

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 1896.

OPIUM EATER'S DREAMS.

THE HABIT, THE VICTIM, THE RELIEF, AND DESPAIR.

The Pipe and its Smoking and the Habits of Dependence—What Constitutes a Habit—A Man With a Yen-yen—Opium Smokers do not Have—Some Gorgeous Dens.

Opium smoking in this country is believed to be more particularly a pest of the Chinese, but in truth the greater number of the smokers are white men and white women. China-town furnishes the pipe, lamp, and yen-hock, but let a man once possess a layout, and a common American drug store furnishes him with the opium, and China is discernible only in the traditions that cling to the habit.

There were 25,000 opium smokers in the city of New York alone. At one time there were two great colonies, one in the Tenderloin one of course, in Chinatown. This was before the hammer of reform struck them. Now the two colonies are splintered into something less than 52,000 fragments. The smokers are disorganized, but they still exist.

The Tenderloin district of New York fell an easy victim to opium. That part of the population which is known as the "sporting" class adopted the habit quickly. Cheap actors, race track touts, gamblers, and the different kinds of confidence men took to it generally. Opium raised its yellow banner over the Tenderloin, attaining the dignity of a common vice.

Splendid joints were not uncommon then in New York. There was one on Forty-second street which would have been palatial if it were not for the bad taste of the decorations. An occasional man from Fifth avenue or Madison avenue would have there his private layout, an elegant equipment of silver, ivory, and gold. The bunks which lined all sides of the two rooms were nightly crowded, and some of the people owned names which are not altogether unknown to the public. This place was raided because of sensational stories in the newspapers, and the little wicket no longer opens to allow the fiend to enter.

Upon the appearance of reform, opium retired to private flats. Here it now reigns, and it will be undoubtedly an extremely long century before the police can root it from these strongholds. Once Billie Rostetter got drunk on whiskey and emptied three scuttles of coal down the dumb-waiter shaft. This made a noise, and, Billie, naturally, was arrested. But opium is silent. The smokers do not rave. They dream or talk in low tones.

People who declare themselves able to pick out opium smokers on the street usually are deluded. An opium smoker may look like a deacon or a deacon may look like an opium smoker. The fiends easily conceal their vice. They got up from the layout, adjust their cravats, straighten their coat tails, and march off like ordinary people, and the best kind of an expert would not be willing to bet that they were or were not addicted to the habit.

It would be very hard to say just exactly what constitutes a habit. With the fiends it is an elastic word. Ask a smoker if he has a habit and he will deny it. Ask him if some one who smokes the same amount has a habit and he will admit it. Perhaps the ordinary smoker consumes 25 cents' worth of opium each day. There are others who smoke \$1 worth. This is rather extraordinary, and in this case at least it is safe to say that it is a habit. The \$1 smokers usually indulge in high hate, which is the term for a large pill. The ordinary smoker is satisfied with pin-heads. Pin-heads are of about the size of a French pea.

It is said to take one year of devotion to the pipe before one can contract a habit; but probably it does not take any such long time. Sometimes an individual who has smoked only a few months will speak of nothing but pipe, and when a man talks pipe persistently it is a pretty sure sign that the drug has fastened its grip so that he is not able to stop its use easily. When a man arises from his first trial of the pipe, the nausea that clutches him is something that can give cards and spades a big casino to seasickness. If he had swallowed a live chimney sweep he could not feel more like dying. The room and everything in it whirles like the inside of an electric light plant. There comes a thirst, a great thirst, and this thirst is so insatiable and so misleading that if the novice drank spirits to satisfy it he would presently be much worse. The one thing that will make him feel again that life may be a joy is a cup of strong black coffee.

There is a sentiment in the pipe for him, he returns to it after this first unpleasant trial. Gradually the power of the drug sinks into his heart. It absorbs his thought. He begins to lie with more and more grace to cover the shortcomings and little failures of his life. And then, finally, he may become a full-fledged pipe fiend, a man with a yen-yen.

A yen-yen, he it known, is the hunger, the craving. It comes to a fiend when he

separates himself from his pipe and it takes him by the heart strings. If, indeed, he will not buck through a brick wall to get to the pipe, he at least will become the most disagreeable, acrid-tempered person on earth until he finds a way to satisfy his craving.

When the victim arrives at the point where his soul calls for the drug, he usually leans to cook. The operation of rolling the pill and cooking it over the little lamp is a delicate task, and it takes time to learn it. When a man can cook for himself and buys his own layout, he is gone, probably. He has placed upon his shoulders an elephant which he may carry to the edge of forever. The Chinese have a preparation which they call a cure, but the first difficulty is to get the fiend to take the preparation, and the second difficulty is to cure anything with this cure.

