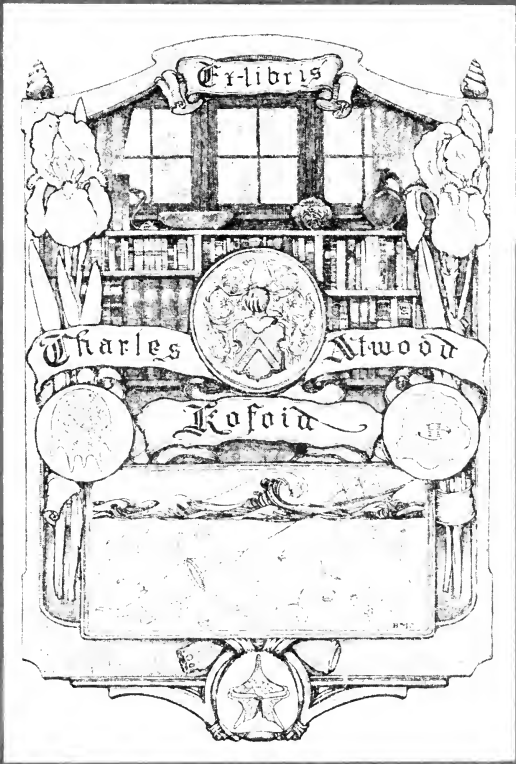


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THE
RISE AND PROGRESS
OF
BRITISH OPIUM SMUGGLING:

THE
ILLEGALITY OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S
MONOPOLY OF THE DRUG;
AND
ITS INJURIOUS EFFECTS UPON INDIA, CHINA,
AND THE COMMERCE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

Five Letters

ADDRESSED TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE
EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.

BY
MAJOR-GENERAL R. ALEXANDER,
MADRAS ARMY.

THIRD EDITION REVISED AND ENLARGED.



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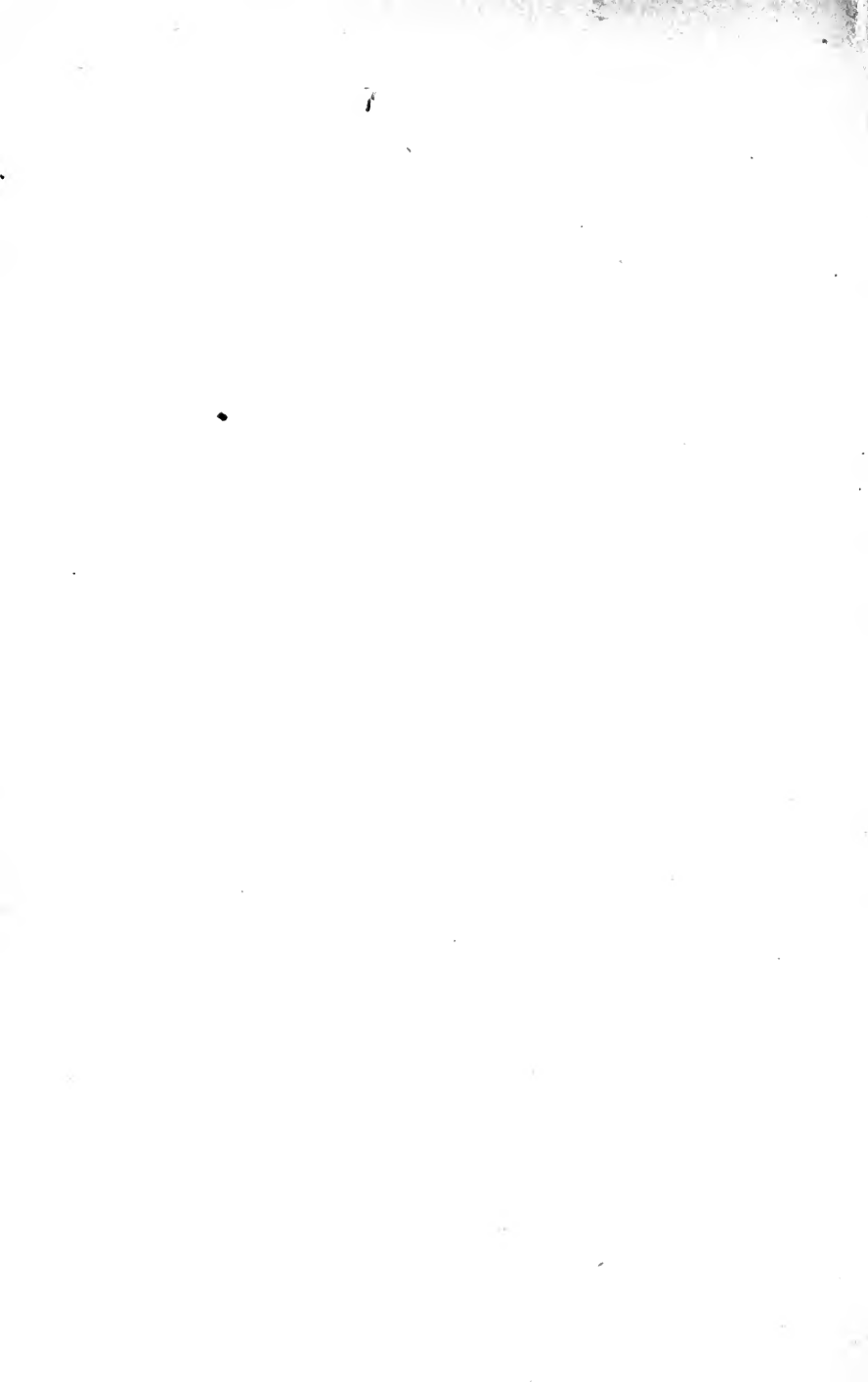
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LETTER I.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE OPIUM MONOPOLY, AND ITS
EFFECTS UPON INDIA.

MY LORD,

More than a year has elapsed since a few gentlemen met in your Lordship's presence, to consider the representations which have been so frequently and forcibly made, regarding the progress, extent, and evils of the contraband trade in opium carried on by British subjects at the principal ports and along the sea-coast of China.

Many facts were then stated and authenticated; but it was felt that information on the subject must be collected and presented to the public in a manner as concise as is compatible with a full apprehension of the injury that is inflicted by means of this illegal traffic on the population of China, on the commerce of Great Britain, on the morality and prosperity of the subjects of both nations, and—though last mentioned, what is first in importance and paramount to all—on the spread of true religion and the blessings of civilization that follow in its train.

My Lord, I have no higher ambition in now venturing to address you, than to collate these facts and

information, with the hope that in so doing, I may be permitted to submit an humble foundation for measures which the statesmen and philanthropists of our country will see fit to adopt, in justice to our national character, and in compassion to a people comprising one-third of the family of man. I shall use the privilege of quoting freely, with or without acknowledgment, and generally *verbatim et literatim*, whatever I may find necessary to my purpose of presenting a clear narrative of facts in the plain language of truth.

Beginning with India, I find that previous to the year 1767, the quantity of opium exported from thence did not exceed 200 chests yearly—the trade was carried on by the Portuguese in a legal manner, and the drug, imported from Turkey, was admitted as a medicine through the Custom-house in China by payment of a duty equal to 13s. English money on the 100lbs. In the year 1773, the East India Company, acting upon the suggestion of a member of their Council in Calcutta, entered upon this traffic and established a depot for opium in vessels anchored in a bay to the south-west of Macao. The trade so conducted does not appear to have been profitable, nor did opium become a source of revenue to the Company until, as well as I can trace, about the year 1798, or 1800; it seems that about that period they ceased to be exporters, and had by fiscal measures secured a rigidly guarded monopoly of production in India; they thus not only relieved themselves from the risks of commerce, but were better prepared to steer a devious course through the political embarrassments,

which it may be presumed, were foreseen as an inevitable consequence of forcing upon the unwilling government of China an importation, against which remonstrances, or resistance by force of arms, have since proved equally unavailing. It was part of the astute policy of the Company, strictly to prohibit the captains and officers of their own ships from trading in the drug, or allowing it to be received on board their vessels; they were not to be caught *flagrante delicto*, and it devolved upon diplomacy to answer "Not guilty," to nullify the evidence of complicity, and screen its principal from the responsibility of being an accessory before the fact: while on the other hand, in the licenses granted for private ships trading to China, there is a provision with penalty attached, that no opium except that which the East India Company monopolizes shall be taken on board.*

A reference to the code of Regulations for the Bengal Presidency shows that the first legislative enactment for restraining illicit trade in opium was passed in the year 1795, and by its preamble, proves that as the government grasped at monopoly, an antagonistic principle devolved itself in the smuggling, which had come into existence since the year 1767, when the commerce, openly carried on by the Portuguese, was legal both in India and China.

From the year 1795 until the year 1816, successive laws were enacted by the government in Bengal, prohibiting the importation of the drug from the sur-

* *Vide* Appendix to Report of a Committee of the House of Common on the trade with China. 1840. Pp. 176—177.

rounding Independent States ; laying down rules for the guidance of parties concerned in providing opium for the government ; repressing the growth in some provinces, fostering it in others, and passing more stringent regulations for the repression of an increasing illicit trade. In the last-named year, these laws were embodied in Regulation XIII., and opium legislation arrived at the state in which it is at the present day ; codified in an Act containing ninety-eight sections, sixty-eight of which have direct reference to the penalties to be inflicted on transgressors of the monopoly ; to legal processes peculiar to its circumstances ; to punishment for frauds, oppression, and perjury ; and to rewards for informers ; while the other sections grant authority to opium agents, and are more generally declaratory and supportive of the system.

If a nation's laws are to be taken as an index to the morality and civilization of its people, and to the state of crime which especially calls for repression, the whole tenor of this enactment bears testimony to the evils that have been inflicted upon the population of India by the growth of the opium monopoly. The zeal of the loyal subject, the cupidity of the informer, and the fears of the timid are excited to the utmost, while the notorious profligacy and oppression of an Indian police are recognized as existing, by penal clauses which all experience proves to have been hitherto ineffectual for the protection of the people. In illustration of this, I will quote some sections of the above regulation XIII. of 1816, marking in italics the passages to which I would call particular attention.

“Sect. XIV. In the event of the cultivator failing to deliver the full quantity of opium agreed for by him in the manner specified in Sect. XI.; if the agent shall *suspect* or *believe* the cause of failure to be in the wilful neglect of the ryot, he shall complain to the zillah, or city judge, within whose jurisdiction the land of the ryot may be situated; and if it shall be proved to the satisfaction of the judge that the failure has been owing to *neglect*, he is to award that the ryot shall restore the proportional advance with interest, at the rate of 12 per cent. per annum. The ryot so failing to fulfil his contract shall likewise be liable, *at the discretion of the judge*, to a further penalty, not exceeding the amount of interest, to the payment of which he will be liable under the above provision.”

Need I remind your Lordship of the world-wide character of Indian police and informers? and of what might be the consequences to a helpless ryot if *suspicion* or *belief* should be instilled into the mind of a man of ordinary capacity or more than ordinary susceptibility, supported by that false evidence which it is the curse of India to find everywhere procurable? On this subject I need but refer generally to the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the question of torture at Madras.

“Sect. XXXII. All zemindars, talookdars, and other proprietors of lands, whether malguzary or lakheraj, all sudder farmers, and under-renters of land of every description, all dependent talookdars, all naibs, gomastahs, and other local agents, all sezawuls, all tehsildars, and other native officers employed in the collection of revenue and rents of lands on the part of the Government or Court of Wards, are hereby declared *accountable for giving the earliest information* to the police, or abkarry darogah, to the magistrates, collectors of revenue, or officers in charge of the abkarry mehaul, collectors of customs, opium agents, or their deputies, of all poppy which may be illegally cultivated within the limits of the estate or farm held or managed by them.

“Sect. XXXIII. Any landholders, or other descriptions of persons above noticed, to whom *such responsibility is declared to attach*, who

may *wilfully or knowingly neglect* to give the information hereby required to the nearest police, or abkarry darogah, the magistrate, the collector of land revenue, or officer in charge of the abkarry mehaul, the collector of Government customs, the superintendent of salt chokies, the opium agent or his deputy assistant, shall, on proof of such *neglect* before the collector of the land revenue, or other officer in charge of the abkarry mehaul, be liable to the penalty,* with the exception of imprisonment, stated in Sect. XXXI.; for whatever quantity of land shall be illegally cultivated with the poppy on their respective estates or farms, or on the lands under their management, unless it shall have been so cultivated without their knowledge or connivance.

“Sect. XXXIV. All native officers of Government, of *whatever description*, are hereby strictly enjoined, under pain of dismissal from office *and such punishment as shall be specially prescribed*, to give immediate information to the authority under whom they are placed, of all poppy which may be illegally cultivated within their knowledge.”

Is it too much to affirm that such legislation as this can find no parallel under the British crown? The legal net is so constructed that there is no escape for landowner, renter, agent, farmer, or officer of Government in any of its departments; espionage and inquisitorial search are evoked and pushed into all the social relations of the people; neglect is constituted into positive crime, and may be adduced as a charge against a cultivator when the seasons or unavoidable circumstances have proved adverse to his crops; there is a power of “punishing specially” without definition or limit; no allowance is made for an absentee landowner or tenant; ignorance or indiscrimination renders

* *i.e.* To a fine of twenty sicca rupees per begah for whatever quantity of land shall have been so cultivated, and the destruction of the plants if the opium has not been extracted; if the opium shall have been extracted and not seized, then the fine shall be thirty-two sicca rupees; and in addition to the above penalties, the offender shall be liable to six months' imprisonment if the fine is paid, and to a year's if it is not.

any one liable to the *suspicion* of knowledge or connivance, which, if not disproved, subjects him to severe punishment; and all this train of evil may be set in motion by police and Abkarry Darogahs and officials, than whom, the merest tyro in India administration can inform your Lordship, there is not a more false or corrupt set of beings upon earth.

By Sect. XLV., a person to whom any quantity of contraband opium may have been given or sold, is liable to a fine of 500 rupees, at the discretion of the officer, whose merit with the Government is to raise the opium revenue.

Prohibitions, fines, imprisonments, and confiscations by summary jurisdiction, meet at every turn the inhabitant of a district in which the growth of poppy may be legalized; nor may a person relinquish the purchased privilege of vending opium until, under the provisions of Sect. LXVI., "he has paid to the collector a sum equal to the daily tax of one month, over and above the amount payable by him in the ordinary course, under the engagements contracted with the collector, or other officer in charge of the Abkarry Mehaul, up to the date of the resignation of his license.

The zeal of officials in stimulating the use of opium is excited by a commission of five per cent on the net amount realised by them on its sale, *vide* Sect. LXIX.

I must add one more reference to the Regulation which provides so freely for fines to the *amount of, and exceeding 500 rupees*, and imprisonment for even trivial infractions of its rules. Of all the oppressive

acts of Indian police, perhaps none is more common than that of dragging an innocent man from his home and business, to answer a false accusation at a distant court. If this very usual tyranny should be inflicted under the provisions of the Opium Law, the imprisoned victim, "who, after the investigation prescribed by these rules, shall not have been convicted of the offence with which he stood *charged* or *suspected*, shall be immediately released, and the expense to which he had been actually subject on account of the inquiry, shall be paid to him by the collector or other officer in charge of the Abkarry Mehaul *on the part of Government*; should it further appear that the inquiry originated in malice or in motives clearly vexatious and unwarranted on the side of the informant, it shall be competent for the collector or other afore-said officer to order such informant to discharge the amount of any diet money which may have been paid to the witnesses, and to pay to the party aggrieved such moderate fine, *not exceeding twenty rupees*, as may appear reasonable, or to be confined for a period not exceeding fifteen days."

Here there is no hypothetical legislation against merely imaginary grievance; the judge is the officer, whose sense of public duty is engaged in favour of a rigid execution of the law under which a man is arraigned, on possibly no other ground than suspicion without distinct evidence; if the "*suspicion*" which is, legally marked as distinct from "*a charge*," be not converted into fact, and if the informant has acted as informants in such cases too often, and in general do

act, from "malicious, vexatious, and unwarranted motives," and the almost impossible proof of a motive, or disproof of a suspicion has been substantiated, then the gratification of revenge, or the risk run for reward, is to be estimated by the small amount of payment of diet money to defendant's witnesses (the informant's evidence being as usual, or in all probability, his accomplices), and the comparative slight punishment to which his guilt is amenable.

Opium is manufactured in Malwa, one of what are termed the Independent States of India; the Native Government does not interfere with the cultivation of the poppy, which the ryots are at liberty to grow as they do rice, grain, or any other produce; if, however, Malwa opium could be brought into the export market at a merely remunerative price to the grower and manufacturer, it is obvious that high prices in Calcutta could not be maintained against competition in Western India. But as Malwa opium cannot reach a seaport without passing through the territories of the East India Company, the paramount power of the latter secures its own monopoly price, by the simple protectionist expedient of imposing a transit duty of 400 rupees upon every chest of opium, and the enactment of a law of confiscation of the property, and heavy penalties of fine against the smuggler, for whose enterprise such high stimulant is created by large profits upon his illicit trade; the transit duty has gradually been increased from 100 rupees a chest, and is, of course, liable to be advanced as the interest of the East India Company may require.

In a statistical paper, printed for the Court of Directors of the East India Company in 1853, the first words are, "In Bengal the revenue from opium is realised by means of a Government monopoly;" and almost immediately thereupon follow these sentences:—"The ordinary consequences of monopoly, increase of price to the consumer and restriction on the employment of capital and industry, are not wanting in the opium system; the free cultivation of the poppy would doubtless lead to the larger outlay of capital, and to greater economy of production." It is a pity for India, my Lord, that so sound and simple an axiom in political economy has ever been departed from, and that now the consequences of such departure from right principle have evolved those evils which render retrogressive measures imperatively necessary.

So completely is the production of opium in the hands of the East India Company, that not a poppy can be grown in the extent of their vast territories without either the permission of the Government or infraction of its laws. In Bengal only is the growth allowed, and it is there carried on and the opium collected under the management of two principal agencies, at the head of which are officers, who, to judge from the largeness of their salaries and extent of their powers, must stand high in the confidence of the authorities by whom they are appointed. Under the opium agents is an immense staff of officials, whose designations would be unintelligible to a mere European reader, and whose multifarious duties

extend from making the advances of money to the cultivators before the poppy-seed is sown; watching its growth and produce within the strictly-defined boundaries of cultivation; the delivery of opium at the appointed places: its inspissation and preparation for the taste of the Chinese consumers: its formation into balls, and packages in chests especially adapted to the convenience of smuggling: and finally to its conveyance to Calcutta, where it is put up to auction at the Government sales, and passes from the hands of the officers of the State into those of the speculators in illicit trade, and the daring contrabandists who land it in China.

Another injury done to India by this monopoly is to be found in the poverty of the ryots, by whom the rich opium producing lands are cultivated; to them the poppy fields yield but a bare subsistence, while the profit upon opium, which ranges as the difference between 250 rupees and from 1200 to 1600 rupees a chest, goes to the Government, which exchanges the drug for silver at the auction mart; if this profit, or a fair portion of it, was realised by the ryots, they would become capitalists, and consumers of British manufactures; and if the profit was derived from sugar, indigo, cotton, or products for which these richest of all lands are best adapted, there would be an abundant supply of raw material for the purposes of reciprocally beneficial commerce between the two countries.

There is a fallacy connected with the opium monopoly and Abkaree system of India, which, while

it is allowed to operate, must prove more and more destructive to the social and commercial prosperity of the people. As long as revenue is raised from, and the respectability of legal sanction given to, the principal causes of crime and misery ; as long as capital is invited to be embarked in the sale of ardent spirits, opium, and intoxicating drugs, under the safe-guard of Government contracts for monopolies, and protection of penal laws in their support, so will intoxication in its different forms, continue to spread, as it has spread, among millions, who, before they were thus demoralized, were to be classed among the most sober, and generally abstemious people upon earth. This is not the place to enter upon such a subject *in extenso*, nor will I do more than suggest that if the revenue derived from the Abkaree system and opium monopoly, was balanced with the expenses of crime, disease, and idleness, as well as of misdirection of capital, and loss of productive power consequent thereupon, there is an appalling amount to be carried to the account of moral deterioration and material loss. With strict relevance, however, to the opium question, let me quote, first, the report of Mr. C. A. Bruce, Superintendent of the tea-plantation in Assam, and then the opinions of two other authorities of the highest order. Mr. Bruce's words are,—

“I might here observe that the British Government would confer a lasting blessing on the Assamese and the New Settlers, if immediate and active measures were taken to put down the cultivation of opium in Assam, and afterwards to stop its importation, by levying high duties on opium land. If something of this kind is not done, and done quickly too, the thousands that are about to emigrate from the plains into Assam will soon be infected with the

opium mania; *that dreadful plague* which has depopulated this beautiful country, turned it into a land of wild beasts, with which it is overrun, and has degenerated the Assamese from a fine race of people, to the most abject, servile, crafty, and demoralized race in India.

