with. Now, is it not a significant fact, that just at the time we hear such arguments against any interference with this trade, our Indian Empire is shaking it to its centre, and our finely balanced revenue sheets are scattered to the winds, and our benevolent schemes, for a time, arrested by a diabolical insurrection of the very people we wished to benefit? This fact we recognise as significant, not because of any connection between the opium trade and the revolt; we have no heart, at such a time as this, to measure out with nice balance the degree of blame to be attached to the rulers of India, or to fix our finger with prophetic wisdom, *after the event*, on the causes of such a terrible visitation of Providence. We take it simply as a fact, that the hand of Providence has permitted this fearful tragedy to be enacted; and without any reference to the past, we cast our eyes to the future, and there we see, what every man of intelligence must see, that our rule in India must undergo a great change, and that our sources of revenue and the means of its realization must all be remodelled, and that the very first principles of our system must be re-examined. The state of anarchy is such that we are in a position to lay plans for the future as if the past were a blank for all purposes save the lessons of a sad experience. India, especially the opium-growing portion of it, is practically a chaos; the only element of order visible on its troubled surface is the shattered yet vital power of British arms; and by the blessing of God the desperate energy of British will and of British valour shall yet bring order out of the confusion.

But is it only that we may return to the old state of things? Is all the agonising experience of these few months, which seem an age, and all the blood and treasure yet to be expended, only a step to the restoration of the past—that the Honourable East India Company may go quietly on with their old policy and the sweet exercise of their old patronage, that the old revenue may be collected as heretofore, and that the monopolies of salt and opium may be enjoyed? The thought is too monstrous to be indulged. As for the monopoly of salt, they are welcome to that, if they need a conservative element. If there is a covenant about that, we have no desire to “violate our salt.” But the opium—they have had enough of that; we must have no more dreaming under its delightful but delusive influence. Providence has opened up the way to the rapid, if not immediate abolition of that vile traffic, and that, by no active effort of home agitation, or the interference of a prohibitory legislation, of which there is such a dread. It is by a means which we could never have dreamed of or desired. All that seems to be required for the extinction of the trade and its sudden drying up by the roots is that, for a single year, it be *let alone*; that *no sacrifice* be made for the growth, and protection, and forced production of the drug; that the East India Company abstain from advancing money to the growers, who will be glad to grow rice or sugar if left to their choice; that the troops and police of India be not diverted from more important work to aid in the transmission of that which might be grown in independent states. But by such a policy we apprehend that the supply would be reduced by one half, perhaps by three-fourths; and by prohibitory measures, which at such a time as this would be neither unjust nor injurious, it could be stopped entirely, and that in such a way, that no other country could come in to supply the demand; and if any other field were to be cultivated, the poor victims of the tyrannous vice in China would in the meantime be weaned from their habit, and be in a position to resist the temptation if again presented; if, indeed, any but ourselves should be either able or disposed to tempt them. ✕