The fiend will defend opium with eloquence and energy. He very seldom drinks spirits, and so he gains an opportunity to make the most ferocious parallels between the effects of rum and the effects of opium. Ask him to free his mind and he will probably say:

"Opium does not deprive you of your senses. It does not make a madman of you. But drink does. See? Who ever heard of a man committing murder when full of hop. Get him full of whiskey and he might kill his father. I don't see why people kick so about opium smoking. If they knew anything about it, they wouldn't talk that way. Let anybody drink rum who cares to, but as for me, I would rather be what I am."

When prepared for smoking purposes, opium is a heavy liquid much like molasses. Ordinarily it is sold in hollow li-shi nuts or in little round tins resembling the old percussion cap boxes. The pipe is a curious affair, particularly so for the way in which it does not resemble the drawings of it that appear in print. The stem is of thick bamboo, the mouthpiece usually of ivory. The bowl crops out suddenly about four inches from the end of the stem. It is a heavy affair of clay or stone. The cavity is a mere hole, of the diameter of a lead pencil, drilled through the centre. The yen-hock is a sort of sharpened darning needle. With it the cook takes the opium from the box. He twirls it dexterously with his thumb and forefinger until enough of the gummy substance adheres to the sharp point. Then he holds it over the tiny flame of the lamp which burns only peanut oil or sweet oil. The pill now exactly resembles boiling molasses.

The clever fingers of the cook twirl it above the flame. Lying on his side comfortably, he takes the pipe in his left hand and transfers the cooked pill from the yen-hock to the bowl of the pipe, where he again moulds it with the yen-hock until it is a little button-like thing with a hole in the centre fitting squarely over the hole in the bowl. Dropping the yen-hock, the cook now uses two hands for the pipe. He extends the mouthpiece toward the one whose turn it is to smoke, and as the smoker leans forward in readiness, the cook draws the bowl toward the flame until the heat sets the pill to boiling. Whereupon the smoker takes a long deep draw at the pipe, the pill sputters and fries, and a moment later the smoker sinks back tranquilly. An odor, heavy, aromatic, agreeable, and yet disagreeable, hangs in the air and makes its way with peculiar powers of penetration. The group about the layout talk in low voices, and watch the cook dextrously moulding another pill. The little flame casts a strong yellow light on their faces as they cuddle about the layout. As this pipe passes and paces around the circle, the voices drop to a mere indolent cooing, and the eyes that so lazily watch the cook at his work, gladden and gladden from the influence of the drug until they resemble flashing bits of silver.

There is but one pipe, one lamp, and one cook to each smoking layout. Pictures of nine or ten persons sitting in armchairs and smoking various kinds of curiously carved tobacco pipes probably serve well enough, but when they are named "Interior of an Opium Den" and that sort of thing, it is absurd. Opium could not be smoked like tobacco. A pill is good for one long draw. After that the cook moulds another. A smoker would just as soon choose a gallow as an armchair for smoking purposes. He likes to curl down on a mattress placed on the floor in the quietest corner of a Tenderloin flat and smoke there with no light but the tiny yellow spear from the layout lamp.

It is a curious fact that it is rather the custom to purchase for a layout tray one of those innocent black tin affairs which are supposed to be placed before a baby as he takes his high chair for dinner.

If a beginner expects to have dreams of an earth dotted with white porcelain towers and a sky of green silk, he will be much mistaken. "The Opium Smoker's Dream" seems to be mostly a mistake. The influence of hope is evidently a fine languor, a complete mental rest. The problems of life no longer appear. Existence is peace. The virtues of a man's friends, for instance, loom beautifully against his own sudden perfection. The universe is readjusted. Wrong departs, injustice vanishes; there is nothing but a quiet harmony of all things—until the next morning.

PEGGY'S ENGAGEMENT.

In the olden days and golden, folk held the rose a flower of silence, wisely discreet as to all which came within its kin. Times change—manners with them—why not flowers as well? Possibly it is nature's kind provision. Otherwise—but a story should begin always at the proper beginning.

Somewhat, in spite of the muffled drums, the arms reversed, the line of scarred and grizzled veterans, now grown pitifully short and thin, there was distinctly a holiday air about the crowd which streamed into the ragged cemetery. Indeed, there could not help but be—for the lilacs, snow ball's, bridal wreath and flowering almond were all riotously in blossom; the yew clumps green miracles of swelling white buds. Within the week a late spring had grown suddenly forward; the winds were warm and scented like the breath of June, and the birds sang in full high-summer chorus warmed and melted by the golden heat of May.