“This vile drug has kept, and does now keep, down the population; the women have fewer children compared with those of other countries, and the children seldom live to become old men, but in general die at manhood; very few old men being seen in this unfortunate country in comparison with others. Few but those who have resided long in this unhappy country know the dreadful and immoral effects which the use of opium produces on the native. He will steal, sell his property, his children, the mother of his children, and finally even commit murder for it. Would it not be the highest of blessings, if our humane and enlightened government would stop these evils by a single dash of the pen, and save Assam, and all those who are about to emigrate into it as tea-cultivators, from the dreadful results attendant on the habitual use of opium? We should in the end be richly rewarded, by having a fine healthy race of men growing up for our plantations, to fell our forests, to clear the land from jungle and wild beasts, and to plant and cultivate the luxury of the world. This can never be effected by the enfeebled opium-eaters of Assam, who are more effeminate than women. I have dwelt thus long on the subject, thinking it one of great importance, as it will affect our future prospects with regard to tea; also from a wish to benefit this people, and save those who are coming here from catching the plague, by our using timely means of prevention.”

This official report receives confirmation from a letter received from a gentleman also holding an official situation under the East India Company in Assam. His allusion being only casual, is the more striking:—

“The cultivation of opium is free in Assam; the fearful results from its use, which every day present themselves to notice, are very painful to witness.”

Mr. Henry St. George Tucker, Deputy-Chairman

of the East India Company, protested against the whole of the traffic, in a minute of dissent dated October 1839, and has left on record, that,

“By promoting the growth of the poppy throughout central India, as we have done, we become accessory to the probable extension of a pernicious habit among a race of men whose well-being ought never to be an object of indifference to us.”

And the late Sir Stamford Raffles thus wrote of the evil, which has fearfully increased since his day :—

“The use of opium, it must be confessed and lamented, has struck deep into the habits, and extended its malignant influence to the morals of the people, and it is likely to perpetuate its power in degrading their character, and enervating their energies, as long as the European Government, overlooking every consideration of policy and humanity, shall allow a paltry addition to their finances to outweigh all regard to the ultimate happiness and prosperity of the country.”

To these I will add the testimony of the late Lord Jocelyn, who, having visited the opium-shops and smoking dens in the East, stated in Parliament,

“He must acknowledge that the noble Lord (Ashley) had called to his recollection scenes which he had witnessed of the lawless character of the trade; and that, in all he stated as to the moral, political and physical evils, he concurred.”

The following extract of authentic, and official authority, on the subject, is so apposite, that, as I find, so I quote it :—

“The produce of this delicate plant, the poppy, is extremely uncertain, being liable to frequent injury from insects, wind, hail, frost, and unseasonable rain. To the poor man *the advance is the chief inducement*. He takes it at first, perhaps, to obtain a sum of money when

urgently wanted; and having once become dependent upon this assistance at a particular season of the year (as he barely ekes out enough from his laborious occupation to pay his expenses), *necessity* compels him to continue the cultivation. Only a small proportion of the amount paid by the Government reaches the hands of the actual cultivator. It is stated by Langford Kennedy, assistant opium agent at Patna, and opium agent at Behar, from 1811 to 1829, in his evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons in 1832, Nos. 721 and 722, that, ‘advances were made by him to the gomastah, by the gomastah to the suddor mattoo, by the suddor mattoo to the village mattoo, and by the village mattoo to the ryot;’ and he adds, No. 757, ‘the gomastah obtains a further income by a species of extortion,’ which must ultimately fall on the unfortunate ryot.

“It is the interest of the deputy opium agent, who always did get, and, in some instances, still gets, a commission on the Government profits, to collect as much opium as possible. He is generally the collector and magistrate of the district, possessing great power, and from his situation, almost unbounded influence over the natives, which it is not unfair to suppose he would exercise to promote the extended production of the drug: in doing this, he would not only benefit himself, but be acting in strict conformity with the instructions of his employers. Moreover, the boundaries of land in some districts are extremely ill defined, and disputes often arise as to who is the rightful occupant. It frequently happens in such cases that one of the disputants offers to grow poppy, and a decision in his favour is the almost invariable consequence.

“The statements contained in the last paragraph have been confirmed to me in the strongest manner by an eye-witness, Mr. Andrew Sym, who resided eleven years at Gorakhpooer, and for about eighteen months of that time had charge of the East India Company’s branch opium agency for that district. This gentleman, who has recently returned from India, has permitted me to use the authority of his name.

“Other and grievous sources of oppression, arising from the surveillance of the custom-house searchers, and the extortions of the officers of the chokees, or search-houses, are forcibly detailed in the following letter, written by a gentleman of my acquaintance, who, from long residence in the interior of India, possesses an intimate knowledge of the subject on which he writes; this letter, though long, will amply repay the perusal:—

“ ‘The evils which the cultivation of opium entails upon our fellow-subjects in India arises partly from the ryots in the opium districts of Patna and Benares being compelled to give up fixed portions of their lands for the production of poppy. It is true that the Honourable Company pay fairly for the lands and labour thus wrested from the ryot (farmer); and did the amount paid by the government find its way honestly into the possession of these people, there might not be so much cause of complaint in this matter; but the contrary is the case. These payments have to pass through the hands of numerous *employés* of the Government; and scarce twenty per cent. of it ever reaches the legitimate owner. The evils of the cultivation, however, do not end here. In consequence of being obliged *forcibly* to cultivate this highly-taxed drug, the peasant is constantly exposed to a suspicion of retaining some part of the produce for sale; the surveillance of the police is, therefore, especially directed to these unhappy creatures; and the oppressions which they are subjected to in this way surpass belief. They are exposed to every sort of annoyance which the ingenuity of authorised plunderers (the police and custom-house searchers) can devise, in order to extort bribes. The privacy of their miserable abodes—the sanctity of their females—is intruded upon by these harpies of Government; and no redress can be given by the Government, unless they abolish the production of this accursed drug.

“ ‘The evils arising from Government’s trade in opium to the people of Bengal, Behar, and Benares arises from the necessary protection against the smuggling of this article of monopoly, and the right of search given to the custom-house officers, who are placed in search-houses, or chokees, at short distances along the bank of that main artery of Indian trade—the Ganges, and allow no native boat to pass, without bringing it to, for search. Before I proceed further in this branch of the subject, I had better give some insight into the character of the natives employed in these search-houses. They consist of peons (pay ten shillings per month,) ameens (twenty-four,) and writers (fourteen.) The writer is generally the more respectable personage of the three; he has charge of the rest; his pay is seven rupees per month; his qualification is a knowledge of the Persian language. He finds his own stationery, which costs him two rupees per month, leaving five rupees for himself. He has to give security for good behaviour, to the amount of five hundred rupees (50*l.*) The five rupees which remain of his salary are not sufficient to provide him

with food. Yet these men generally live expensively (that is to say, for natives,) and save money. Were there nothing beyond the authorised emolument of the situation above-mentioned, it is obvious that it would be impossible to get any one to accept such places. Yet large sums are paid, as bribes, to those who are supposed to have power with the European collector, in order to procure them. The natural consequence is, that feelings of honesty and morality are thrown aside, as incompatible with *employés* in the customs. In other departments, in judicial offices, in the revenue, and even in the police, honest native officers have been found, notwithstanding the British Indian system (which seems as if it were devised with the view of offering temptation to natives in authority to be dishonest); but, *in the customs*, I never met with an honest native. Those who are employed enter it with the sole intention of doing the best they can for themselves. Therefore, the bribery and perjury, apparent and acknowledged in the system, is most lamentable.

“ ‘I have already said, that the right of search is intrusted to characters such as I have described. Therefore, all goods passing the main artery of India—the Ganges—are exposed to it. Now this right is not in any way used to protect the Government; it is held out by the custom-house officers as a means of extorting bribes. This tax upon goods is made in every search-house established along the line they have to travel. Nor are merchant boats alone subjected to these extortions. They fall heavily upon mere travellers—especially pilgrims, and those who travel with their families. The latter usually have a separate apartment for their wives, sisters, and other females, which the officers threaten to enter, under the pretext of suspecting that opium is concealed there; and we know that a respectable Hindoo would sacrifice all he has in the world rather than expose his wives to insult from these miscreant searchers.

“ ‘The same system of extortion exists upon goods and persons conveyed by land whenever they come within the limits of inland custom-houses.

“ ‘To sum up the curse consequent on *this right of search, which springs from the Government trade in opium*, I may say they are as follows:—The exactions and corruptions; the greivous delay; the insolent exercise of low, ill-paid authority; the interruption of communication, by shutting up ferries, roads, and routes; the distress and ruin resulting from false seizures and confiscations (got up by the custom-house people to blind the Government); the diversion of trade

into channels less impeded ; the advancement in price of all goods, by reason of these checks and annoyances ; and, worst of all, the demoralization of the habits of all parties connected with, or exposed to the influence of, these oppressive and unjust measures. And we must either submit to all these evils and hindrances, the happiness and prospects, eternal as well as temporal, of the inhabitants of this large and wealthy tract of country, teeming with industry and fruitfulness, or annihilate the right of search, which, as it is exercised, is replete with every curse that can be inflicted on millions of our unoffending fellow-creatures, whom, by the laws of God and man, we are bound in every way to protect and comfort.’

“ But a still greater evil than the oppression of the natives, is the RAPID DEMORALIZATION OF THE VAST POPULATION OF INDIA, FROM THE GROWING HABIT OF OPIUM-EATING. Even the Hindoos, said to be the most temperate people in the world, have caught the mania. I must again refer the reader to the letters from Assam, p. 19, and request him to reperuse the harrowing statement of Bruce ; but these distressing effects are not confined to that province. In a written communication received from Mr. A. Sym, dated the 13th March, 1840, he states,—

“ ‘ The health and morals of the people suffer from the production of opium. Wherever opium is grown, it is eaten, and the more it is grown the more it is eaten ; this is one of the worst features of the opium question. We are demoralizing our own subjects in India ; ONE-HALF OF THE CRIME IN THE OPIUM DISTRICTS, MURDERS, RAPES, AND AFFRAYS, HAVE THEIR ORIGIN IN OPIUM-EATING.

“ ‘ Both Hindoos and Musselmen eat the drug ; and its pernicious effects are visible on the population of the opium districts, particularly in the neighbourhoods of the depôts.’

“ It is important to remember that this gentleman speaks of what he has actually seen, during a long residence in the opium districts. He assured me that all the other evils of the opium trade, as far as India was concerned, sink into insignificance, compared with the debasing effect upon the population ; he added this remarkable expression,— ‘ ONE OPIUM-CULTIVATOR DEMORALIZES A WHOLE VILLAGE ! ’ Comment upon this is superfluous.

“ THUS THOUSANDS OF OUR FELLOW-CREATURES IN INDIA ARE OPPRESSED, AND THEIR HEALTH AND MORALS DESTROYED, FOR THE SAKE OF THIS ‘ INFERNAL OPIUM TRADE.’ ”

Before leaving this part of my subject, I will state the result of my own experience of the progressive and destructive course of intoxication by opium, drugs, and ardent spirits, for corroboration of which I can confidently appeal to almost every civil and military officer, and missionary throughout India. The returns of courts-martial and defaulter-books of the Madras army will show that the character of the Sepoy is now tarnished by that vice, which is the one dark stain on the military superiority which his European comrade bears over every other soldier in the world. I have heard judges, magistrates, and collectors, bear their testimonies to the rapid deterioration of the native character in this respect, which is more authoritatively proved by the records of their courts and offices. Families feel it in their drunken servants, and missionaries deplore it as an increasing obstacle to the progress of the Gospel. During the wars in Afghanistan and the Punjab, when it became necessary to increase the native army, it fell under my observation in the office which I then held as Adjutant-general of the Army, that the commanding officers of regiments represented very generally their inability to procure the desired proportion of Mahomedan recruits, who were reported to be numerically few, and physically inferior when compared with the Hindoos. This induced me to make inquiries, not only from our highly intelligent officers themselves and other Europeans, but among the Mahomedans of all ranks, civil and military, and I was much struck with a fact that has also excited European attention, viz.

that the race is apparently wasting away. The Mahomedans universally acknowledged the fact, and accounted for it in various ways, *but in every instance adduced the use of opium and bhang** as one cause of the palpable diminution of the numbers and energies of their people.

I have the honour to be, &c.

R. ALEXANDER.

* The inspissated juice of hemp, used for intoxication, the sale of which is under monopoly purchased from the Government, and protected by penal laws.

LETTER II.

THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND CONSEQUENCES, OF OPIUM SMUGGLING IN CHINA.

MY LORD,

I now turn to the progress of the contraband trade of opium in China.

Until the year 1800, opium was admitted through the custom-house as a medical drug. As I stated before, the quantity imported previous to the year 1767 had not exceeded 200 chests, weighing about 133 lbs. each chest; nor did the powerful East India Company enter upon the traffic until the year 1773, when they established a depot near Macao.

In 1781, the Bengal Government sent an armed vessel laden with opium to China, the proceeds of the sales of which were to be paid into the treasury of the East India Company at Canton; the price of the drug appears to have been then about £100 a chest.

In 1794 the Company stationed a large vessel laden with opium at Whampoa, the anchorage for the port of Canton; and, as I learn from the pamphlets and publications from which I am quoting, it was in

the year 1796 that the rapid progress of demoralization was so apprehended by the Chinese Government, that to arrest the vice it passed a law, that any one found guilty of smoking opium should be punished by being beaten with a bamboo, and exposed in the streets with a wooden collar round his neck, bearing an inscription of the crime for which he was condemned. Thus early were the Chinese alive to the consequences of the smuggling traffic, and, according to their customs and rules of government, energetic in their endeavours to suppress it.

The trade increased notwithstanding, and, in the year 1800, the importation reached to the number of 2000 chests. From this period may be traced that legislative and executive opposition of the Chinese Government which eventually drew down upon the nation the horrors of an unjust war, and the misery under which its millions of opium victims now suffer. Edicts were sent to the governors of provinces to take stringent measures to suppress the use of the poisonous drug; punishments were increased in severity against those who indulged in the destructive habit, even to the extent of banishment and confiscation of property; still the vice, introduced and stimulated by the English contrabandist, spread like a contagious disease, and the measures of the Chinese Government were counteracted by an aggravation of the evils inflicted upon the people; the custom-house and other officers at Whampoa and Macao were bribed into connivance at the trade which the Emperor was endeavouring to suppress, and the corruption

of the public authorities was added as a fatally necessary incident in the progress of national demoralization.

Previous measures having proved ineffectual, the Hong merchants, in the year 1809, were required to give security for every vessel that came to Whampoa, that she brought no opium, before she was permitted to open her hatches; and it was made known, that if opium was found on board any vessel, she should be sent away without being permitted to discharge her cargo, and the security-merchant should be punished. Both parties are seen at this period to be pursuing their objects with equal earnestness, but with different degrees of success. The Chinese Government, according to its laws and customs, endeavoured to suppress the traffic, which, nurtured by the East India Company, in the days when Free Trade was unknown, is gradually assuming gigantic strength and proportions. In 1820, the number of chests smuggled into China had increased to 5147; owing to some flagrant instances of crime having come to the knowledge of the Governor of Canton in 1821, when 7000 chests were imported, the senior Hong merchant was disgraced for remissness of duty, and more stringent measures were put in practice against the trade. At the same time, when the Chinese punished their own subjects for infraction of the laws, they addressed the most earnest remonstrances to the foreign merchants who instigated them to do so.

The only consequence, however, of this activity

on the part of the Chinese was, that the depots for opium were driven away from Whampoa and Macao, and permanently established in armed vessels, which lay at anchor under the island of Lin Tin, at the entrance of the Canton river. From these armed vessels the traffic was managed thus:—The foreign merchants resided in Macao or Canton. They received the money in payment of the drug at their counting-houses, and gave orders on the commanders of the store-ships at Lin Tin. The Chinese purchasers sent very fast boats, which were propelled by forty or fifty stout rowers well armed, to the ship to receive the opium, and smuggle it into Canton, or wherever it was wanted; and these deliveries were generally made at night, to avoid the observation of the officers of Government.

Under such circumstances of impotent legislation, disregarded remonstrances, and daring violation of the laws, the trade went on. In 1824, the importation was 12,639 chests, and in the next ten years it increased to 21,785. The insatiate craving of the Chinese grew with what it fed upon to their destruction, so that in 1837 there was a successful smuggling of 39,000 chests, valued at 25,000,000 dollars.

That the Chinese Government was sincere in its opposition to this contrabandism, is proved by the consistency of its edicts, and the ineffectual severity of its ill-executed laws. Charles Majoribanks, Esq., in his evidence given before the House of Commons in 1830, states "he did not imagine that the Chinese possessed any means of putting it down by any

marine force which they had; that the opium was forced upon Whampoa, where it was met by counter-acting prohibitions and exactions of the Chinese Government, and that the trade, entirely prohibited by that Government, was compelled to take refuge among the islands at the mouth of the Canton river, where it was carried on to a very great extent." On being questioned another day, the same gentleman replied, "that the Chinese have frequently interposed by the strongest proclamations, and that he knew of some instances in which opium boats had been seized *and the heads of their crews were cut off.*"

Sir J. F. Davis, another able and experienced officer of the East India Company's service in China, was asked by the same Committee of the House of Commons whether the Chinese had issued many edicts against the opium traffic, and whether they had been carried into force. He answered, "they certainly have, to the utmost capability of the weak Chinese Government, which had rather evinced its hostility to the system than been effective in repressing it."

A reference to the Third Report of the Commons Committee on India Affairs in 1830, will show, that by dispatches from its factory in Canton, the East India Company was kept aware of the undeviating opposition of the Chinese Government, and of the difficulties in which the legal trade became involved by the pertinacity of the smugglers. The Emperor and his ministers avowedly acted upon moral principles, and rejected every suggestion to replenish their

treasury by a revenue that must accrue in proportion as the population became demoralized. About this time the low average price of a chest of opium may be taken at 700 dollars, and the annual importation, at the very moderate estimate of 22,000 chests. Had the Emperor consented to impose a duty of twenty-five per cent., there was a revenue to be derived of 3,850,000 dollars.

In 1837 we find the Chinese Government exerting all the vigour it possessed in issuing laws, edicts, proclamations, and remonstrances, and punishing with the greatest severity such of its own subjects as it could apprehend. At this period, therefore, the state of the affairs stood thus—the East India Company used its monopoly in India to produce any quantity of opium that could be smuggled into China. According to the evidence given before the House of Commons, and recorded in its Blue Books, this opium was not prepared for medical purposes, but solely to suit the taste of the Chinese consumers; it was packed expressly for the convenience of the smugglers, and sold by Government officers at Government sales in Calcutta, for the known purpose of being taken to China, there to be imported contrary to the laws of the empire. All this was done with the knowledge and by the authority of the Select Committee of the Court of Directors in Leadenhall Street, the connivance or command of the Board of Control, and carried practically into effect by the Supreme Government of India in Calcutta, with all the power of its legislative and executive

authority. So completely was the Indian Government identified with the trade, that when heavy losses were sustained in China, it bore its share thereof as shown by the following Government notification issued in Calcutta: "Shippers to China of opium purchased at the sales of January, February and March 1837, if the ship left before the 1st of August last will receive at the rate of 140 rupees per chest Upon opium of the sales of January, February and March 1837, shipped from this port to any port of the Straits, or Eastern Archipelago before the 1st of May last, nothing will now be paid; but if it shall hereafter be proved by the production of bills of lading, to the satisfaction of the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium, that any part of this opium has been sent on from Singapore, Malacca, or Pinang, to China," (alas poor China!) "before the 1st of January 1837, then the shippers thereof will receive the same amount per chest as all other shippers of opium of the said sales to China, viz., at the rate of 140 rupees per chest." Then follows other adjustments upon Profit and Loss, varying from 150 to 300 rupees per chest.

The British Government having thus intimately identified its interests with that of the smugglers, I will quote from a pamphlet published by Mr. Fry in 1840, some specimens of the way in which the latter carried on their part of the business:—

Extract from a Letter dated Macao, 14th June, 1839.

"The opium trade is not annihilated. It has only, as it were, changed hands. It has passed only from the established houses in

Canton, under whose management it has ever been conducted with the greatest moderation, and in the most orderly and quiet manner, to a class of men prepared to carry on the traffic at all hazards, to overcome all obstacles that may oppose their progress by weapons of war, and who for this purpose, at this time, both here, at Manilla, and Singapore, are fitting out vessels in such a manner as will defy all the naval power of China."

The above comes from a house extensively interested in the opium trade.

Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman at Macao to his Friend in London.

"The profit upon opium is at this time so immense, that people are tempted to continue smuggling it, although at a very great risk of life. Even now, notwithstanding the merchants have signed a paper declaring they would not bring any more opium to China, vessels, *armed to the teeth*, are employed along the coast, and actually forcing it into the country; one of them was attacked by a Chinese junk, two of the crew were killed, and about forty of the Chinese. To say nothing of the morality or immorality of the trade, I think it disreputable from the first introduction of it; and the manner in which it has lately been carried on is disgraceful in the highest degree. I consider all persons engaged in it, as much deserving any punishment the Chinese may choose to inflict, as the smuggler on our own coast is of that awarded him by the laws of England. *After so many warnings* they have no right to complain of the means used by the Chinese for the suppression."

From the Head of a Mercantile House.

"The smuggling trade, as now carried on, too closely approximates to murder, even to defend the morality of it; to fire upon parties who endeavour to stay them, or to sell opium to men who risk their heads for money, is neither a gentlemanly nor an honourable trade."

From a Correspondent in China.

"The Ann opium clipper having been up at a place called Tienpâh, in the neighbourhood of Amoy, had made arrangements with some shore-boats to deliver a quantity of opium; very fortunately she had

remained under way when a large junk came out upon her, propelled by oars, the wind being very light. This junk engaged the *Ann* for four and a half hours, when one of the *Ann's* guns burst and killed seven of her crew. Most fortunately the breeze by this time had freshened, which enabled the *Ann* to make sail and get away from the junk. The captain of the *Ann* said, that, had it fallen calm, he should have been boarded to a certainty.

“To show you that more of such occurrences may be expected, we conversed the other day with a gentleman just arrived from China, who informed us that, before he left Macao, he had been in company with four captains of opium vessels, who declared to him that they had fully made up their minds to attack and sink all that opposed them in any way whatever.”

Extract from a Letter from Hong Kong, dated Oct. 9th, 1839.

(From the Head of a Mercantile House.)

“A report is afloat of another fight up the coast of four smuggling schooners and brigs, owned by the Portuguese of Manilla, but all commanded by *Englishmen*, and with some of the crews English, all were armed (one of them carrying long 18-pounders), having been attacked by the mandarin junks, which they beat off, and of which eventually they burnt five. The lives lost are not mentioned.”

A merchant at Bombay wrote to this firm in London in December 1839, as follows:—

“The opium trade is carrying on with the greatest vigour. The *Lady Grant*, a clipper, left this in September with 700 chests, and was leaving Singapore for the coast of China, armed with twelve guns and a crew of fifty-five men: the *Red Rover*, a clipper, had passed Singapore with 1100 chests from Calcutta; a letter from—— of the *Vansittart*, dated from Hongkong, states that a vessel has just arrived from Calcutta, carrying eighteen guns and forty Europeans, besides her Lascar crew. Our last letter would inform you that the Bengal Government put up 6000 chests on 4th January. This is the answer Lord Auckland makes to Captain Elliott when he forwards expresses to him for assistance. From the following extract of a letter from the brother of the writer you will have a good idea of what is going on at Hongkong.

“ ‘The opium trade is flourishing on the coast, and even at this anchorage 850 dollars is offered for it here, and 1200 dollars is said to be current on the coast. The Sir Edward Ryan has just arrived with a full cargo, and fully armed and manned by a set of desperate fellows, who burn and destroy everything that comes in the way of their disposing of their opium.

“Those parties who are now engaged in China in selling British manufactures and purchasing teas, and in no way connected with the opium traffic, now seeing clearly that their interests have all along been sacrificed to those of the opium party, will stand it no longer; for while their business was at a complete stand-still, and their constituents’ interests at home sacrificed, the opium party were carrying on an enormous profitable trade.’ ”

The following, from a Hindoo, dated Calcutta, August 1839, is particularly forcible and striking:—

“The opium question is next treated by ———. If from what was before known in England one book has been published ‘On the Iniquities of the Opium Trade,’ there will be dozens when the people in England know as much of this trade as we now know. The latter circumstance I will relate myself. The Red Rover and Sir Edward Ryan lately arrived from China, and they have both sailed within these two or three days, the former with about one thousand chests, and the latter with about seven hundred chests of opium. The agents of the former are ———, and those of the latter are ———. They are armed to the teeth and well manned. They have thus sailed out of a British port, under the sanction of the British Government, with the avowed object of landing their opium, and selling it at all hazards on the east coast of China. Will it be hereafter believed that British merchants in the nineteenth century could, in the face of the world, without a cloak and without a blush, engage in such a nefarious and piratical adventure for the sordid love of pelf?”

In November, 1855, I received from a friend a letter, written by a gentleman of high character and position in society, who is unwilling that his name should be made public; no candid mind will, I presume, reject the facts stated, nor be blind to the

system with which they are connected; the information is as follows: "A vessel sailed out of the harbour in broad daylight, well manned, of the very finest build and rig which Aberdeen could furnish; built, launched, and equipped under the light of heaven, and before our eyes, and armed to the teeth with every implement of war—an opium smuggler for poor China! the schooner *Vindex*. She is about 160 tons, of clipper build, built for _____ of _____. A vessel of the same kind, named the *Wild Dayrell*, was launched from a building-yard at Cowes for the same trade, and as a companion for the *Vindex*. The Captain of the *Vindex* is an Englishman, and the officers and crew came down from London; but the Captain having gone to sea with the crew and found them inefficient, he brought the vessel back, and shipped a new company, officers and all. I am not aware that there is any secret in what I have told you, the thing has been done from the beginning quite openly."

This, my Lord, connects the doings of the present day with those of 1839, and I do not suppose that it would be difficult to complete the links of the chain, some of which would be afforded by one of the richest public Companies in London.

Authority for what follows is to be found in Blue books and official records, published in this country and in China.

In 1836, there had commenced one of the most remarkable consultations which are on record in the history of any nation. The Chinese Government

had been trying to suppress a destructive vice among its own people, and to put a stop to an iniquitous traffic in a contraband poison carried on by foreigners.

But its efforts had been nugatory. The armed smuggling continued, the fascinating vice was still spreading, and £500,000 sterling of silver were exported in payment of the drug; in such an extremity, some advisers of the Emperor thought it might be best to seek a remedy by legalizing the traffic. The most distinguished statesman who recommended this policy was Heu Naitsi, and as it was approved of by most of the foreign residents in China, many of the Chinese at Canton thought it would be adopted by the Emperor, and the more so, as it had been concurred in by the Governor of Canton, to whom, as well as the other governors, the memorial of Heu Naitsi had been referred for their consideration. In expectation of the trade being legalized, measures were taken by foreigners to secure an increased production of the deleterious drug. The ruinous nature of this line of policy was, however, ably exposed by three very remarkable state documents, drawn up by a Cabinet Minister, Choo Tsun; another by Hwang Tseotsze, President of the Sacrificial Court; and a third by a sub-censor named Heu Kiu. The question of the legalization of the traffic in opium, with these memorials against it, was again submitted to all the high officers of the empire for their consideration and advice. After full and mature deliberation, ex-

tending over a period of more than a year's duration, the nearly unanimous decision of the advisers of the Emperor was, that, on account of the injuries it inflicted on the people, the nefarious traffic *should not be legalised*. At the same time it was resolved to have recourse to yet more stringent measures to suppress the seductive, but ruinous vice, and to put a stop to the smuggling of the poison. Heu Naitsi, who had recommended the legalisation of the traffic in opium was disgraced, and the severity of the punishments for smuggling by Chinese, and smoking it, was increased. The names and residences of the foreign merchants in Canton, who were concerned in the traffic, having been reported to the Emperor, an edict was issued, commanding their immediate departure from China. To still further excite the attention of foreigners to the stringency of the measures now taken by Government to put down the traffic in opium and suppress its consumption, early in 1838, a Chinese, who had been engaged in smuggling, was executed at Macao in presence of many foreign and Chinese witnesses; later in the same year, another of the transgressors of the laws against opium was executed near the foreign residences in Canton; and again, early in 1839, a third Chinese was executed in the same vicinity, and it was reported that the upper lips of smokers in Hupeh province were cut off to incapacitate them from inhaling the fascinating poison. These measures checked the consumption to a degree that surprised many foreign residents, who had witnessed the in-

effectual manner in which previous edicts had been carried into effect. But it having been reported to the Emperor that the foreign merchants still continued to carry on the obnoxious traffic, and that the store-ships still lay quietly at anchor at Lin Tin, the Emperor's patience was at length exhausted by this contumacious disregard of his edicts and continued trampling on his laws; and in the latter part of 1838 he resolved to proceed to extremities. To this end he clothed a trusted and valued public officer with extraordinary powers, such as had only been thrice delegated by the Emperors of this dynasty, and sent him to Canton to put a stop to the traffic. It is said that the Emperor gave his distinguished servant, Lin, his instructions in person; and as he spoke to him of the evils that had been inflicted upon his people for these tens of years by this overflowing poison, his emotions checked his utterance. He paused and wept; then turning to the Commissioner he said,—“How, alas! can I die and go to the shades of my imperial father and ancestors until these direful evils are removed?”

Commissioner Lin arrived at Canton, March 10, 1839. He immediately made known the purpose of the Emperor to put a complete stop to the opium trade; he addressed the most earnest remonstrances to the foreigners to abandon this illegal traffic, that the legitimate trade might continue uninterrupted; and he demanded that this smuggled poison should be quietly and immediately surrendered to him for destruction. This proper and reasonable demand,

and which would have been enforced in every other country, was refused. The Chinese Commissioner then had recourse to more stringent measures, by preventing the departure of all foreigners from Canton till the opium was delivered to him by those who owned it. The noble lord, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Palmerston, had signified to the British merchants, that their country's protection would not be afforded to enable them to violate the laws of the empire to which they traded. His language is as explicit as the sentiment is just. "*No protection can be afforded to enable British subjects to violate the laws of the country to which they trade. Any loss, therefore, which such persons may suffer in consequence of the more effectual execution of the Chinese laws on this subject must be borne by the parties who have brought the loss on themselves by their own acts.*"

When the Chinese Commissioners had recourse to more stringent measures for obtaining possession of this forfeited property which was stored in the vessels at Lin Tin, her Britannic Majesty's Superintendent of Trade, Captain Elliot, stepped in to protect British subjects from the threatened losses, which their own conduct had justly brought upon them in direct contravention of the sentiments of the noble lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Captain Elliot called upon British subjects to deliver up the smuggled opium to him for the use of the British Government, and pledged the faith of that Government to remunerate them. In answer to his call, the

enormous amount of 20,283 chests were delivered from the accumulated quantity on hand; accumulated, because owing to the stringent measures which were in operation to suppress its consumption, the amount of sales had been greatly lessened. This quantity was delivered over to the Chinese Commissioner by her Majesty's Superintendent under protest; and, on this authorised act of the Superintendent, was based the claim afterwards made upon the Chinese Government for the value of the opium, which, at the then depreciated prices, was estimated at about £1,800,000. At the same time, the Chinese Commissioner required a bond of all foreign merchants, that they would not hereafter engage in this traffic. That pledge was given in the following language:—"They beg to represent, that now being made fully aware of the Imperial commands for the entire abolition of the traffic in opium, the undersigned foreign merchants hereby pledge themselves not to deal in opium, nor to attempt to introduce it into the Chinese Empire."

Lin having reported to the Emperor, that 20,283 chests had been delivered up, the Emperor sent down his mandate that the whole should be destroyed. This was most effectually done, in the presence of foreign witnesses, by mixing it with lime and salt in large trenches; after which process, the whole was let out into the sea. The work occupied a period of twenty days. Such was the Emperor's proceedings, to show his regard for the lives and happiness of his people, and to celebrate, as he supposed, the complete success of his efforts to put a stop to this

desolating curse. The Superintendent of British trade also announced to her Majesty's Government, "that as all the opium on hand had been destroyed, and all the foreign merchants had given bonds not to deal in opium, nor to attempt to introduce it into the Chinese empire, the traffic in opium was entirely abolished!"

The consequence of seizing and confiscating this smuggled opium, and of other measures growing out of it, was the war declared by England. When the Emperor and his high officers became fully sensible, by dear-bought experience, of their inability to resist the prowess of the British arms, he concluded a treaty, one article of which stipulated that the Emperor of China should pay £1,200,000 as indemnity for the contraband opium which he had, in accordance with the usage of all nations, confiscated, and £3,000,000 sterling for the expenses of the war; but in this treaty there was not any provision or stipulation made against the traffic, on account of which the two countries had been involved in a destructive but unequal contest. After the high Chinese Commissioners had signified their acceptance of the terms, which were dictated to them by the British envoy, "they eagerly requested to know why we (the British) would not act fairly towards them (the Chinese), by prohibiting the cultivation of the poppy in our dominions." The British Envoy, Sir Henry Pottinger, replied,—“Your people must become more virtuous, your officers incorruptible, and then you can stop the opium coming into your borders. Other people will bring it to you, if we should stop

the cultivation of the poppy ;” and in conclusion, the Envoy added, “ You cannot do better than legalise it !” In order, however, to avert public indignation in this country, and present some palliative to the outraged principles of the opponents of opium smuggling, there was inserted in a supplementary treaty a proviso that, “ If any merchant vessels shall, in contravention of this agreement, and of a proclamation to be issued by the British plenipotentiary, repair to any other port or places (than the five ports), the Chinese Government shall be at liberty to confiscate both vessels and cargoes.” But the Chinese Government, having had to pay so dearly for confiscating the cargoes of smuggling vessels in 1839, has never dared to interfere with the traffic in opium since, so that the practical result of the opium war has been to secure perfect impunity to the contraband trade.

The matter is now very seldom referred to in the Pekin Gazette. It was proposed to the young Emperor, Hienfung, in 1853, when he was involved in great financial embarrassment, that he should assist his revenue by legalising the trade in opium ; it being represented to him that the revenue therefrom would be about £1,200,000 sterling. But after several months’ deliberation, the Emperor announced his intention to continue the policy of his revered ancestors ; thus have three Emperors in succession persevered in views of moral rectitude, amid so many difficulties, and so many allurements to induce the adoption of an opposite policy.

I have the honour to be, &c.

R. ALEXANDER.

LETTER III.

EFFECTS OF THE OPIUM MONOPOLY AND SMUGGLING
UPON THE COMMERCE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

MY LORD,

It would be but an irrelevant digression to enter upon the bloodshed and devastating circumstances of the opium war. If you will imagine the military and naval organisation of Great Britain to have been retrograded to what it was about the reign of Richard II., and this country subjected to blockade and invasion by the line-of-battle ships and army of France in their present perfection, you will be able to form a fair idea of the comparative means and resources of two such unequally matched belligerents. When our troops came in collision with the Tartars, they encountered an enemy whose half-disciplined energy and desperate courage called forth those high military qualifications of skill and valour on our part, which triumphed over every resistance that was offered; but, as regards the unwarlike Chinese, I remember the expression of an old Mahomedan native officer of the Madras artillery, who had served in the campaigns under the Duke of

Wellington, and through the hard struggles of the first Birmese war. "Then, Sahib, our hearts rose to contend with *men*, but as for firing upon these Cheen Logue,* it was like turning our guns upon flocks of sheep."

The result of the war was, that having forced the Chinese to pay for the contraband opium they had confiscated, and the expenses of our unjust invasion of their country, we entered into a treaty, by which we recognise their right to seize and confiscate the drug. The island of Hong Kong was ceded to us, and five Chinese ports were opened for legal trade, at which we were permitted to establish consuls, for whom we engaged that they were to co-operate with the Chinese authorities if any English vessels should arrive within the range of their consular jurisdiction with the contraband drug on board. How these engagements have been fulfilled will be seen as I proceed to show the effects of opium smuggling upon the commerce and interests of Great Britain, availing myself of some statements long since published, and still, I believe, neither refuted nor denied.

"The excess of exports from China to Great Britain over the imports from Great Britain to China, in 1837, according to the statements of the Canton Chamber of Commerce, was about £3,200,000 sterling, and the excess of exports to the United States over the imports from that country, for the same year, was about £860,000 sterling, both together making £4,060,000 sterling! This excess of exports to, over the exports from, these countries, has been about the same every

* Chinese people.

successive year till 1852. The immense balance of £4,060,000 sterling in favour of China every year, on the legalised commerce, ought to enable China to take an enormous quantity of Western manufactures, and £3,200,000 ought to go to the purchase of the manufactures of Great Britain. But what is the fact? The smuggled opium comes in and sweeps away all this immense balance, and brings the Chinese in debt to nearly an equal sum, nearly all of which (£7,000,000) is taken away in silver to fill the coffers of the East Indian Government, and of the opium merchant, to the prejudice of the upright and hard-working manufacturer. But this is by no means the extent of the injury done to the manufacturer. The Chinese have been so impoverished by this continued drain upon their country of £4,000,000 sterling every year for a long succession of years, that they cannot pay remunerating prices for the quantity of Western commodities that they now take. It has been estimated, that about £90,000,000 sterling have been taken away from China in silver during this century in payment for opium. The result is, that while the price of opium has been maintained or increased, the price of Western manufactures has gradually fallen from one-half to one-third of their former rates. In many cases, the prices are below the cost of manufacture, not including the cost of transportation. A 'Report on the China Trade,' published in 1851, mentions as evidence of the lowered prices of British manufactures, that 'long-cloths, valued, in 1836-7, at £1 sterling, are now (1851) quoted at from seven to eleven shillings a-piece; while opium, which has doubled in quantity, has generally maintained its price.' This diminution in price is much more on some other articles, especially on articles of luxury and ornament. It may then be asked if British manufactures are sold below remunerative prices, how are the merchants able to continue importing them? The plan of operations is this: the merchants engaged in the China trade can place their funds in China for the purchase of teas and silks by manufactured goods, even at these low prices, at a less discount than they can by importing silver, or purchasing exchanges; and one reason of this is, that they get manufactures on credit, and hope to get the return of Chinese productions in time to make payment for the manufactures, whereas the money would be at interest from the day they despatched it. The merchants must then make up this loss incurred in getting their funds to China, as well as their profits, by charging high prices for Chinese productions. Thus, in the long-run, the manufacturers and the consumers of tea and Chinese silks pay the revenue of £3,500,000, which the East India Company derive from opium, by the

loss sustained on manufactures sent to China, and by having to pay enhanced prices on those articles imported from China.

“That the opium trade is injurious to every other commercial interest with China, and prevents the Chinese from taking an increased quantity of Western manufactures, can be established by the testimony of the highest authorities, and of those best acquainted with the China trade. Mr. W. Norton gave the following testimony on this subject before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 20th April, 1847 :— ‘British general imports (British India included) [which was not included in the statement given above] into China are £2,321,692; the exports from China are £4,492,379, which would give a balance of trade in favour of China of £2,170,687; and if that existed in reality, I can easily conceive that the trade in British manufactures would increase to an enormous extent. But the purchase of opium to the amount of £5,400,000 (the cost in India, not reckoning the additional cost in China) leaves a balance against China eventually of £3,229,313. The Chinese, it is well known, are drained of their silver to an enormous extent. It is a grievance, pressing upon China to such an extent, that it may, in the end, oblige them to break off their intercourse, contrary even to their own will, in order to stop it, for it is reducing them comparatively to a powerless state as regards their circulation.’

“The ‘Friend of China,’ in its issue for July 28, 1849, has the following remarks :— ‘The opium trade has interfered with the legitimate trade to an unusual extent since the opening of the northern ports. Silk in particular has been taken in barter for opium to a very large extent. Before the treaty, the shipments of raw silk to Great Britain were from 3,000 to 5,000 bales annually. In the last commercial year, the export from Shanghae was upwards of 17,000 bales; the previous year it was 22,000 bales. This large increase in the silk trade would have operated favourably upon the import of manufactured goods; but, unfortunately, the opium dealers cut in upon it. The silk taken in barter for opium was shipped to England and sold at a profit; while Lancashire and Yorkshire goods—the legitimate articles of exchange—would have rotted in the stores at Shanghae, had the factors not pushed them off for what they would fetch. Thus the larger consumption of tea and silk in the British isles would be provided for by the returns for opium. There is no way of getting over this difficulty. The opium trade progresses steadily. The increased consumption of teas and silk in Great Britain would merely result in the increase of the opium trade; the case of the British manufacturer is hopeless.’

“Mr. Montgomery Martin says,—‘I inquired of the Taoutai at Shanghae, what would be the best means of increasing our commerce with China;’ and his first answer to me, in presence of Captain Balfour, Her Majesty’s Consul, was, ‘Cease to send us so much opium, and we will be able to take your manufactures.’

“The Canton Circular, in 1846, observed,—‘Considering that the prime cost of opium in Bengal is about 250 rupees per chest, and that it is now sold by auction (in Calcutta) for 1,200 or 1,600 rupees a chest, we need not ask the question, who have been chiefly benefited by the war in China, justly termed the Opium War. With respect to the opium trade, as at present conducted, it is certainly a great evil, and indirectly injures the sale of other merchandise.’