In the face of that, youth could not be sorrowful, even though it came out to mark the land's old desolation. It was mainly these too young to remember that time, save as a vast vague cloud of storm and distress, who came in line behind the veterans, to deck their comrades' graves. Not a man in the fire knew Grayville Cadets, marching as escort to the old soldiers, was over 30. And though for long, men and matrons of sober years had counted it their privilege to bring lighter flowers and greens, upon this day the work had fallen wholly to the girls and younger women.

Their light frocks and fluttering ribbons, massed or singly, seemed to repeat and accentuate the tints of the flowers in bloom there in the cemetery, and the knots and wreaths and loose handfuls they bore in their baskets or heaped in the hollow of the arm. But nobody was quite so much the days embodiment as Peggy Farley—who had on a white gown, fine and clinging, a broad blue sash and a sheaf of red roses made fast to her belt. She was easily the prettiest girl in Grayville—the test liked, too, for all she had certain little willful proud ways.

Over against them were to be seen the kindest heart, the readiest hand, lips wholly free from guile. Everybody had rejoiced over her engagement to young Grahame, the fine, tall captain of the Cadets. He had women friends in legion yet not one had hinted that he was a "sacrifice." Likewise Peggy's adoration, masculine from 7 to seventy, agreed that while he was not quite good enough for her, he came as near it as mortal man was likely to be found.

So when the engagement was broken with no word said in explanation on either side, gossip ran riot—nor were there lacking enough folk to note that the break came just a week later than Miss Barbara Grahame's return to the old home. She had been five years away, seeking vainly to escape her arch enemy, rheumatism. Naturally her temper had not improved—

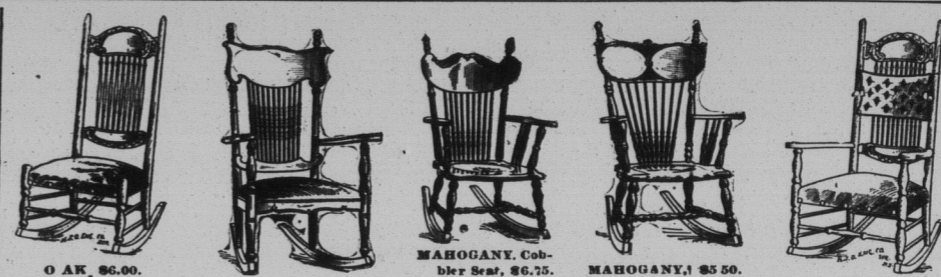


THROWING THE ROSE.

besides it had been known always that she had really loved two things—her brother John's memory and her own way, though it had pleased her to imagine herself devoted to her nephew.

Captain John Grahame, the elder, had not died in battle, albeit he slept well to the head of the cemetery's soldiery. He had come home from the long fighting with a bullet in his chest, but had grown within a year of peace so much his old self, handsome, hearty, sunny-tempered, that he had married rejoicingly the sweetheart he had left behind him. When young John was born it seemed there was nothing left to wish for—but almost in the first joy of fatherhood, the end came. The bullet had touched a vital spot—with a smothered, gasping cry, a red torrent gushing from his mouth, the gallant gentleman tendered up his soul.

His widow sobbed piteously, [but in a year was consoled—a twelve month later



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married again. Then Miss Barbara adopted little John, saying grimly as she took him upon her knee: "John you are never to forget it is through the wickedness of those rebels you are fatherless, and worse than motherless."

She was not of the throng today; her old enemy had her hand and fast in his clutches. If she walked at all, it was by the help of crutch and cane, and she was nervously sensitive about appearing thus in public. Neither would she take the carriage nor be wheeled in her bath chair. But she had stripped garden and green house for the flower bearer. Three, whose baskets she had filled, were talking eagerly together as they stood leaning to the minute guns that marked the close of set ceremony.

"I asked if these were not especially for her brother, and oh, the look she gave me!" one pretty creature said.

"It was petrifying," said her mate, "and only fancy her saying: 'I wish you children of today would understand it is the cause, not the individuals, that one honors. Give my brother his share—but no more. My hero, my martyr, is no worthier of remembrance than the million like him who died for the right.'"

"Do you know, I am as certain as can be she is at the bottom of that," the third said, nodding faintly toward the place where Peggy and Captain Grahame, in unlooked for encounter, were saluting each other with elaborate if tremulous indifference.

"Oh! that couldn't be! Why! Barbara could not have a rag of objection anywhere about Peggy. She has grown up here—we know all that is to be known of her—her mother is the loveliest, sweet lady, and her grandfather almost the richest and quite the best man in the village."