“Mr. Montgomery Martin says, ‘The true remedy of our deficient trade with China is not to be found in the reduction of £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 sterling of tea duties, but in a perfect freedom of intercourse with China; in facilities of access to the interior of that vast country; and in the abolition of the pernicious opium traffic, which absorbs the money, £4,000,000 sterling, that would otherwise be devoted to the purchase of British manufactures.’

“In an interesting article on ‘Tea and the Tea Trade,’ published in Hunt’s ‘Merchant’s Magazine’ for January, 1850, Mr. Gideon Nye, junior, a leading American merchant in China, says, ‘Until the taste for this pernicious drug (opium) had spread insidiously over the empire, and the traffic in it had largely increased, China was the recipient of the precious metals from the western nations, in the adjustment of the balance of trade in her favour; but since the expiration of the East India Company’s Charter (1834), the consumption of it has so largely augmented, that, although the exports of China produce have also greatly increased, yet the export of the precious metals in adjustment of the balance adverse to China, has reached the annual sum of about 10,000,000 dollars, thus inflicting upon China a twofold injury in the demoralization of her people, and the undermining of her pecuniary resources, whose effects are of the most grave moment, as threatening the very integrity of the empire.’

“As one of the impediments in the way of the prosperity of the tea trade, the consideration of the influence of this immense traffic is in nowise a digression; nor can we consistently content ourselves with merely an incidental allusion to it, although it is no part of our purpose to discuss the moral question, for we find it greatly prejudicial to the whole legal trade with China. It seriously disturbs the financial affairs

of the country, thus impairing confidence and directly depressing the prices of all other articles of importation, whilst, at the same time, raising those of export articles.'

"Mr. Nye quotes from a letter of August, 1849, from a mercantile house at Shanghai, as follows:—'The country cannot take both goods and drug, and thus the question is, so far as England is concerned,—which branch of industry should be encouraged? The East India Company will never give up the drug, and probably the Government would not, should the Company's charter not be renewed in 1854. It appears to us, the difficulty must increase with the increasing quantity of the luxury imported.'

"These authorities which might be definitely increased while they differ as to the amount, according to the year in which their calculations were made, and the principles of reckoning the commerce, all agree in these great and important facts, that the opium trade is 'intensely injurious' to the legitimate trade; that it causes the prices at which British manufactures can be sold to the Chinese to be depreciated, and, in many cases, to be below the price of production; that it causes the prices of Chinese products to be enhanced to the British purchasers, and that it deprives the British manufacturers of customers that properly belong to them, who are ready to purchase to the enormous extent of between three and four millions sterling.

"But, perhaps, some one may object and say, that the opium trade does good in thus coming in to pay off the balance of trade, in favour of China, in the legitimate commerce; for otherwise the merchants would have to import silver to pay it off, and it would be a heavy drain upon Britain to export between three and four millions sterling to China in payment for her products. If the opium trade was to stop suddenly, some treasure would of course have to be imported to pay the balance of trade; but the trade would soon arrange itself. And if the Chinese nation were prevented squandering the eight millions sterling annually for the pernicious drug, they would very soon not only take the whole of the present balance in manufactured goods, but they would take them at improved prices, and the exports and imports would gradually and greatly increase. For the limit is not near reached yet to which Great Britain can consume Chinese products; and so also of China, much less has she reached the limit to which she could consume British products, if she was not so impoverished by this immense squandering for opium. But even if it should be necessary to import treasure to pay the balance of trade, it

would be a great deal cheaper than to pay it with opium; for thereby you would enrich one of your best customers, and thus in the end enable them to take more goods and at better prices, and Chinese products could be purchased at lower prices.

“The class of persons who are especially interested in the abolition of opium smuggling, embraces the merchants in Great Britain, and of the United States, and China, who are engaged only in the legal China trade. The advantage which the opium dealer has over the honest merchant can be seen at a glance. While the honest merchant has to place his funds in China for the purpose of Chinese products, at a greater or less discount, the opium dealer gets his funds there by opium at, as it is said, a profit of 15 per cent. A still further advantage that the opium dealers possess is, that they receive nearly all the proceeds of the opium in money, amounting nearly to £7,000,000 sterling, which gives them a preponderating influence in the money market, and in regulating the rates of exchange between China and Great Britain, and China and India.”

As, however, this important branch of my subject must come under the consideration of others far more competent to deal with it than I can pretend to be, I will conclude with a short summary of the effects of opium-smuggling on legal traffic. Your lordship will perceive that there is a difference between some of the figures taken from the table on the next page and the Parliamentary Blue Book of 1854, and those quoted from publications of earlier dates.

The trade with China has always been considered by the Chinese as a *barter* trade, and it has been so in Canton to a great extent.

China has no paper currency worthy of notice, and, therefore, she is dependent on a clumsy metallic currency, consisting of Spanish dollars and ingots of silver. There is also a copper coin used by the poorer classes.

TABLE

Drawn up from Official Returns, showing the value of Opium Smuggling in excess of the Legal Trade of India, and the drain of Specie from China to the detriment of the Commerce of Great Britain ; the exchange calculated 10 rupees for £1 sterling.

	1849-50.	1850-51.	1851-52.	1852-53.	1853-54.
BENGAL.					
<i>Imports.</i>					
Merchandise	187,099	153,445	223,797	224,176	246,403
Treasure	797,917	441,627	888,318	1,189,480	148,875
Total Imports£	985,016	595,072	1,112,115	1,413,656	395,278
<i>Exports.</i>					
Opium	3,171,761	2,777,518	2,713,469	3,482,948	3,069,895
Other Merchandise....	49,579	267,773	508,259	353,551	185,923
Treasure	60,356	20,000	None.	5,275	260,700
Total Exports£	3,281,696	3,064,291	3,221,728	3,841,774	3,516,518
MADRAS.					
<i>Imports.</i>					
Merchandise	10,365	8,995	16,030	14,268	1,783
Treasure	2,856	..	..	..	..
Total Imports£	13,491	8,995	16,030	14,268	1,783
<i>Exports.</i>					
Merchandise	105,534	118,820	136,276	166,202	37,530
Treasure	55	..	..	..	20
Total Exports£	105,589	118,820	136,276	166,202	37,550
BOMBAY.					
<i>Imports.</i>					
Merchandise	610,068	826,929	688,332	628,498	562,154
Treasure	1,576,144	1,403,655	1,413,474	1,241,327	502,890
Total Imports£	2,186,212	2,230,584	2,101,806	1,869,825	1,065,044
<i>Exports.</i>					
Merchandise	704,858	891,620	1,794,789	629,624	676,449
Opium	2,371,827	2,96,560	3,368,838	2,987,967	2,732,575
Treasure	250	1,000	3,575	26,251	459,322
Total Exports£	3,076,935	3,189,250	5,167,202	3,643,842	3,868,346

EXPORTS and IMPORTS between Great Britain and China ; the former in the best year (1852), being at the rate of about $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ for each subject of the Chinese Empire.

	1849.	1850.	1851.	1852.	1853.
Exports to China (British produce.) £	885,140	965,954	1,528,869	1,918,244	1,373,689
Imports from China £	6,170,672	5,849,025	7,971,495	7,712,771	8,255,615

The opium trade, however, being contraband, the natives who engaged in it found it most convenient, for the purpose of secrecy and despatch, to pay silver, which thus became the regular mode of payment for opium.

The gradual extension of this trade from half a million sterling in 1816 to three millions sterling before the war, seriously embarrassed the internal commerce and revenues of the country by withdrawing annually so large a sum from the needed circulation. Since the war of 1841-2, the importations of opium have continued to increase, till it now costs between six and seven millions sterling. Latterly, so great has been the difficulty of getting silver, that part of the China produce has been paid for the opium, and dollars have been imported to relieve the currency at the chief ports.

This will appear more clearly by looking at the following figures :—

	£
Export of produce, China to Great Britain	8,255,615
Legal imports in part payment.....	1,373,689
Leaving to be paid by us	<u>£6,881,926</u>

Were there no opium trade, this balance would be reduced :—

First,—By a better price being given for the same quantity of our manufactures; and, secondly, by an increased demand for them.

But the opium trade entirely changes the face of affairs, and we have the following as the state of the whole CHINA TRADE.—

	£	£
Legal imports, British and Indian ...	2,273,591	
,, American	900,000	
,, Others	600,000	
	<u>3,773,591</u>	
Contraband opium, at its value in India, say	5,802,470	
	<u> </u>	9,576,061
Export of produce :		
British and Indian	9,065,955	
American	2,000,000	
Others	500,000	
	<u> </u>	<u>11,565,955</u>

The opium and legal trade are mixed up to a great extent, but the following is a rough analysis:—

British Legal Trade :

	£
We receive from China produce, value, say	9,065,955
For this we pay in legal merchandise, say.....	<u>2,273,591</u>
* And there remains to be paid for in opium, or in silver, the proceeds of opium, about	<u>£6,792,364</u>

American Legal Trade :

	£
They receive from China produce, value, say.....	2,000,000
For this they pay in legal merchandise, say	<u>900,000</u>
And there remains to be paid for in opium, or silver, the proceeds of opium, about	<u>£1,100,000</u>

Opium Trade :

	£
We now, in 1856, sell to the Chinese not less than 75,000 chests, value above.....	6,000,000

The question now is, how does this annual *importation* of more than six millions sterling of *opium*, and the annual large *export* of *silver*, affect China and the legal trade ?

In three ways, 1st, in the destructive effect of

* A part of this bullion settlement is made in London, and the amount is adjusted between India and China, by bills on England.

opium-smoking on the Chinese; 2d, in the derangement of the circulation of the country; and, 3d, in an injurious influence on the legal foreign trade.

1st. The consumption of this destructive drug is just so much capital destroyed, besides involving thousands of Chinese families annually in ruin, causing the death of many more, and spreading poverty and crime over the land.

2d. The evils resulting from the derangement and restriction of the circulation can scarcely be exaggerated. Suppose a country like our own suddenly reduced to a state of barter, and this to continue for a series of years by the withdrawal of paper credit, while a very scanty quantity of metallic money remained. All the evils that would thus accrue are those which have fallen upon China. The whole machinery of commerce is impeded and contracted within the narrowest dimensions, poverty becomes general, and, in the absence of efficient laws, crime becomes rampant. Like the deteriorating of the blood in the human system, the whole frame decays. The current money annually removed from the circulation of the country, through the consumption of a destructive drug, the use of which is on the increase, must inevitably lead the nation to ruin, which can be but slightly, if at all, retarded, by the inadequate supply of silver obtained from the mines in China.

3d. The injurious influence on the legal foreign trade is plain. Our own prosperity as a commercial nation is wrapt up with the prosperity of the nations with which we deal. As China becomes less and less

able to bear the drain of silver, she is gradually paying for the opium with her produce, the drug thus supplanting the foreign legal merchandise. Did she retain the silver to keep up a healthy circulation at home, there cannot be a doubt she could consume much more largely of our manufactures, besides giving a better price for them.

A merchant resolved to keep himself clear of the opium trade can scarcely maintain a position in China. He cannot sell his manufactures for cash, unless at a loosing price; and he is constantly at a disadvantage, in the difficulty of obtaining cash for a favourable investment in China produce.

It has been argued that the trade is necessary to keep up the commerce of the country from the readiness with which it commands silver; but this is a fallacy, as has been already shown. The exchanges of the East are no doubt facilitated by this trade, as the larger the commerce in any part of the world, the greater the facilities for exchange. Capitalists in England send large sums of money out to India to go to China, either in opium, or in bills on opium, and to be returned home from China in bills or produce, and thus the question of exchange has become intricately mixed with that of opium smuggling, and affects now the general Eastern commerce of Great Britain and America. It might be deemed presumptuous in me strongly to maintain before a community like that of the British public a direct affirmative of the cause and evil consequences of the present drain of bullion, and its effects upon the monetary system of Europe. Standing, however,

upon what I consider the safe ground of facts and authority, I avail myself of an extract from the *Times** newspaper of 23rd October, 1856.

The Board of Trade have lately published some particulars furnished by Mr. Consul Robertson, on the commerce of Shanghai, during the past year, together with a statement of the peculiar condition of that port as regards its silver currency and the premium on the Carolus dollar. It appears that the imports in 1855, exclusive of specie and opium, amounted to £1,602,849, of which England supplied £1,122,241; America, £272,708; and other countries £207,900; while the exports reached the extraordinary total of £12,603,540, of which £6,405,040 were to England, £5,396,416 to America, and £102,084 to other countries. The balance to be met was therefore £11,000,691. Towards this the treasure imported was £2,335,017, and the opium from India £3,174,949. As the two latter items however amount only to £5,509,966, there is, according to these figures, an additional sum of £5,490,725, which must have been liquidated by some unexplained means. Discrepancies in the official valuations would perhaps partly account for it, but it may be presumed that at the end of the year a considerable sum remained to be discharged by opium and silver which had yet to arrive. With regard to the trade between China and the United States, the fact that while the imports of American goods were only £272,708, the exports of teas, silks, &c., to that country were £5,396,416, illustrates the extent to which England acts as the banking agent between them, a large proportion of the remittances brought by each New York packet being to meet the draughts from China on American account made payable in London. During the year the general trade of Shanghai gave employment to 871 vessels, representing 311,139 tons, while the revenue derived from it by the Imperial Government in the shape of Customs' duties was £845,146. It is to be regretted that no opportunity exists of making a comparative statement with previous years, accurate returns not having been before obtainable. The belief is, that notwithstanding the disorganized state of the empire, the import business reached a fair average of satisfactory prices, and it appears that the stocks held at the close of the year were not so heavy as had been anticipated. The opium trade has lately been characterized by freedom

* *Vide* Abstract of Reports on the trade of various counties and places for the year 1855, presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty, 1856. Pp. 29 to 36.

from the speculative fluctuations which were common when steam communication with India was less regular, and the quotations during the past year have been steady ; but, owing to the disorganized state of the interior, the Chinese dealers have restricted their investments as much as possible. The tea produce of the season was very late, but ultimately large supplies came down, and an extensive business took place at full rates, although some of the medium classes were diverted to the rising port of Foochow.

Three incidents are noticeable in this extract, viz. :— the large amount of opium over British manufactures ; the precarious state of the inland opium traffic ; and the vigour with which legal trade in tea and other articles is carried on, and might be extended.

The antagonism of legal and contraband trade being thus brought out, let me remind your Lordship, that Lord Dalhousie in his published minute on his administration of the Government of India, estimates that the opium monopoly will this year raise the revenue to £5,000,000 sterling, dependent of course upon increased smuggling into China.

The city article of the *Times* of the 18th September 1856, which discusses the question of exchange that I purposely avoid entering into, states that the exportation of English goods to China during the last three years, has averaged only about £1,300,000 ; with this I contrast the following statement of the exportation of bullion, and adverting to the present political and commercial state of China leave others to decide whether opium smuggling is or is not injurious to our manufactures, and whether the income which the East India Company obtains from the monopoly of the drug, is not drawn from a source that ought to aliment our national prosperity

by the production of cotton, &c. for home manufactures, and promotion of a larger demand for those manufactures abroad.

REPORT OF GOLD BULLION TO THE EAST.

FROM LONDON TO—	YEARS ENDING 7TH JANUARY.				From 7th Jan. to 7th Sept.
	1852-1853.	1854.	1855.	1856.	1856.
Calcutta ..... £	..	..	..	350	769
Madras	300	24,207	120	17,889	8,327
Bombay .....	..	2,400	..	1,232	1,500
Singapore, Penang, & } China	20,950	133,310	310,629	276,912	136,517
Total £	21,250	159,917	310,749	296,383	147,118

EXPORT OF SILVER BULLION TO THE EAST.

FROM LONDON TO—	YEARS ENDING 7TH JANUARY.				From 7th Jan. to 7th Sept.
	1852-1853.	1854.	1855.	1856.	1856.
Calcutta £	1,266,098	985,516	125,758	2,372,145	2,525,114
Madras	106,979	228,882	26,392	177,640	191,833
Bombay	948,206	1,667,976	108,755	2,369,315	2,955,430
Singapore, Penang, & } China	117,397	2,084,445	2,943,411	1,419,913	2,652,268
Total £	2,438,680	4,966,819	3,204,336	6,339,013	8,324,645

EXPORT OF SILVER BULLION.

From MEDITERRANEAN PORTS TO—	YEARS.			From January to 4th June.	From January to 4th June.
	1853.	1854.	1855.	1856.	1856.
Calcutta £	88,517	No return	603,141	Gold.	Silver. 88,099
Madras	175,561	do	289,014	10,000	101,663
Bombay	5,785	do	51,344	„	31,885
Singapore, Penang, & } China	643,612	do	571,813	50,000	348,797
Total..... £	913,475	do	1,515,312	60,000	570,444

A Committee of the House of Commons deputed in 1847, to take into consideration the state of our commercial relations with China, reported thus, "We regret that the trade with that country has been for some time in a very unsatisfactory condition, and that the result of our extended intercourse has by no means realised the just expectations which had naturally been founded on a free access to so magnificent a market." From the same report may be taken *passim* the following extracts; "We find that the difficulties of the trade do not arise from any want of demand in China for articles of British manufacture, or from the increasing competition of other nations; the payment for opium from the inordinate desire for it which prevails, and from the unrecognised nature of the transaction, which requires a prompt settlement of accounts, absorbs the silver to the great inconvenience of the general traffic of the Chinese, and tea and silk must in fact pay the rest."

Another circumstance must be taken into consideration, which is the probability that in the present distracted state of China, bullion is withdrawn from commerce and secreted by the people as a measure of security against future vicissitudes.

I have the honour to be, &c.

R. ALEXANDER.

LETTER IV.

TESTIMONIES AGAINST THE CONTRABAND TRADE IN OPIUM.

MY LORD,

I have felt the difficulty of condensing the almost incredible operations of more than a half-century's traffic, and their effects upon a people who cling with unenlightened pertinacity to customs which they trace back, with national pride, through long ages of ancestral history and tradition; these customs still remain, and, however barbarous we may deem them, they witness against the boasted enlightenment and Christianity of Great Britain, who, by her intercourse with China, leaves their permanency unaltered, and has, as yet, introduced to millions of heathen men, women, and children, but little beyond the lawless enterprise of contrabandism, and the unmitigated misery inseparable from its success.

I here adduce some very competent *native* authorities on the subject, beginning with the statement of Kinshan, one of the literati of Nankin, in 1836:—

“Opium is a poisonous drug, brought from foreign countries. At first the smokers of it merely strive to follow the fashion of the day, but in the sequel the poison takes effect, and the habit becomes fixed. The sleeping smokers are like corpses,—lean and haggard as demons; such are the injuries it does to life; it throws whole families into ruin, dissipates every kind of property, and destroys man himself. There cannot be a greater evil than this. In comparison with arsenic, I pronounce it to be tenfold the greater poison, for those who smoke the drug are injured in many ways. 1st. It exhausts the animal spirits. Hence the youth who smoke will shorten their days, and those in middle age who smoke, will hasten the termination of their years. 2nd. It impedes the regular performance of business. 3rd. It wastes the flesh and blood. Flesh is gradually worn away and consumed from the robust who smoke, and their skin hangs down like bags,—the faces of the weak who smoke, are black and cadaverous, and their bones are naked as billets of wood. 4th. It dissipates every kind of property. 5th. It renders the person ill-favoured—mucus flows from their nostrils, and tears from their eyes,—their very bodies are putrid and rotten. 6th. It promotes obscenity. 7th. It discovers secrets. 8th. It violates laws. 9th. It attacks the vitals. 10th. It destroys life. When he has pawned everything in his possession, he will pawn his wife, and sell his daughters. Such are the inevitable consequences.”

Choo Tsun, in an able memorial, in which he deprecates the legalizing of the opium trade, says:—

“To sum up the matter, the wide-spreading and baneful influence of opium, when regarded simply as injurious to property, is of inferior importance,—but when regarded as hurtful to the people, it demands most anxious consideration; for on the people lies the very foundation of the empire.”

Heu Naitsi, in a memorial to the Emperor, recommending the legalizing of the traffic in opium, says:—

“The population of this vast empire has increased from year to year, but now the evil practice is spreading widely, and checking this increase. All men smoke, the high and the low, the old and the young, and life is degraded and shortened; the subsistence of families is wasted, and the wealth of the land is passing away.”