"But her father—may be you have never heard that he fought through the war on the other side—and all the time engaged

heart. The poor lad was no stoic. He felt himself colored, and for a minute saw all things blurred and dim, because, forsooth,



AT IS FATHER'S GRAVE.

a young creature who did not come up to his shoulder had waved her hand at him and flung him a rose from the cluster on her breast.

The soldiers were out of sight, the town folk for the most part well homeward when Peggy who had lingered unaccountable and just outside the cemetery gate, said hurriedly: "Oh, I have forgotten something; don't wait for me," and ran back before anybody could say a word. She ran so devotedly that though they looked after her her companions could not keep track of her. "She is the dearest odd creature!" they said: "No doubt she will go home by the other gate. It is ever so much nearer. It is not worth while to wait."

When young Captain Grahame got home to his delayed dinner he found his aunt in wait for him with a most unusual look in her eyes. She trembled all over, too, and there was an odd break in her voice as she bade him sit beside her so the night take his hand. Wondering, he obeyed and the wonder grew to amaze as he heard her say:

"John, I am a wicked woman; I have brought sorrow to one who is—but listen! I did go to the cemetery to day; after all the crowd had gone I wanted to touch your father's shaft and read his name on it, and the names of all the battles he fought in. I was just coming to it, at it, hobbling, a bent and withered old woman—when I saw a vision, something white, with the motion of the wind. It ran and knelt by my dear grave, softly kissed some royal roses, touched the blossoms to your father's name, and hid them in the greenery about the shaft. Then it said: 'Oh! Fathers up in heaven! surely you two understand and forgive and are happy. Please help John to be happy—I can bear everything but that.'"

"It was not wholly you," John said wretchedly. "I had too little patience. I raved when I should have soothed her; told her she did not care for me, if she would let scruples of her father's memory, or anything come between us—"

"You have no time to waste recalling folly," Miss Barbara said severely. "I shall never forgive you if you do not go to her at once, and fetch her here, that I may ask her pardon."

Peggy came stately under her mother's wing and peace was made upon the instant. But the why and wherefore is still a secret in Grayville. Everybody knows though that there will be a brilliant wedding very early in the fall.

Genuine Applause.

Blighter We had a fine bit of realism at the theater last night. Blitherer—Really, I didn't notice it. Blitherer—Why, the applause was genuine.

WOMEN'S DRESS IN ICELAND.

The Kiss is the Universal Form of Salutation in That Country.

The common working dress of the Icelandic women, without distinction as to social quality or wealth, consists of an undergarment of wadmel, in one piece, extending from the shoulder to the heel, fastened at the neck with a button or clasp, with petticoat of white or blue wadmel, and a blue cap, the top of which hangs down on one side and terminates in a tassel. On Sundays and festivals occasions their dress is singular. Then they wear, in addition a bodice and two or three blue petticoats, called "lat" and in front an apron, bordered with a material resembling black velvet, which is a domestic manufacture. The petticoats are fastened immediately beneath the bodice by a girdle of this black velvet, embroidered and studded with such silver or gilt ornaments as they may possess.

The bodice is also ornamental and fastened in front with large clasps, generally gilt, and rendered more conspicuous by being fixed upon a broad border of black velvet, bound with red. Over the bodice is a jacket, called "trejs," fitting close to the shape, and made of black wadmel or velvet. The stockings are of dark blue or red worsted, and the shoes which are of seal, shark or sheep skins, are made tight to the foot and fastened about the ankles and insteps with leather laces. On their fingers the women generally have many rings of gold, silver or brass, according to their means; and be it known, no present is so acceptable to an Icelandic girl as a ring. The most singular and at the same time the most beautiful part of the female costume is the head-dress, called "faldur," which is made of white linen, stiffly starched, kept in shape with an immense number of pins, and from 15 to 20 inches in height. This is the holiday and Sunday head covering.

When you visit a family in Iceland you must kiss each member according to their age or rank, beginning with the highest and descending to the lowest, not even excepting the servants. On taking leave the order is reversed; you must kiss the servants, then the children, and lastly the master and mistress. Both at meeting and parting and affectionate kisses on the mouth, without distinction of rank, age or sex, is the only mode of salutation known in Iceland.—New York Times.

Artificial Diamonds.

The new French Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Berthelot, first among French savants, experimented in the chemical manufacture of diamonds and other precious stones. His work in this field occupied him some years, and was abandoned only when he was out-distanced by M. Moissan, the actual inventor of a process by which diamonds can be artificially produced.

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