The following is a translation of a paper, written to dissuade men from opium-smoking, which was placarded in the streets of Canton ;

“ Of all the evils which afflict mankind, the greatest are those which he perversely brings upon himself. In this life, he not only follows up a line of conduct that leads him to a miserable death, but he contentedly sinks down to the lowest of his species, and becomes an object of hatred and scorn to his fellow-men. When people begin to smoke, they at first observe no evil effects produced by it ; but having smoked it still longer, the constitution gives way, the interior gradually decays, thousands of worms and maggots gnaw the intestines, their faces become discoloured, their teeth black, their appearance like charcoal, their necks shrink in, and their whole frame is hateful as that of a ghost or devil (which is the reason they are called opium-smoking devils), and, in fine, they insensibly hug their bane, till death overtakes them in the very act. At first it was merely used by the people of Canton and Tuhkien provinces, and those parts which border on the sea ; now, however, it has gone East and West, it has crossed the frontiers into Tartary ; nor is there a province in the empire where it has not found its way. At first none but a few depraved wretches of the male sex used it ; and now we find that even Buddhist and Taonist priests, married women and young girls, are addicted to the life-destroying drug. In every item, in every respect, the evil is becoming more grave daily, more deeply-rooted than before ; so much so, that its baneful influence seems to threaten, little by little, to degrade the whole of the population of the Celestial Empire to a level with reptiles, wild beasts, dogs and swine. Those foreigners, by means of their poison, dupe and befool the natives of China. It is not only that year by year they abstract thereby many millions of our money, but the direful appearances seem to indicate a wish on their part utterly to root out and extirpate us as a people. I repeat, that from the time of our becoming a nation, until now, never did any evil, at first so bland, so enticing, blaze so fearfully as does this dreadful poison.”

That distinguished Chinese statesman, the late Commissioner Lin, in the extraordinary letter which he addressed to the Queen of England, expresses the following sentiments :—

“That in the ways of heaven no partiality exists, and no sanction is allowed to the injuring of others, for the advantage of one’s self; that in man’s natural desires, there is not any great diversity (for where is he who does not abhor death and seek life?), these are universally acknowledged principles. Though not making use of opium one’s self, to venture, nevertheless, on the manufacture and sale of it, and with it to seduce the simple folk of this land, is to seek one’s own livelihood by the exposure of others to death—to seek one’s own advantage by other men’s injury; and such acts are bitterly abhorrent to the nature of man, are utterly opposed to the ways of Heaven.”

The same Commissioner in his address to foreigners, on the wickedness of smuggling opium, indignantly asks:—

“Why do you bring to our land the opium which in your own lands is not made use of? by it defrauding men of their property, and causing injury to their lives? I find that by this thing you have seduced and deluded the people of China these tens of years past; and countless are the unjust hoards that you have thus acquired. Such conduct rouses indignation in every human breast; and it is utterly inexcusable in the eye of Celestial reason. It is then a traffic on which Heaven looks with disgust; and who is he that may oppose its will? If, then, your laws forbid it to be consumed by yourselves, and yet permit it to be sold that it may be consumed by others, this is not in conformity with the principle of doing unto others what you would they should do unto you.”

Such remonstrances and statements of the evils resulting to China from this traffic, might be largely multiplied. But I will conclude them by repeating the noble declaration of the late Emperor, made in 1844, when urged to legalize the trade—a declaration which is worthy of being inscribed on the archives of other empires and kingdoms than that of China:—“It is true, I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison; gain-seeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my

wishes ; but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people.”

I now turn to the statements of Europeans, who have witnessed these frightful and appalling evils. The distinguished Missionary, the Rev. W. H. Medhurst, D.D., now of Shanghai, stated, at different times, that—

“Those who have not seen the effects of opium-smoking in the Eastern World, can hardly form any conception of its injurious results on the health, energies, and lives of those who indulge in it. The debilitating of the constitution, and the shortening of life, are sure to follow in a few years after the practice has been commenced. The dealers in opium are little aware how much harm they are the instruments of doing, by carrying on this demoralising and destructive traffic, but the differences between the increase of the Chinese people before and after the introduction of opium ought to open their eyes, and lead them to ask themselves whether they are not accountable for all the diseases and deaths of all those who have suffered by its introduction. And, if it be true that the Chinese increased at the rate of three per cent. per annum before the commencement of the traffic, and at the rate of one per cent. per annum since, it would be well for them to consider, whether the deficiency is not to be attributed, in some degree, to opium, and the guilt to be laid at the door of those who are instrumental in introducing it. In putting down the slave-trade, it was not considered too much to maintain a naval force on the coast of Africa ; and to abolish slavery in the British dominions, the sum of £20,000,000 sterling was willingly sacrificed ; yet slavery was not productive of more misery and death than the opium traffic, nor were Britons more implicated in the former than the latter. In the case before us, however, no compensation-money could be demanded, and only a few light-armed vessels would be required. The lands now employed in the cultivation of the poppy, being necessarily rich and fertile, would, if laid out in the raising of other productions, be equally valuable to the possessors ; and, while the revenue was not diminished, the happiness, health, and industry of the people, would be increased ; in addition to which, the Divine blessing would, doubtless, be doubly bestowed on those who renounced an apparent benefit to themselves in order to extend a real good to others.”

Mr. Majoribanks, President of the Select Committee at Canton, observed in reference to the use of opium by the Chinese,—

“Opium can only be regarded, except when used as a medicine, as a pernicious poison. To any friend of humanity it is a painful subject of contemplation that we should continue to pour this black and envenomed poison into the sources of human happiness. The misery and demoralization occasioned by it are almost beyond belief. Any man who has witnessed its frightful ravages and demoralizing effects in China must feel deeply on this subject.”

A British merchant, in an Essay on the Opium Trade, writes ;—

“There is but one point of difference between the intoxication of ardent spirits and that of opium deserving of particular attention here, and that is the tenfold force with which every argument against the former applies to the latter. There is no slavery on earth to compare with the bondage into which opium casts its victims.”

Mr. Montgomery Martin exclaims—

“Why, the slave-trade was merciful compared with the opium-trade! We did not destroy the bodies of the Africans, for it was our immediate interest to keep them alive ; we did not debase their natures, corrupt their minds, nor destroy their souls. But the opium-seller slays the body, after he has corrupted, degraded, and annihilated the moral being of unhappy sinners ; while every hour is bringing new victims to a Moloch which knows no satiety, and where the English murderer and Chinese suicide vie with each other in offerings at his shrine.”

Captain John Shepperd, recently Chairman of the East India Company, who has often been in China, gave in evidence that—

“The smoking of opium has the most demoralizing effects. To a certain extent it destroys men’s reason and faculties, and shortens life.”

Sir R. Inglis, in the debate on opium in the House of Parliament, April 4, 1843, stated that—

“He held in his hand a statement which had appeared in the ‘Batavian Gazette,’ being an account by an individual who had visited one of the houses where opium was consumed. This individual said, ‘I visited one of the opium-houses, and shall I tell you what I saw in this ante-chamber of hell? I thought it impossible to find anything worse than the results of drinking ardent spirits, but I have succeeded in finding something far worse.’ He says he saw Malays, Chinese, men and women, old and young, in one mass, in one common herd, wallowing in their filth; beastly, sensual, devilish, and this under the eye of a Christian Government.”

Captain Elliot, Her Majesty’s Superintendent of Trade at Canton, pointed out the necessity for the occasional visits of vessels of war, to protect the legal trade, on account of the embarrassments and dangers arising from this illicit commerce. He wrote to Lord Palmerston, Feb. 21, 1837:—

“The fact, that such an article should have grown to be by far the most important part of our import trade, is of itself a source of painful reflection. And the *wide-spreading mischief which the manner of its pursuit has necessarily entailed*, so ably and faithfully represented in some of the papers I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship, aggravates the discomfort of the whole subject.

“And, perhaps, your Lordship may be led to think that a *gradual check to OUR OWN GROWTH AND IMPORTS would be of salutary effect*.

“It cannot be good that the conduct of a great trade should be so dependent upon the steady continuance of a *vast prohibited traffic in an article of vicious luxury*, high in price, and liable to frequent and prodigious fluctuation. *In a mere commercial point of view, therefore, I believe it is susceptible of proof, that the gradual diversion of British capital into other channels of employment than this, would be attended with advantageous consequences.*”*

* *Vide* “Correspondence relating to China, laid before the Houses of Parliament in 1840.”

And in another letter to Lord Palmerston he says :—

“No man entertains deeper detestation of the disgrace and sin of this forced traffic on the coast of China than the humble individual who signs this despatch. I see little to choose between it and piracy.”

Lord Broughton, when President of the Board of Control, in the debate in Parliament on the opium question, spoke thus :—

“Far be it from me to wish to say anything less than was deserved of the unfortunate results of that traffic, or to palliate them. He could not but deprecate it as a vice, for a great vice it was.”

The Rev. E. B. Squire, who resided several years in China, as an agent of the Church Missionary Society, says of the opium dens in Canton :—

“Never, perhaps, was there a nearer approach to hell upon earth, than within the precincts of these vile hovels, where likewise, gaming is carried on to a great extent.”

He adds :—

“Truly it is an engine in Satan’s hand, and a powerful one ; but let it never be forgotten that a nation professing Christianity supplies the means, and that nation is England, through her possessions in Hindostan.”

Again, the Rev. Howard Malcolm, of the United States, says :—

“The great blot upon foreigners at Canton, though not upon all, is the opium trade. We have little reason to wonder at the reluctance of China to extend her intercourse with foreigners, when such intercourse brings upon her pestilence, poverty, and crime, and disturbance. No person can describe the horrors of the opium trade. That the government of British India should be the prime abettors of this abominable traffic, is wrong, as we continue to introduce into China with one hand

our transcendantly pure Christian Gospel, but with the other the destructive and demoralizing opium drug! If ever the enterprising spirit of our merchants shall succeed in breaking through the barrier which ancient jealousies and habits still interpose to a free intercourse with the interior of this vast empire, it will be by making the Christian missionary his pioneer, and by availing himself of that powerful impulse which religious zeal in a righteous cause can alone confer and sustain. The examples of disinterestedness and universal good-will which our Christian missionaries and physicians have exhibited in union, in China, in the free hospitals already established at Canton and Hong Kong, are calculated to soften the obdurate hearts, and have not been altogether thrown away, even upon the lawless and hostile population of Southern China. It can hardly be necessary to add that whatever thus raises the moral, religious, and social character of foreigners in China, must tend, in an eminent degree, to a juster appreciation amongst the Chinese of the advantages generally of foreign intercourse."

From different parts of a narrative of an exploratory visit to each of the Consular cities of China, in the Years 1844, 1845, 1846, by the Rev. George Smith, now Bishop of Victoria. I extract the following passages:—

"Our own vessel, though not engaged in the opium trade, carried 750 chests, which were discharged on board one of the receiving ships stationed at Woo Sung. My Chinese boy more than once asked me whether I knew there was opium on board, and what I should say in reply to the Chinese, if, after hearing me speak about *Yay-soo-taou-le*, 'Jesus' doctrines,' they should ask why I had come in a ship that brought opium, of which so many of his countrymen ate and perished?"

Again, at page 499:—

"The Chinese as a Government have been, during the last half century, opposed to the introduction of opium into the country. Individual officers have, for the sake of peace or bribes, doubtless connived at the evil; but, as a *Government*, they have prohibited the introduction of opium by that inalienable, inviolable right, by which every Govern-

ment can exclude articles of contraband trade. Consistently with the prohibited importation of opium, its growth has been interdicted in China itself, in six provinces of which it has at various times been clandestinely raised. The Chinese Government have always had it in their power to exclude foreign opium, by the simple process of encouraging the growth on their own soil. They have, however, pursued the opposite course ; no slight evidence that the moral evils greatly, if not principally, influenced the prohibition of opium by the Imperial Government."

Did space permit, I would gladly quote the whole of the 29th chapter of the Bishop's work. He thus describes the opium smokers :—

" They formed a motley group of sallow, sunken cheeks, and glassy, watery eyes, as, with idiotic look and vacant laugh, they volunteered items of information, and described the process of their own degradation. There was to be seen the youth who, just emerging from boyhood, had only commenced the practice and was now hastening to premature old age ; there was the man of middle age, who, for half his life a victim of this indulgence, was bearing to an early grave the wreck of his worn-out constitution ; there was the elderly man, whose iron strength of frame could better ward off the slow but certain advances of decrepitude, but whose bloated cheek and vacant stare told of the struggle that was raging within ; there was, again, the early spectacle of old age ; and the man of sixty lived to tell of forty years consumed in the seductions of this vice. They all assented to the evils of their course, and professed a desire to be freed from its power. They all complained of loss of appetite—of the agonizing craving of the early morning—of prostration of strength,—and of increasing feebleness ; but said they could not gain resolution to overcome the habit. They all stated its intoxicating effects to be worse than those of drunkenness, and described the extreme dizziness and vomiting which ensued, so as to incapacitate them for exertion. The oldest man, with strange inconsistency and candour expatiated on the misery of his course. For three years he had abandoned the indulgence, at the period of Commissioner Lin's edicts and compulsory prohibition of opium. At the conclusion of the British war, the foreign opium ships came unmolested to Amoy ; he opened an opium shop for gain, and soon fell a victim to the drug. Some of the

Chinese asked us to give them medicine to cure them of the habit. On hearing that I was an *English missionary*, they exposed the inconsistency of my rebuking them for smoking opium, while my countrymen brought them the means of indulging it.

“The opium drain is severely felt in China, the more patriotic of their scholars speak of the rapid decay of their cities from their ancient wealth and splendour as the consequence of the system. This subject is the great difficulty that will, sooner or later, embarrass the two Governments. Let then the Christian legislators of Great Britain look to this evil, and boldly confront the danger. Let Indian revenues be collected from other sources than from a nation whose Government we have humbled to the dust, and incapacitated for the vigorous enforcement of her laws. Britain has displayed her power, the giant’s attribute. Let her also exhibit the noble spectacle of a Christian Government, superior to the arts of oppression, and actuated by a regard for the best interests of mankind.”

Sir George Staunton, than whom there is no higher authority in questions pertaining to China, thus expresses his view of the subject:—

“Every friend of humanity must surely desire that the revenues raised from the vast and fertile fields of India should be derived from a produce beneficial to man, rather than from one which, however ingeniously defended, or at least palliated, unquestionably leads him morally, as well as physically, to his destruction. It is mere trifling to defend the cultivation of opium on the score of its utility in medicine. The drug used in medicine, and that prepared for the purpose of a vicious luxury, are well known to be totally and essentially different. The same may be said of the attempt to place the abuse of opium upon the same level with the abuse of spirituous liquors. It is the main purpose in the former case; but in the latter it is only the exception. Nor can the opium farms be fairly justified on the ground of their supposed analogy to our gin-shops. It is true that our government tolerates gin-shops, but at least it does not build and maintain them. I cannot, therefore, but think that if Mr. Ball shall have decided the Government of India to persevere in their encouragement of the cultivation of the grateful, and at least innoxious, tea-shrubs, in place of the seducing, but poisonous poppy, he will be entitled to the cordial thanks of every genuine philanthropist.”

But what will our countrymen think of an extract from Mons. Huc's "Chinese Empire," published at Paris in 1855 :—

"When we set off again, we remarked that our escort was much more numerous than usual. Our palanquins proceeded between a double line of lancers on horseback, whom it appeared the Governor of Tchoung-tcheou had given us to protect us from robbers. These robbers were the smugglers of opium, and we were informed that for several years past they had come in great numbers to the province of Yun-nan, and even as far as Birmah, to fetch the opium sent to them from India. They came back with their contraband goods quite openly, but armed to the teeth, in order to be able to defy the mandarins who might oppose their passage. Instances were mentioned to us, of murderous conflicts in which both sides had fought desperately, the one to keep, the other to get, the smuggled goods; for Chinese soldiers are only valiant against robbers and smugglers when they hope to get possession of the booty themselves. When these armed bands of opium traders meet any rich travellers on the road, they seldom fail to do a little more business by attacking and plundering them.

"Everybody is aware of the unfortunate passion of the Chinese for opium, and of the war this fatal drug occasioned in 1840, between China and England. Its importance in the Celestial Empire is of rather recent date, but there is no trade in the world the progress of which has been so rapid. Two agents of the East India Company were the first who, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, conceived the deplorable thought of sending to China the opium of Bengal. Colonel Watson and Vice-President Wheeler are the persons to whom the Chinese are indebted for this new system of poisoning. History has preserved the name of Parmentier; why should it not also those of these two men? Whoever has done either great good or great harm to mankind ought to be remembered, to excite either gratitude or indignation.

"At present China purchases annually of the English opium to the amount of seven millions sterling; the traffic is contraband, but it is carried on along the whole coast of the empire, and especially in the neighbourhood of the five ports which have been opened to the Europeans. Large fine vessels, armed like ships of war, serve as depots to the English merchants, and the trade is protected, not only by the English Government, but also by the mandarins of the Celestial Empire. The

law which forbids the smoking of opium under pain of death, has indeed never been repealed; but every body smokes away quite at his ease notwithstanding. Pipes, lamps, and all the apparatus for smoking opium, are sold publicly in every town, and the mandarins themselves are the first to violate the law and give this bad example to the people, even in the courts of justice. During the whole of our long journey through China, we met with but one tribunal where opium was not smoked openly and with impunity.

“At Canton, at Macao, and at other ports open to European commerce, we have heard people attempt to justify the trade in opium, by the assertion that its effects were not so bad as was supposed; and that, as with fermented liquors and many other substances, the abuse only was injurious. A moderate use of opium, it was said, was rather beneficial to the feeble and lymphatic Chinese. Those who speak thus, however, are commonly dealers in opium, and it is easy to suppose that they seek by all possible arguments to quiet their consciences, which can hardly fail to tell them they are committing a bad action. But the spirit of trade and thirst of gold completely blind these men, who, with this exception, are generous in their conduct, keep their purses always open to the unfortunate, and are prompt in every good work. These rich speculators live habitually in the midst of gaiety and splendour, and think little of the frightful consequences of their detestable traffic. When from their superb palace-like mansions on the sea shore, they see their beautiful vessels returning from the Indies, gliding majestically over the waves, and entering with all their sails spread into the port, they do not reflect that the cargoes borne in these superb clippers are bringing ruin and desolation to numbers of families. With the exception of some rare smokers who, thanks to a quite exceptional organisation, are able to restrain themselves within the bounds of moderation, all others advance rapidly towards death, after having passed through the successive stages of idleness, debauchery, poverty, the ruin of their physical strength, and the complete prostration of their intellectual and moral faculties. Nothing can stop a smoker who has made much progress in this habit; incapable of attending to any kind of business, insensible to every event—the most hideous poverty, and the sight of a family plunged into despair and misery,—cannot rouse him to the smallest exertion, so complete is the disgusting apathy in which he is sunk.

“For several years past some of the southern provinces have been actively engaged in the cultivation of the poppy and the fabrication of

opium. The English merchants confess that the Chinese product is of excellent quality, though inferior to that of Bengal; but the English opium suffers so much adulteration before it reaches the pipe of the smoker, that it is not in reality as good as what the Chinese themselves prepare. The latter, however, though delivered perfectly pure, is sold at a low price, and only consumed by the smokers of the lowest class. That of the English, notwithstanding its adulteration, is very dear, and reserved to smokers of distinction; a caprice which can only be accounted for from the vanity of the rich Chinese, who would think it beneath them to smoke tobacco of native production, and not of a ruinous price; that which comes from a long way off must evidently be preferable.

“‘Tutto il mondo è fatto come la nostra famiglia.’

“It may be easily foreseen, however, that this state of things cannot last; and it is probable that the Chinese will soon cultivate the poppy on a large scale, and make at home all the opium necessary for their consumption. The English cannot possibly offer an equally good article at the same price; and when the fashion, at present in their favour, shall have altered, they will no longer be able to sustain the competition. When that happens, British India will experience a terrible blow, that may possibly even be felt in the English metropolis, and then, who knows whether the passion of the Chinese for this fatal drug may not decline. It would be by no means surprising if, when they can procure opium easily, and at a low price, they should gradually abandon this degrading and murderous habit.

“It is said that the people of London, and many of the great manufacturing towns of England, have been for some time addicted to the use of opium, both in its liquid and solid form; but the circumstance has attracted little attention, though the progress of the habit is alarming. Curious and instructive would it be indeed, if we should one day see the English going to buy opium in the ports of China, and their ships bringing back from the Celestial Empire this deleterious stuff to poison England. Well might we exclaim in such a case, ‘Leave judgment to God!’”

To add to such authorities—European, American, and Chinese—would be superfluous: I will therefore conclude my extracts with another of the

emphatic statements of Mr. Montgomery Martin, who, be it remembered, was Her Majesty's Treasurer in China, and returned to England to lay before Her Majesty's Government a Report on the state of our affairs in that country. In the Minutes of Evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, on commercial relations with China (1847) are to be found the following question and answer:—

“ 3941. In what respect do you think the trade injurious to us in our relations with China ?

“ 3942. Politically, with reference to our position with the Government of China. Had France, or America, or Russia, granted us an island on their coast, as a commercial station, and had they prohibited the use of opium, believing it to be injurious, we dare not in that case have made it a smoking-shop for the empire ; and I would not act to the Chinese Government in a different manner than I would act to a government in Europe. Then, socially speaking, I believe it is the duty of this Government to uphold moral principles, and to disseminate religious truth, and she cannot do that with one hand, while on the other she is introducing into China an amount of opium which furnishes 17 grains a-day to each of three millions of people, and which, in the language of Mr. Lay, her Majesty's late Consul at Amoy, is ‘ham-stringing the nation:’ that was the expression of Mr. Lay. I think it is desolating China, corrupting its government, and bringing the fabric of that extraordinary empire to a state of more rapid dissolution. Commercially speaking, it is injurious to us, because it prevents the extension of our manufactures in China. Four or five mercantile houses are engaged in that traffic, and derive a large amount of income from it, but the trade in England is materially cramped by the extension of opium consumption in China, to the extent of at least four millions sterling.”

That the stigma of smuggling is peculiarly British I prove by the facts of the Spaniards prohibiting the export of opium from Manilla to China, and the Dutch from Batavia. The Americans having, like

ourselves, entered into a treaty by which smuggling the drug is prohibited, no vessel of the United States dare cover the contraband article with their star-spangled banner in the presence of their Consular authorities. The red-cross flag of England, my Lord, flies over the ships of other countries while engaged in their buccaneering traffic, and our national faith is not only habitually broken, but was especially dishonoured, when so late as September, 1855, the English opium smugglers, at anchor at Foo Chofoo, saluted with their cannon his Excellency Sir J. Bowring, Her Britannic Majesty's representative in China.

Nor let any one imagine that England is allowed to encourage crime with impunity. Retribution is overtaking us, and the plague is spreading, especially among our working classes, and with the votaries of fashionable life. Besides the use of opium in other ways, I am informed by an eye-witness that miscreants, who probably learned the trade in China or India, have established smoking dens in London, at which victims are intoxicated cheaper than with gin.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. ALEXANDER.

LETTER V.

THE ILLEGALITY OF THE OPIUM MONOPOLY, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS SUPPRESSION.

MY LORD,

The last point which I undertake to assert is, that not only is the opium traffic contraband in China, but that the opium monopoly in India is as contrary to the laws of this kingdom, as to the dictates of humanity, and every sound principle of international policy and commercial economy.

To maintain this proposition, I turn to the Act of Parliament 3 & 4 William IV, cap. 85, entitled "An Act for effecting an arrangement with the East India Company, and for the better government of His Majesty's Indian territories (28th August 1833,) by the third section of which is enacted, "that the exclusive right of trading with the dominions of the Emperor of China, and of trading in tea, continued to the said Company by the Act of the fifty-third year of King George the Third, shall cease."

Had legislation stopped here, it would have left no alternative but for obedience to be rendered according to the literal meaning of a positive command. But not only did Parliament enact that the exclusive right of trading with China should cease, it went on by the fourth section of the same Act further to prescribe, that "the said Company shall

with all convenient speed after the 22nd day of April 1834, close their commercial business and make sale of *all* their merchandise, stores and effects, at home and abroad, distinguished in their account books as commercial assets, and *all* their warehouses, lands, tenements, hereditaments, and property whatsoever, which may not be retained for the Government of the said territories, and get in all debts due to them on account of the commercial branch of their affairs, and reduce their commercial establishments as the same shall become necessary, and discontinue and abstain from *all* commercial business which shall not be incident to the closing of their actual concerns, and to the conversion into money of the property hereinto-before directed to be sold, or which shall not be carried on for the purposes of the said Government."

So fully in earnest was the mind of the nation upon this important question: so determined in its deliberate wisdom to put an end to the anomaly of a Sovereign power being engaged in speculations and unseemly competition with the interests of its subjects, that by Section VI. of the above-named Act, the Board of Control was authorised "to superintend, direct, and control the sale of the said merchandise, stores and effects, and other property herein-before directed to be sold, and the said Board shall and may appoint such officers as shall be necessary to attend upon the said Board during the winding up of the commercial business of the said Company."

Such was the law introduced by the Minister of the Crown to the House of Commons, carried through the Peers, and established by the concurrent authority of the three constitutional powers of the realm. Its purposes and provisions were so fully apprehended, that whatever fell under the vigilant observation of the people of this country, was, with legal promptitude carried into effect. The East India Company parted with the finest commercial navy the world had ever seen, and pensioned the officers of that department of their service: trade property was sold, accounts closed, and warehouses disposed of; the delegated sovereignty of the East was raised to its proper dignity, and commerce, relieved from the trammels in which it had been guided and restrained since the year 1600, appeared to have a fair field for free trade, to the reciprocal benefit of Great Britain, China, and our empire in India. Parliament and people, happy in this as in other instances, to think that an important question had been satisfactorily settled, confided in the obedient integrity of the executive authorities, and turned their attention to other subjects. That this national confidence has not been justified is manifest in the fact, that though the East India Company relinquished trade in tea, and all that was deemed competitive in England, they illegally retained two monopolies by which free trade and production were most effectually repressed abroad. By the salt monopoly, the use of one of the principal supports of human existence is restricted in quantity and enhanced in price to 150,000,000 of

our Indian fellow subjects; and by the monopoly of opium, a poisonous drug is cultivated for, and sold by, the East India Company, for the purpose of so “exclusively trading with the dominions of the Emperor of China,” that no other opium shall be brought into competition.

It is also to be remarked, that although under the 33rd George III, cap. 52, sec. cxxxvi, the inland trade in salt, beetle nut, tobacco, and rice, was granted to the East India Company, that of opium was not included—by what right, therefore, the local Government maintained the odious monopoly of this drug, or continued that of salt, after the Act 3 & 4 of William IV, cap. 85, was passed; is not to be discovered by a perusal of the laws under which India is, or should be, governed. All that appears by them is, that of the two monopolies now in existence, that of opium was never granted by the law of this country, and both it and the monopoly of salt have been exercised with more intense illegality since the year 1834, when the present corporation ceased to be “the United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies,” and by virtue of Sect. cxi, 3 & 4 William IV, cap. 85, became the “East India Company” without either commercial charter, rights, privileges, or designation.

If ambiguities were to be recognised in Acts of Parliament, I confess that one might be suspected in the concluding words of Sect. iv, 3 & 4 William IV, cap. 85. To show, however, that “the purposes of Government” there meant, are only such as might be

lawfully carried on after the cessation of *all* trade and the closing of *all* commercial accounts, reference may be made to the explanatory note in the margin of the Act, which, though not of judicial authority, may in all fairness be taken to express the mind of Parliament, as understood by the House and its own officers, in these words, "Company to close their commercial business, and to sell their property not retained for Government;" this obvious meaning is borne out by the evident necessity of so far qualifying the preceding part of the section, as to enable the Company to retain unsold their house in Leadenhall Street, and the various Government houses, public offices, and depots, which every State must possess for transaction of its business, safe keeping of clothing and arms for troops, ordnance material, provisions, and grain.

It is only on the supposition that the East India Company must have something to adduce in extenuation of their flagrant violation of the laws of their country, and because I cannot discover any other passage in the Acts of Parliament that could be used as a peg on which to hang a plausibility in explanation of their conduct, that I enter so fully upon what might otherwise appear unworthy of argument. Let me, however, if possible, exhaust the subject.

My argument is strengthened by the 5th section of the above-named Act of William IV, which provides that "the Company may sell at the sales of their own goods and merchandise by this Act described, or authorised to be sold, such goods and merchandise

the property of other persons, as they may now lawfully sell at their public sales." By section 4, no commercial business, and consequently no sales, are permitted to the Company except for the purpose of winding up their trading business: by section 5, they may sell at such sales, but at no others, the goods of other persons: therefore, even though opium should be incidentally included in this permission, it is plainly only allowable to sell it at such sales as are authorised by the Act itself—whereas it is a patent fact that the sales of opium are a distinct thing, and in no way connected with the sale of any other merchandize.

But admitting, merely on behalf of the East India Company, that a British Parliament could have been so lost to all feelings of legislative dignity, as purposely to have left open a door for opium smuggling to be driven through its Act, the futility of such proceeding is palpable to every mind acquainted with the fundamental principle of our common law, that nothing can be recognised as legitimate which is contrary to reason and religion. That the opium traffic is under every aspect and in every incident contrary to both, is simply proved by the monopoly in India being arbitrary and impolitic, and the trade in China contraband, carried on against the known laws of the empire, and deeply dyed with the blood of its victims and opponents. Reason and religion alike condemn its existence and its crime, and both are happily combined in the dicta of the great commentator on our laws. In Vol. I, of Blackstone,

and in the third section, which treats of "The Laws of England," we find among the rules given for the construction of Statutes, that "One part of a Statute must be so construed by another, that the whole may (if possible) stand : *ut res magis valeat, quam pereat.*" We find also these words : "Lastly, Acts of Parliament that are impossible are no validity; and if there arise out of them collaterally any absurd consequences, manifestly contradictory to common reason, they are, with regard to these collateral consequences, void. . . . Where some collateral matter arises out of the general words, and happens to be unreasonable, then the judges are in decency to conclude that this consequence was not foreseen by Parliament; and therefore they are at liberty to expound the statute by equity, and only *quoad hoc* disregard it." Now, to such a construing of our laws, I gladly commit the few concluding words of the section of our Act of Parliament, well assured by common reason, and every idea of decency, that it was not foreseen by Parliament, that an Act for the cessation of legal commerce was to convey either sanction or authority for the most outrageous contrabandism by which humanity has ever been disgraced.

The limits of a pamphlet oblige me to omit from these letters much that I desire to bring to the knowledge and consideration of its readers, who yet require to be informed of the atrocities of the opium trade in Cochin China, Siam, Borneo, Sumatra, and on the coasts and islands of the Malay peninsula; of the demoralization that follows upon the gambling and *respondentia* transactions connected with Government

sales in Calcutta, and opium speculations at Bombay, as ruinous to individuals as are, in this country, the risks upon horse racing to the victims of the turf. I could bring forward much more evidence from our Parliamentary Blue Books, and also show to my countrymen how such distinguished men as the Count de Montalembert* and other French and American writers hold up to the reprobation of mankind a traffic, the opprobrium of which is attached to our nation by the suicidal impolicy of the East India Company and the oversight or connivance of a Minister of the Crown.

But it may, and I presume it will, be asked, what is the East India Company to do for the revenue derived from this source? I might answer, Let the merchants and Parliament of Great Britain answer that question; or, taking a higher ground, point to an example in our Bibles, recorded in the Second Book of Chronicles, xxv. 9,—“And Amaziah said, But what shall we do for the two hundred talents? And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.” On the authority of parties interested in the present system, *i. e.* opium agents, whose writings I have before me, I find that the poppy requires the richest lands in India for its cultivation, and is a plant of extreme delicacy, and liable to injury in many ways from variations of temperature, changes of wind, a greater or less quantity of dew, and other frequently occurring causes. The soil best suited for its growth is the best adapted for the richest productions of

* “The Political Future of England,” by Count de Montalembert, p. 219.

the East,—such as sugar, cotton, indigo, and others, for which this country can give her manufactures in exchange. Why, my Lord, it seems to be an insult to the administrative wisdom and moral feelings of our nation to entertain for a moment such a supposition, as that in the undeveloped resources of the richest portion of the globe, inhabited by upwards of 150,000,000 intelligent subjects of our gracious Sovereign, there are not sufficient means of raising revenue* without having recourse to an expedient as degrading as it is uncertain. By such political economy we are exposed, not only to the contempt of true statesmen and philanthropists, but to that righteous retribution which both Divine Revelation and the whole history of mankind show to be inextricably involved in every unholy system based upon false principles. The East India Company appear blind to the dangerous precariousness of the profits upon which they rely, and to the fact that with the growth of their monopoly has also grown the impending element of its destruction, either by success of the demand now made in the name of justice and humanity for the abolition of opium smuggling, or by the eventually certain climax of its perishing under the weight and consequences of accumulated misery and crime.

Let, however, the East India Company diminish its advances for poppy cultivation by twenty or twenty-five per cent per annum, maintaining its own

* See on this important subject Colonel Arthur Cotton's pamphlet, published by Richardson & Co., "Profits on British Capital expended on Indian Public Works;" also that officer's and Mr. Bourn's pamphlets, "Public Works in India."

imposed restrictions upon the growth, and in a few years there would not be produced more than sufficient opium for the purposes of legal trade and justifiable uses. Their government would thus free itself from the odium of an illegal and impolitic monopoly; and, acting in accordance with the right principle, which I quoted from a paper of their own publication, would afford opportunity for private capital to be employed in those districts from whence monopoly excludes competition, and where the wealth of the Government Treasury excites an unnatural development; in the ordinary course of events, this would soon subside, and the legal cultivation and trade in opium fall to their level in the relative value and importance of sound commercial enterprise. Most deeply are our manufacturers and merchants interested in this question; for there is not a poppy field in which cotton might not be grown, nor a chest of opium provided in India that does not render Manchester and the trading cities and towns of Great Britain more dependent upon the American market for slave produce from the shores of the Mississippi.

One sentence, my Lord, from a despatch of the East India Company, would, if acted upon in sincerity, settle the whole question:—

“WERE IT POSSIBLE TO PREVENT THE USE OF THE DRUG ALTOGETHER, EXCEPT STRICTLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF MEDICINE, WE WOULD GLADLY DO IT IN COMPASSION TO MANKIND.”

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

R. ALEXANDER.

WHAT IS THE OPIUM TRADE

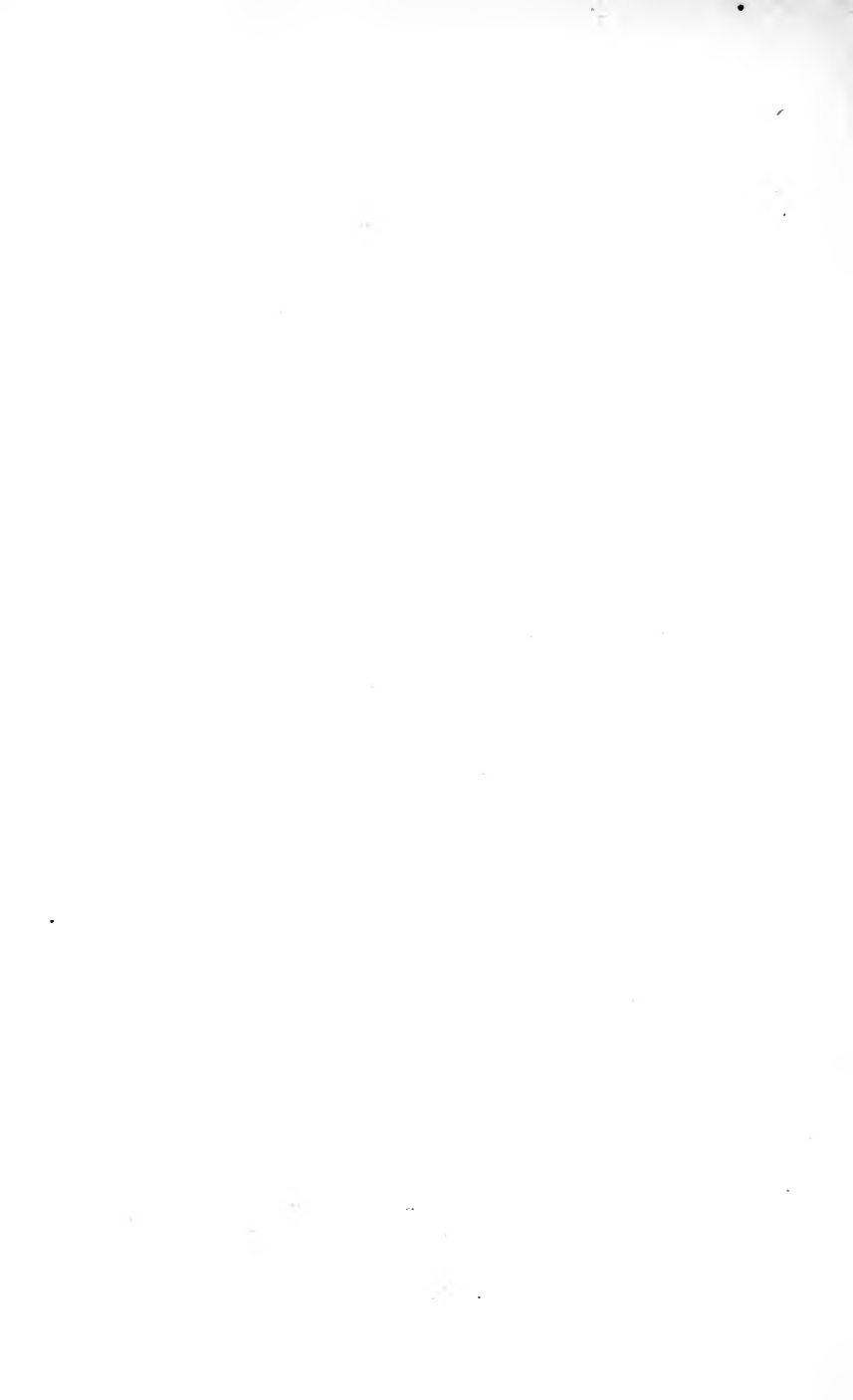
BY DONALD MATHESON, ESQ.

FORMERLY OF CHINA.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE AND CO.

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MDCCCLVII.



WHAT IS THE OPIUM TRADE?

As so little is known by the public generally on the subject of the trade in Opium with China, and as erroneous and exaggerated views have been put forth in the absence of correct information, it is hoped that the following plain statement of facts may not seem uncalled for at the present time.

The first inquiry which naturally suggests itself is,—What is opium-smoking, for which this extensive trade exists?

OPIUM-SMOKING, then, is not, as some suppose, similar to tobacco-smoking, where the smoke is merely taken into the mouth and forthwith puffed out again. In the case of opium, the fumes are inhaled into the lungs by a deep-drawn breath, and retained as long as possible. There they “act on the nervous fibres that are spread over the extensive membrane which lines every cell of the lung,” and the effect of this process on the human system is even more injurious than that of *eating* opium. In proof of this it may be stated, that the regular smoker in China arrives at the same stage of delirium by the use of about one-third of what is required by a regular opium-eater in Turkey.* When a Chinese is about to partake of the indulgence, he retires to a private apartment, and, reclining on a couch, takes his pipe, made for the purpose, and placing upon the bowl of it a little opium, about the size of a pea, he sets it

* Dr. Smith, while at Smyrna, took pains to observe what the doses of opium taken by the Turks in general were. He found that three drachms in a day was a common quantity among the larger eaters of it, but that they could take six drachms a day without mischief.—Rees' *Encyclopædia*.

on fire at a small lamp, and then throwing himself back on the couch, inhales the smoke at short intervals in a listless mood, till he has attained the desired stimulus, or delirium, as the case may be. If he is a confirmed victim, he usually falls into a profound but restless sleep, till the effects of the indulgence have passed off. In the latter case, the craving soon returns, and with it all the languor and misery and pain, till the next period of relief.

Evidence as to the pernicious effects of this practice on the population is sufficiently abundant.* Nevertheless, being chiefly gathered from what has been witnessed in the public smoking-shops, and among the lower orders, it must be admitted that this is but one phase of the case. The writer has inspected some of these opium dens, and although more quiet prevails there than in a London gin-palace, the grovelling sensuality is greatly more painful to the visitor. On the other hand, as practised in private houses, there is not the same outrage on public decency as in the case of drunkenness. The victim quietly sleeps off his debauch. But those who would compare this with drinking wine, or ale, or even spirits, in moderation, must be unwilling to look at it in its true light. The only comparison that can be made is between opium-smoking and drunkenness; and we all know the wretchedness which that produces in our own land. Opium, however, is unquestion-

* Dr. Little states, that in 1847 there was in Singapore a population of 40,000 Chinese, male and female, of whom about 15,000 of both sexes smoked opium; the average quantity being about twenty grains' weight per day for each person, although ranging from 10 to 200 grains (the latter in rare cases) per day. In the course of his investigations he visited eighty licensed smoking-shops, and examined 603 persons who smoked opium. The rate of wages for a labourer there is about six dollars per month, or one shilling per day, and this sum is also about the average sum daily expended on opium by the Chinese in that settlement; the poorer victims in some cases expending their whole earnings. Some of these had been addicted to the vice for twenty-five years; but a much shorter period produced sickness and emaciation. He states as the result of his experience, that "the habitual use of opium not only renders the life of the man miserable, but is a powerful means of shortening that life." He adds, "I cannot suppose, after what has been written, that one individual can be found to deny the evil effects of the habit, the physical disease it produces, with the prostration of mind and the corruption of morals." See Dr. Little's pamphlet on the Habitual Use of Opium in Singapore.

ably more seductive, and more tenacious in its grasp, than spirits.

Dr. Little remarks,—“A state of excitement, or one of sedative tranquillity, is what is primarily desired by the opium-smoker, and which, at first, is effected by a small quantity of the drug. That small quantity soon loses its effect, and to produce the same amount of excitement, the dose must be doubled, and that again increased, till I have known the original quantity multiplied one hundred-fold.”

The writer has known men who have smoked opium for many years without apparent injury, just as in this country we know men who consume an alarming quantity of wine or spirits apparently unscathed. Still, the Chinese, heathens as they are, unquestionably look upon the indulgence as a vice, and not as a harmless luxury. There are various ways in which the habit takes root. A friend, who is suffering from headaches, is recommended to try a whiff or two of the pipe, and finding it bring relief, he recurs to it again and again, till the habit is formed, and he is on the downward road to ruin. Others, again, take a whiff or two to stimulate the faculties for the business of the day, or to soothe the nervous irritation at the close of it. Others begin the practice, as our young men at home, by imitating the fashionable vices of their seniors. But in whatever way the habit is formed, it has a fearful tendency to grow with what it feeds upon. The truth is, the saying that a Chinese smokes the “black dirt,” is the same as that among ourselves, that such a one is “fond of his glass.” Whatever hopes of immunity may mingle with present appearances, we all feel that it forebodes future evil.

Of some cases which have come under the writer's observation, two may be mentioned. An opium-broker, called Bighead, gave the following testimony:—“He had been in the habit of smoking the drug for three years past. He commenced by tasting samples as a dealer, and cannot now give it up. He knows it is very bad for him—everybody knows that—but he cannot help himself. The Chinese say, when a man smokes opium, ‘that he is making his own coffin.’ Formerly he had been strong and muscular, now his arms and legs are thin and

weak, and his face of a black unhealthy colour. A Chinaman that smokes opium can do without rice (*i. e. meals*) for a time, and without clothes too, but not without opium ; if he does not get this, he wishes himself dead."

The career of a young man, named Keet-Kwan, was watched with painful interest. He was a fine-looking man of about twenty, with a wife and family, and with a singularly intelligent, honest, and amiable countenance. He was employed by a mercantile house in China to go to Bombay to inspect the season's supply of the drug. A year passed, and he returned from Bombay. His face had a darker complexion, and he was somewhat thinner, which might have been occasioned by ordinary ill-health. He went the next year on a similar voyage, and on his return the second time he was much altered for the worse. His fine full eye was sunk, and flashed wildly,—a livid hue appeared about his lips, and his whole face was discoloured, as if he had been half-strangled. He had become a confirmed opium-smoker. I remarked to his father—"Your son smokes opium, I fear." He replied—"Ah ! that is a bad business, we need not talk of that ; I would give a hundred dollars for physic to cure my son, were that possible !" Two months after this interview Keet-Kwan again made his appearance, but now his eyes were lustreless, and a watery rheum was secreted from them ; his features were thin, and had a look of great delicacy, and his nose sharpened ; his neck had lost all the volume of muscle which it formerly showed ; his body was attenuated, and he stooped considerably. Two years later I saw Keet-Kwan once more. It was now four years since he commenced the habit. He seemed to have grown twenty years older in the interval ! He was quite emaciated, but retained his amiable expression. He was not a bad character. He was a quiet respectable man, engaged in business ; but he was hurrying to the grave, a victim to this fatally fascinating drug.

But the injury done by this habit is not confined to the individual ; it brings families to misery and ruin ; it tempts to crime, and, being illegal, it leads to the demoralization of those engaged in the retail trade ; and what is worst of all, it is

spreading rapidly. In proof of this, two extracts may be given from letters lately received from most trustworthy witnesses in China. The first is from the Rev. W. C. Burns, who has been more than eight years in that country, and who writes from the neighbourhood of a station for opium vessels, called Namoa, where the demoralizing influence of the traffic on the population is more seriously felt than further inland. He writes, under date July 16, 1856 :—"The ravages of opium we meet with here on every hand, and the deterioration of the morals of the people generally, I cannot but ascribe, in great part, to the use of this ensnaring and destructive drug. When will measures be taken by those in power to lay an arrest on the opium traffic, which is inflicting such indescribable injury on this people, and which threatens in its progress, by its direct, and still more by its indirect effects—poverty and anarchy—to sweep away a great part of this nation from the face of the earth?"

The second extract is from the Rev. Carstairs Douglas, of Amoy, who had been little more than a year in China at the date of his letter, namely, August 21, 1856. He writes :—"Friends at home often ask me about that question (opium-smoking). I have been here too little time to say much upon it. We do see plainly that the vice is exceedingly prevalent and destructive, and that it is steadily on the increase. The nature and effects of the trade more and more seem to me to be like those of the liquor traffic at home, with the additional element of unlawfulness. We also see that about the most common objection brought against us when we go out to preach is, that our nation grows, and sends, and sells the opium. It is also worthy of remark, that so many persons are anxious to give up the use of the drug, that the manufacture and sale of pills, which somewhat assist the attempt to give it up, forms almost a self-supporting branch of our mission ; the sales of the medicine for some months past averaging fifteen dollars a month, which just about covers the necessary expenses."

It should also be borne in mind by those who contend that this is only one form of pleasurable stimulus, of which every nation upon earth possesses some kind or other, that opium is not with the Chinese a national stimulant. They have had

their national stimulants of tea, wine, spirits, and tobacco, for aught we know, for the last 4000 years, whereas opium-smoking is not a century old among them, and is as yet most in use in the coast provinces.

Under these circumstances, it need not surprise us that the Chinese Government has prohibited the importation as well as the use of the drug throughout the empire, and although these prohibitions are now little more than formal, there is no reason to doubt its sincerity in the matter, as we may judge from the severe measures enacted against its own subjects in 1838, imprisonment and death being then the penalties for smoking. We have also the Emperor's steady refusal from first to last to legalize the trade, even with the prospect of a large revenue. The official reply of the Emperor Taou Kwang to such representations on the part of our Government has been often quoted:—"It is true I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison; gainseeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes; but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people." At present, however, there is comparative immunity from punishment, and this, with the cheapness of the drug, causes a rapid increase in the number of smokers. Their number is now variously estimated at from three to nine millions.*

OPÍUM, which in Europe is one of our most valuable medicines, but which in China feeds this depraved taste, is manufactured from the juice of the white poppy; a small quantity of which is grown in Turkey and Persia, and in China itself; but it is cultivated to the greatest extent in India, both in the British dominions, and in the Independent native states. The process of cultivation and manufacture may be shortly described. The finest soil is required for the plant. The seed is sown in November. The preparation of the ground, and the subsequent weeding and watering, require much attention. The time for collecting the juice is in February and March. The poppy heads are then cut or scratched with a sharp instrument, and a milky juice exudes, which becomes

* The estimates differ according to the daily average a smoker is supposed to consume, varying from twenty to sixty grains' weight of smokeable extract.

brown in colour and thick in consistency by exposure to the sun and air, and is carefully collected by the farmer and his family. This is the crude opium. In Bengal this is delivered by the small farmer to the agent of the East India Company. It is then prepared under the inspection of these agents for the China market. The principal districts in which the poppy is grown are Patna, Benares, Behar, and Malwa, from which the different kinds of drug derive their names. In Bengal it is grown exclusively for the Government, under severe penalties for any infraction of the laws. It is understood also to be a forced production, which could not be entered upon with profit to the farmers, but for advances in money made by the Government. This point is disputed; but the poppy has undoubtedly occupied some of the finest land formerly used for indigo, sugar, and other produce.

The opium is prepared by the Government agents for the China market, by rolling it into large balls covered with a coating of opium-paste and poppy leaves, so as to exclude the air; it is then packed in chests—forty balls to a chest, and transferred to the Government warehouses at Calcutta, where the drug is put up to auction at the Government sales, of which there are four each season, at intervals of a month, commencing with December or January. At these sales the drug sells at prices varying from 700 to 1600 rupees a chest, containing 116 lbs. weight, and yielding a profit to the Government of from £40 to £120 per chest. Their total revenue from this source, including a transit duty on the Malwa exported from Bombay, is estimated at five millions sterling for the year 1857. Malwa opium is that grown in the Independent native States. It must all pass through Bombay, where, in order to keep down its production, it is charged with a duty of 400 rupees (£40) per chest.

The merchants in India purchase the opium either on their own account or for mercantile houses in China or elsewhere, and it is then shipped in fast-sailing vessels capable of carrying from 500 to 1000 chests. Of late years the monthly steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company have carried cargoes of the drug to China.

The quantity thus imported into China from both sides of India now exceeds 70,000 chests, roughly estimated at £7,000,000 sterling. A portion also goes to Singapore for consumption throughout the islands of the eastern Archipelago.

On arrival in China, say at Hong Kong, the opium is usually transferred to large receiving ships stationary in the harbour, the storing of opium on the island being prohibited by our Government.* From these receiving ships, supplies are forwarded in small schooners and other fast sailing craft to different points on the coast according to the demand.

At these coast stations there is no other trade carried on but that in opium. The drug is transferred from the small schooners to ships permanently anchored there, and the local Chinese Government makes no attempt whatever to interfere, as it is enriched by the bribes or fees of the native dealers. These dealers come off in boats to purchase the opium, bringing silver in payment; but if the station be the outer anchorage of one of the free ports, such as Shanghae, Fuh-Chow, Amoy, or Canton, the sale is usually made on shore, in exchange for silver or Chinese produce, and an order given on the ship for delivery of the quantity sold.

The opium being thus conveyed into the country by the native dealers, it undergoes a process of boiling down to fit it for smoking. This reduces the weight one-half, so that one chest of the drug yields only half a chest of smokeable matter. It is then retailed at smoking-shops, or purchased by the wealthier classes for use at home. The laws against smoking are now so completely in abeyance, that the smoking shops in the free ports are almost as numerous as our own public-houses. Although this freedom from legal restraint exists, there is no question that the moral feeling of the Chinese Government and people is against the indulgence, and it is this which contributes in some measure to keep down the consumption.

Let us now trace as shortly as possible the course of this trade. Before the year 1800, only a small *legal* trade in opium was carried on with China, but in that year the drug was made *contraband* by the Chinese Government. This was done in consequence of a memorial from a leading statesman, who

* Since the above was printed, this statement has been found incorrect. For some years past the prohibition has been removed, and Opium is now stored largely on the island of Hong Kong.

makes it "a subject of deep regret that the vile dirt of foreign countries should be received in exchange for the commodities and the money of the Empire, and fearing lest the practice of smoking opium should spread among all the people of the inner land to the waste of their time and destruction of their property," he requests that "the sale of the drug should be prohibited, and that offenders should be made amenable to punishment." In spite of this the annual importations rose gradually from 2000 chests in 1800 to 5000 in 1820. Till 1820 opium had been mixed up with the legal merchandise at the port of Canton, but in that year the authorities again became alarmed at the extent of the traffic, and obliged the merchants to give security that no opium was on board before the ship could discharge her cargo at Whampoa; this led to the storing of it in receiving ships at Lintin at the mouth of the Canton river, and this system continued till the year 1834, when the importations exceeded 20,000 chests. During the period from 1820 to 1834 occasional collisions took place between the native smugglers and the Chinese authorities, arising out of disputes as to the amount of fees, but none occurred between that Government and the British receiving ships. In continuing this narrative, we quote from Williams' "Middle Kingdom":—"Towards the close of the East India Company's charter, in 1834, the contraband trade in opium, off the Bogue and along the coast eastward, had assumed a regular character. The fees paid for connivance at Canton were understood, and the highest persons in the province were not ashamed to participate in the profits of the trade. The attempts to sell it along the eastern coast had been mostly successful, and almost nothing else could be sold. . . . The increasing demand at Namoa and Chinchew (on the coast) led to the frequent despatch of small vessels, one taking the place of another, and finally to stationing receiving ships there, to afford a constant supply. The local authorities, finding their paper edicts quite powerless to drive them away, followed the practice of their fellow-officers at Canton, and winked at the trade for a consideration. It is not, however, right to say that the venality and weakness of these officers invalidated the authenticity of the commands they received from

Court ; however flagitious their conduct in rendering the orders of none effect, it did not prove the insincerity of the Emperor and his ministers in issuing them. By the year 1834 the efforts of the local authorities to suppress the trade, resulted in a periodical issue of vain prohibitions and empty threats of punishment, which did not more plainly exhibit their own weakness in the eyes of the people, than the strength of the appetite in the smokers."

The opium vessels are all well armed, but chiefly as a precaution against pirates, which swarm on that coast. Although there has been more than one serious tragedy in conflict with pirates, there does not appear to have been any actual encounter between the opium vessels and the authorities.

During the years 1837 and 1838 attempts were made by some British merchants to smuggle the drug into the port of Canton, which led to serious collisions and disturbances on the river. Captain Elliot, H. M. Superintendent of Trade, took measures, along with the Chinese authorities, to put a stop to these highly irregular proceedings on the part of a few, and these measures proved effectual. But meanwhile the Imperial Court at Peking was organizing plans of a much more extensive kind to annihilate the whole trade, and to stop the smoking of the drug. A Chinese statesman of the name of Heu Naetse sent up a memorial to the Emperor, praying that opium might be legalized, as the best method of dealing with an unavoidable evil. Two other statesmen, Choo Tsun and Heu Kew memorialized the Emperor in favour of an opposite course, requesting that the existing laws should be put in force with the utmost rigour. The prohibitory counsels prevailed with the Emperor, and although these measures utterly failed, it has been well said by a writer in the *North British Review*:—"No man of any humanity can read without a deep and very painful feeling what has been reported of the grief, the dismay, the indignation of men in authority, and the Emperor, on finding that their utmost efforts to save their people were defeated by the craft and the superior maritime force of the European dealers, and by the venality of their own official persons, on the coast." To proceed, the prisons were soon crowded with victims, and death by

strangling was inflicted in several instances on smokers and native dealers. An Imperial Commissioner, Lin, was sent to Canton to proceed against the foreign merchants. On his arrival there, in March 1839, he immediately put the merchants under arrest, compelled them, through H. M. Superintendent of Trade, to deliver up the whole of the opium then on the coast, amounting to 20,283 chests, and formally destroyed it by mixing it with lime and salt, and casting it into the sea. For some months after this, opium was almost unsaleable, and the prohibitory measures against smoking it were so effectual, that the consumption fell to less than a tenth of what it had been.

The war which ensued, although it arose out of the seizure of the opium as the immediate cause, really sprung from one more deep-seated and more remote in point of time. This was "the arrogant assumption of supremacy over the monarchs and people of other countries claimed by the Emperor of China for himself and for his subjects, and our long acquiescence in this state of things." The war thus commenced in 1840, and concluded in August 1842, however, decided not only the superiority of the British arms, but convinced the Imperial Court that further attempts to put down the opium trade were vain. Thenceforward the laws against smoking became more and more lax, whilst the trade, nominally contraband, went on with fewer restrictions than before. At the present time, the trade has assumed all the importance of an established recognised traffic, and the merchants engaged in it, including nearly the whole foreign community in China engaged in commerce, shelter themselves under the plea of the sanction given to it by the British Government, and the alleged insincerity of the Chinese in desiring to prohibit it. In China itself, also, the growth of the poppy has been extending with the connivance of the local authorities. The quantity thus grown is not positively known, but it was stated on good authority to be not less than 10,000 chests, so far back as 1847. It is inferior to the Indian drug, and, being much cheaper, is used for mixing with it.

Having thus traced the progress of this traffic to the present time, we proceed to inquire what have been its effects on legal

commerce, on our friendly relations with China, and on the progress of the Gospel in that empire, that we may thus arrive at the true character of the trade itself, and of the Indian revenue derived from it.

And first, as to its effects on LEGAL COMMERCE. To the candid reader it must appear quite evident that these effects are highly injurious, and that the consumption of opium materially curtails the means of the Chinese population for purchasing British manufactures. In our own country, for instance, a drunken family cannot afford to purchase more than the scantiest supply of clothing, and we are warranted in saying the same of the opium-smoker's family. But what is true of the individual is true of the whole class, and hence we lose them as customers for our manufactures, and to an extent even greater than the value of the opium. For supposing the seven millions' sterling worth of opium thrown into the sea, instead of passing through their lungs as smoke, the loss would only affect their pockets; but the actual consumption not only sweeps away the seven millions sterling, but incapacitates the victims for productive and prosperous labour. The wealth thus destroyed, with which they might purchase British manufactures, cannot, of course, be estimated, but must be considerable.

It has been objected to this, however, that the purchase of a hat by a man does not necessarily impoverish him so much as to prevent his buying also a pair of shoes, or any other article of clothing, and therefore the purchase of opium does not incapacitate the Chinese from buying long cloths. Unfortunately the hat and the opium are not parallel cases. In the purchase of the hat, its value is more than returned in comfort, preservation of health and industrial power, by which he may obtain more means to buy a pair of shoes; whereas, in the purchase of opium, instead of any value being returned, he loses his money, and, in the use of the drug, he loses his comfort, his health, and his industrial power to produce that with which he may buy clothing. This is one of the simplest truths of political economy, and need not be pursued further. The writer in the *North British Review* has put this in a very plain form when he says,—“These facts leave us no room to doubt that the

opium-chest, landed upon the whole line of continental China, and rapidly making its way inland upon the rivers and canals, is not merely draining the country of its means as a customer for our goods, but is actually destroying our customer himself by thousands or by millions ; or it is bringing him down from a condition which is improvable, to a condition of desperate and irrecoverable wretchedness."

"If the British commercial policy were to be thought of as a *whole*,—as a devised scheme of national enterprise, what we are doing, described in its naked reality, is just this, we are drugging to the death the man whom we are hoping to see enter our shop daily, purse in hand."

But it is again objected,—supposing it possible to annihilate the opium trade, What will you put in its stead to pay for Chinese produce ? It may be replied: recover a drunken family from habits of intemperance, and then let us picture the numberless articles of food, furniture, and clothing that would be introduced into the once empty home, for the benefit of the family and of those with whom they deal. And then multiply this unit by all the victimized families in China, and we arrive at some conception of the enormous powers of healthy consumption that would be created by the annihilation of the opium traffic. Free access to the empire would then be more readily acceded to us, and China, with her magnificent rivers and canals and enterprising population, would soon exhibit a development of wealth, with the aid of steam-power and machinery provided by ourselves, that would enable her to take from us in British goods the equivalent of her own tea and silk.

We would here refer, in a single paragraph, to the difficulties connected with the "leaking out" of the Sycee silver. This was, no doubt, a strong objection to the opium trade on the part of the Chinese Government ; for many years there was an annual export of silver from China to pay for opium, averaging £2,000,000 sterling. This drain of silver seriously embarrassed the internal commerce and revenues of a country destitute of a silver coinage of its own, and possessing no paper currency. The very continuance of this evil, however, has at length

worked out its own cure, although at the cost of much inconvenience to China. When China had no more silver to export, Chinese produce began to be taken in barter for opium, and by the year 1852, not only had the "leaking out" of the Sycee entirely ceased, but the current had set in in the opposite direction, and it is now our turn to feel the inconvenience of a drain of the precious metals. As, however, this source of anxiety to the Imperial Government of China has now ceased, it need not be further discussed here.

If we now consider the effects of this trade on the progress of CHRISTIANITY in China, and on our FRIENDLY RELATIONS with that empire, the consequences appear infinitely more disastrous. The opium scourge has proved one of the greatest obstacles to the reception of Christianity by the Chinese, and it is remarkable that it rose simultaneously with modern Christian missions, at the commencement of the present century, as if the Archfiend were vigorously counterplotting the army of the Prince of Peace. At a later period, there was a striking illustration of this at the port of Fuh-Chow, where, for some years after it was opened, no legal trade of any kind existed, and the only foreign influence at work (if we except the consular officers), consisted of a considerable band of Christian missionaries, and—the contraband opium trade! The interests of Christianity and of the opium trade were thus in open conflict on the same field, and in strong contrast, as influences for good and for evil on the population. But so far as the Chinese were able to discern, it was but one party—British Christians—presenting the Bible with the one hand, and opium to enslave them with the other. In proof of this, we may simply state what has been repeated in almost every missionary publication referring to China, that the constant reply of the poor heathen to the missionary is: Why do you bring us opium?

In regard to friendly relations with this empire, both government and people look upon us with an unfavourable eye; and although we do not lay the whole of this on the opium trade, it is impossible to remove the impression while that trade continues; nor need we wonder at their jealous prohibition of free access into their country for the same reason. "They

must still be left to look at missionary stations, and at Bibles, as seen over that mountain of opium-chests which is set down furtively every year upon their coasts; 'black dirt,' they call it, and the fumes of this blackness darken all the objects that are seen through it."*

As to the measure of responsibility resting on the different parties implicated in this trade, it should, we think, be distributed according to their power of removing the evil, and unquestionably no small share of this rests on the British public.

The Chinese Government are morally and physically helpless,—the Chinese people are equally so for throwing off this fatal habit, which has fastened on the very vitals of the nation, and under which they groan, destitute of the moral and Christian energy that might break its thralldom. The position of the British merchant, as will presently be shown, is a difficult one also, and, at all events, the remedy is beyond the control of individuals of which a commercial community is composed. But the British public have the power, through their Parliament, and taking a large view of the subject, and acting on the broad principles of humanity and justice, of using their influence with the East India Company, that the cultivation of the poppy for the Chinese market may cease, for the plain reason that it is sent there to supply a vicious and illegal demand. The revenue derived from spirituous liquors in Britain has been adduced as a parallel to the Indian opium revenue; and because the former is a good one, therefore the latter is also. But the parallel is not complete. The revenue from spirits is the very best that could be raised, because it enriches the Government while it restrains the use of a dangerous article, by enhancing its cost. The revenue from opium is obtained by the Government first producing this destructive article, and then promoting its consumption in spite of the prohibitions and remonstrances of a weak and heathen nation, whose moral feelings are, nevertheless, outraged by our act.

It has been said that the position of the British merchants in these transactions is a difficult one. In justice to these parties, it must be stated that they are not, as many suppose, a set of

* "North British Review," No. lii. p. 544.

lawless buccaneers, but as respectable a class of merchants as can be found in any part of the world, and their share of the trade is conducted with regularity and business propriety. To explain this apparent anomaly, it must be borne in mind that practically the trade has become almost legalized. It enjoys the dignity and importance of an established recognised traffic. Indeed a merchant can hardly be engaged in trade in China at all without being more or less mixed up with it. The very steamer of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, by which he goes to China, carries a cargo of the drug. If a ship is consigned to his care, there is probably opium in it for himself on freight or for sale. If he is to have any command of money, or to compete with his neighbours in that market on anything like fair terms, he must deal in opium; and should he be so scrupulous as to decline such a connexion, he may as well leave China. Now, this is a distressing state of matters to a conscientious man, and yet he is often driven to acquiesce in it, rather than leave a position which he has occupied at considerable trouble and cost. Then, in addition to the force of custom "which familiarizes men's minds with systems where the greatest abuses prevail," the merchants shield themselves under the plea that the trade is not only countenanced by their own Government, but forms one chief item of revenue to our Indian empire. It may be added, that if we depart from the high standard of Christian principle in judging of the traffic, the question easily admits of being argued. Descending for a moment from the Christian point of view, the merchant argues that opium is only poison to those who abuse it; that the British merchant does not smuggle it into China, but merely brings it to its shores, to be purchased by the natives under the very eye of their own Government, with little more than a show of objection; and further, that the merchant is a mere agent between supply and demand; and that when these two elements of industry are brought to bear upon one another in any given field of commerce, their consequences concern him no further than the extent to which he can benefit himself by the interchange of the commodities. But neither a Christian merchant nor a Christian nation can rest satisfied with such views. And to those taking a manage-

ment of, or having an interest in the trade, and who believe in the Christian religion, it is submitted for their serious consideration whether, in view of the foregoing statements, they do not feel themselves called upon to cease from a course of action which is plainly opposed to the spread of Christianity in China. Let them consider whether any inducement, however lucrative, would lead them to incur the solemn responsibility of attempting to introduce this insidious scourge of opium-smoking into a new and untried field like Japan (with which commercial relations may be established at no distant date); for if it would not, a grave responsibility rests upon them for participating in an old-established evil in China, where its true character is ascertained. In short, every Christian who will examine the matter, will find that the opium trade with China cannot for one moment be defended on Christian principles; and that by applying such a test, it is at once disclosed to view as an evil which is devastating the East, and of which he, if he is engaged in it, should wash his hands at all hazards.

In appealing to the British public to do their duty in applying a remedy, we would place foremost the grand instrumentality of Christian missions as going directly to the root of the evil. The success that has of late years attended missions in China has been so remarkable as to be of itself sufficient to stimulate British Christians to increased efforts in that direction. The entrance of the truth into the heart has been found to clear away the habit of opium-smoking as light dispels darkness. The medical missionary has also done, and may yet do, important service in supplying the Chinese with medicinal means for curing the habit. Let these aids be multiplied. The field is all but a boundless one. Such efforts cannot fail in time to commend themselves to the Government and people of China, and encourage them to persevere in discountenancing the use of the drug.

But to give efficiency to such measures on our part, and to remove suspicions, it is absolutely necessary to show our sincerity by removing, as far as in our power, the temptation itself. The Bengal monopoly was originally established under Lord Cornwallis, "as the best means of raising a revenue without

aggravating the enormous evils contemplated," and "to obtain the largest amount of revenue from the smallest possible amount of consumption." Again, on the opening of the China trade in 1834, the Indian Government expressly stated that they retained the opium monopoly, not so much with a view to revenue, as to restrain the use of this pernicious drug. But they appear to have long since abandoned that humane policy, as we may judge from the fact, that in 1848, when information reached Calcutta that opium cultivation was extending in China, inquiries were made of the British authorities in China as to the truth of the statement; and, with the view of driving the Chinese drug out of the market, the supply from Bengal was largely increased, and has been increasing ever since. But this policy may not always be practicable. China may be induced to grow all that is needed for her own consumption. She is believed to be quite capable of doing so. Or, should the present revolutionists in China succeed, they are determined opponents of opium-smoking, and although we have no faith in physical force to cure such habits, who dare say, that a combination of religious and legal restraints, acting on the awakened conscience of the nation, may not, to a large extent, accomplish the object. Without any such measures, the use of opium in Turkey, once so prevalent, is now almost extinct. The revenue is, therefore, at best a precarious one. To those who can only see the ruin of our Indian empire in the loss of that revenue, we recommend the perusal of an able article in the *North British Review* for this month, (February 1857.) The writer shows that there is an elasticity in the resources of India which might with ease more than recover any such loss in a few years. Moreover, no sudden measure is desirable. The following remedy is merely suggested.

It is a fact well known to all connected with the trade, that the consumption of opium is affected very much by its cost. Whenever the price rises, consumption is checked; and when the price falls to a low figure in any given season, the consumption is large. Applying this principle to the production of opium in India, let the 70,000 chests now exported be annually reduced by 5000 or 10,000 chests, and the East India Company

may count on realizing nearly as large a revenue from the sale of the reduced quantity from year to year as it does now, and meanwhile it may be providing for its ultimate loss by developing its resources in some other direction. Let American cotton, for instance, be more largely cultivated, encouraging this by means of advances transferred from the poppy culture. On the other hand, the higher price of opium in China will check consumption, and annually reduce the number of smokers, till it becomes confined to the select few who can afford it. Opium can be supplied by no other nation in any quantity for a long time to come.

We conclude this paper with an extract from the writer in the *North British Review*, already referred to:—"But it is said if the opium manufacture were abandoned, or were only restricted in India, a stimulus would be given to the culture elsewhere; the people of China *will* destroy themselves in this way, and the Indian Government may as well profit by their infatuation. This is the old plea for all kinds of abominations. It is, or it was, the argument of the slave trader; it is the plea of those who live and fatten upon detestable practices; it is the plea of all who live by the crimes and vices of others; it is the pretext of the receiver of stolen goods; it is, and ever has been the legend upon the rogue's escutcheon all the world over,—'I don't *make* the wickedness—I only live by it.' It would be a great wrong to suppose that such a doctrine should be taken up and used either in Leadenhall Street or the Government House, Calcutta.

"The time is passed, or it is passing away, in which courses of conduct on the part of governments or corporations, which the individual man would abhor, may be palliated, connived at, and left to weigh upon the soul of the automaton, whose business it is to sign official documents. That which is false and wrong, and cruel and ruinous to the weak and the ignorant, is coming to be scouted as a mistake in political economy, as well as a crime.

"The opium traffic of the East India Company with China has come down to us along with many other evil things and great mistakes, from times when atrocities and political errors

hugged each other complacently, and were seldom called to give an account of themselves. But the opium traffic, along with other mischievous usages, must now be prepared to show cause why it should not be condemned, not only as a source and the direct cause of incalculable miseries, but as an enormous error in international polity."

To this admirable extract we can but add the Scripture testimony and appeal,—“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!”—Matt. xviii. 7.

FEBRUARY 1857.





3
QUESTIONS OF THE DAY.

No. I.

INDIAN REVENUE FROM **INDIAN OPIUM** ;
CHINESE MONEY AT THE EXPENSE OF **CHINESE LIFE** ;
BRITISH HONOUR OR **BRITISH DISGRACE** ;

QUESTIONS WHICH SHOULD BE
CONSIDERED IN THE

TREATY TO BE CONCLUDED WITH **CHINA**.

BY

CAPTAIN TYLER, R.E.

LONDON :
JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

1857.

(Price One Shilling.)

In the Biography of Sir John Bowring it is admitted that the Chinese were right, and that the charter had expired before they arrested Chinese criminals on board a Chinese vessel. For this last offence war this country is responsible before God. After much slaughter, rapine, and devastation, the cries to heaven of widows, orphans, and parents bereft of children, the result gained was an enforced tariff to legalize the importation of the drug that has been the greatest curse ever inflicted by one nation upon another, by a powerful army upon a people unable to offer effectual resistance.

Psa. ix. 19. Isaiah xxvi. 20. 21.

BRITAIN AND CHINA.

ON a recent well known occasion, the Chinese authorities boarded a vessel called the "Arrow," belonging to a Chinese subject resident in Hong Kong, which was trading in the Canton river, under British colours, under a British name, and under a British master; and, after hauling down the British ensign, they carried off twelve Chinese subjects, out of the fourteen men who composed its crew, upon the plea that some of their number had been guilty of piracy.

Origin of present hostilities in China.

The "Arrow" was in the habit of trading at Canton, under a licence from the Colonial Government at Hong Kong, renewable annually; and the term of that licence had expired eleven days before the transaction referred to. The Chinese could not, however, have been aware of its expiration; and there appears to be no doubt, that, though they objected to the system which had obtained, of granting British licences to the vessels of Chinese subjects, they yet acted on the belief that the "Arrow" had a right, according to British custom and British regulations, to British protection.

Registry of "Arrow."

Conceiving, therefore, that a gross insult had been offered to the British Flag, the Officers

Steps taken by British

and
Chinese
Authori-
ties.

charged with the superintendence of British interests on the spot, demanded an apology for what had occurred, as well as an assurance that the British Flag should be respected for the future; and these demands not being complied with to their satisfaction, they seized upon a Chinese Junk by way of reprisal. As the Imperial Commissioner still persisted that he was in the right, and still neglected to comply with the requirements of the British representatives, and as he refused to grant that much coveted object—a personal interview, either to the chief Superintendent of Trade or to the Admiral commanding, forts were taken, and hostilities were thus commenced by the British forces. The Chinese Commissioner protested against these measures, and professed, on his part, the greatest moderation; but his subjects retaliated to the best of their power, by poison and assassination, and even offered, in a public proclamation, a reward of £33,* for every Englishman that should be taken alive, or whose head should be “cut off and delivered to the authorities.”

Opportu-
nity will
be offered
for a fresh
Treaty.

In consequence of these proceedings, the two nations are now at war in the Canton river, and an Ambassador of high rank and great reputation is proceeding to China with a considerable naval and military force, for the purpose of continuing hostilities, and of concluding a peace when they

* Blue Book “Proceedings of H.M. Naval Forces at Canton,” p. 128.

shall happily be terminated. As an opportunity will thus be afforded for remodelling the existing Treaties, and making a fresh one, the present is a most appropriate occasion for considering seriously the means by which the real interests of the two empires may be best promoted.

In reflecting upon this important subject, it must not be forgotten, that whilst we are the most favoured nation on the face of the earth;—whilst our wealth, our power, our maritime supremacy, our advancement in civilization, our freedom of intercourse, and, above all, our possession of the light of the Gospel, and our facilities beyond those of all other nations for its extension, are so great;—whilst we possess all these advantages, of which we are sufficiently proud, and in which all of us who reflect must rejoice;—our national responsibilities are at the same time strictly proportionate to our national opportunities; and it is our solemn duty, in providing for the increase of our commerce, the safety of our countrymen, and the honour of our flag, not to lose sight of, undervalue, or neglect those higher destinies with which Providence has entrusted us: but to afford a conspicuous example, at once of firmness, justice, and forbearance; to promote, to the best of our power, the fulfilment of just laws; and to abstain, ourselves, from giving unnecessary offence to all other nations whatsoever, whether they be weak, or whether they be strong.

These convictions should dictate the terms of all our Treaties, and this spirit should guide their ob-

Our chief objects in a new Treaty.

Our motives of action.

servance. Then will our sway permanently extend, and then will our power be beneficial. Thus only can we fulfil our highest destinies, and thus only can we hope to meet with the approval, and escape the righteous judgments, of Him who ordereth all things. Avoiding undue intervention, we should not, however, shrink from just wars; but we should exert all our strength, when necessary, in the defence of that which is right, and in opposition to that which is wrong; and, taking "Dieu et mon droit," in reality, as our national motto, we should always remember that such wars, though the greatest of temporary evils, are intended ultimately to answer good purposes, and that they have been not only permitted, but enjoined, from the earliest ages. If we ourselves abstain from wrong and injury to the Chinese, we have always strong reasons for war with them so long as they refuse to treat us as equals, and to afford to us those facilities for intercourse and commerce which nations have no right to deny to each other. But we must keep our own hands clean while claiming these our rights. We must give the Chinese no *just cause* for refusing to admit us into their country, or for declining to grant suitable means for carrying on the trade which has sprung up between the two nations, upon an equitable footing.

General
opinions
on the
present
war.

There are many who wish that the nominal cause of the hostilities now pending was a more unexceptionable one, but there are few who are not in favour of a vigorous prosecution of the war that has re-

sulted. It has happened that a majority of the Lower House of Parliament has condemned the proceedings of the British officers in China, while the mass of the country has approved of them; and sufficient cause may be assigned for this difference of opinion, without attributing it to the party feeling, or to the factious combinations, that have been so much insisted on. The representatives of the country, who studied more minutely the papers that were placed before them, came to the conclusion that the insult offered by the Chinese did not render necessary the violent measures that were adopted, and desired that an officer of higher rank should be dispatched to the scene of action, with full powers; the merchants on the spot, with strong feelings in regard to other matters, and deeply interested, themselves, in humbling the Chinese authorities and the inhabitants of Canton, believed that such measures would ultimately improve their position; and the nation at large, less informed upon the abstract question, always ready to uphold the honour of the British Flag, and with a strong feeling that war only would improve its relations with a people that refuse foreign intercourse, despise foreign commerce, and oppose all progress,—gave credit to the officers employed, for acting with as much humanity as the case permitted, for being actuated by proper motives, and for using sound judgment.

It may be regarded as certain that the English Government would never have been placed in a minority upon this question, either if Sir John Bowring had

Policy of Sir J. Bowring. or if the course which was afterwards adopted had in the first instance been taken, of sending a Plenipotentiary to the Chinese waters. Sir John Bowring has been much blamed for insisting in his communications with Commissioner Yeh, that the "Arrow" was a British vessel, while he admitted to Consul Parkes that she had no right to be considered as such; and the question of the right of the vessel to British protection has thus been too prominently brought forward. The real causes of quarrel with the Chinese were, that they *acted under the belief* that the "Arrow" was a British vessel, according to the Colonial regulations, that they *intended* to break the 9th article of the supplementary treaty, that they *intended* to insult the British Flag, and that they refused to make the apology for the past, and give the assurance for the future, that was in consequence required from them; and if Sir John Bowring had represented these simple facts to the Chinese Commissioner, had told him the exact circumstances connected with the registry of the "Arrow," and had informed him that the necessary satisfaction for the *intended* insult would be required; he would then have had a clear case, and a good cause, and have been saved from much animadversion. Sir John Bowring no doubt committed an error of judgment, in not thus entering into more ample explanation with the Chinese Commissioner, but no harsher term can properly be applied to his conduct of the negotiations.

Actual
causes of
quarrel.

Different opinions may be, and are entertained, on these subjects ; but, whatever be thought of the justice or injustice of the present war, there can be no disagreement on one point. All must desire that the Treaty to be concluded at its termination, should contain such provisions as will tend to forward the real interests of British commerce, to promote friendly intercourse on equal terms between the two nations, and to extend the blessings of Christianity. It is not to be doubted that the great body of the nation, would, if their feelings were consulted, and their opinions taken, pronounce as distinctly for the abandonment of any course of action that should be calculated seriously to interfere with these objects, to sully the British name, or to inflict real evils upon others, as they have done for the prosecution of the war ; that they would be as anxious to preserve the honour of the British Flag in the one case as in the other ; as desirous to avoid the giving of just cause of offence to others as they are ready to demand redress for insults offered to themselves. Under the full conviction that such is the temper of the British nation, and under the belief that the present moment—while a Treaty is pending—is auspicious for bringing forward the subject, the author desires to make an appeal to his fellow-countrymen, in addition to those which have already been laid before them, against the Opium traffic which is being carried on between their Indian possessions and the coasts of China ; to suggest to them the course that should be taken by themselves

Object of
present
pamphlet.

for the removal of a national disgrace; and to urge them to obtain a settlement of this much vexed question. A great deal has already been published on this subject, both in the numerous general works that have appeared on China and the Chinese, and in various reviews and pamphlets specially devoted to its consideration; and the author only endeavours now to collect, and repeat as concisely as he is able, the leading features of the case; and to lay before the public, as forcibly as he may, the conclusions to which they lead.

Cultiva-
tion and
supply of
opium.

Opium is prepared from the juice of the white^d poppy, which is cultivated for commercial purposes in India, China, Persia, and Turkey. In China the cultivation is prohibited by the Government; but since the war of 1842, and the rebellion of Tae Ping Wang, the Imperial authority has not been sufficiently strong to enforce its prohibition; and the annual yield of opium, which is rapidly increasing, is now supposed to amount to some thousands of chests. In Persia and Turkey the production is comparatively small, and need not be further referred to. In India the poppy is grown, both in British and independent territory. In Bengal there were sold in 1855,* 53,319 chests of 164 lbs. each; and the exports from Bombay in 1854-5 reached 27,688 chests, of 140 lbs. each; and, as nearly the whole of this quantity was for the Chinese market, the total amount supplied by India

* "The Opium Revenue of India," pub. by Allen and Co. p. 10.

to China in 1855 is admitted to be nearly 80,000 chests, even by the upholders of the trade. Calculating roughly, 50,000 chests, or 8,200,000 lbs. from Bengal, furnish 47,000,000,000 grains of opium, or 23,500,000,000 of smokeable extract, as it is called; and 27,000 chests, or 3,780,000 lbs. from Bombay, furnish, in like manner, 22,773,000 grains of opium, or 11,400,000,000 grains of smokeable extract. The Bengal export supplies, therefore, 3,200,000 customers, at 7,300 grains a year of smokeable extract, or 20 grains (equal to 40 grains of opium) a day; and the Bombay export, 1,500,000 customers, at the same rate.

The opium shipped from Bombay is grown principally in Malwa. The Indian Government, since the subjugation of Sindh, has been able to prevent it from being carried to the Portuguese ports of Din and Demaun; and now levies a duty of £40. per chest upon it. Bombay opium.

The Bengal opium must, as the average produce is about 22 lbs. per acre, be gathered from 400,000 acres of the richest land in the British territories. The Government agents advance money to the ryots, or native farmers, for the cultivation of the poppy; they compel them to sell the juice, which is extracted from the poppy-head on the fall of the flower, at a fixed rate; they prepare it and flavour it specially for the Chinese market; they carry it to Calcutta, and there sell it to the speculators who convey it to the Chinese coasts. Bengal opium.

The *net* opium revenue derived by the Indian Government in 1854-5 was £3,282,401, the costs or Opium Revenue of India.

Minute,
28 Feb.
1856.

charges amounted to £1,536,246, and the gross revenue for that year was therefore £4,818,647. The gross opium revenue for the year 1856 was estimated by Lord Dalhousie at £5,000,000, or about one-sixth of the whole revenue of the Indian empire.

Of the net revenue for 1854-5, £2,187,449, or about two-thirds, was derived from the Government monopoly of Bengal, and £1,094,952 or about one-third from the duty levied in Bombay. The cost or charges on the monopoly revenue, which was in gross rather more than three and a half millions, amounted to nearly a million and a half. The prices obtained for the opium vary considerably, but it may be stated, roughly, that each of the 50,000 chests of monopoly opium which go to China, is sold by the cultivator for £25, by the Government for £100, and by the speculator for, perhaps, £150.

The following tables will be interesting to the reader:—

TABLE I.

Quantities of Opium exported from Calcutta and Bombay to China AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

McGregor's
Commercial
Statistics,
vol. v. p.
75.

YEARS.	Calcutta.	Bombay.	Total
	No. of Chests.	No. of Chests.	No. of Chests.
1795-96	5,183	.....	.....
1796-97	5,644	.....	.....
1797-98	3,503	.....	.....
1798-99	3,342	.....	.....
1799-1800	3,926	.....	.....
1800-1801	4,788	.....	.....
1801-1802	3,467	.....	.....
1802-1803	3,068	.....	.....
1803-4	3,053	.....	.....
1804-5	3,358	.....	.....

TABLE I—(continued.)

YEARS.	Calcutta. No. of Chests.	Bombay. No. of Chests.	Total No. of Chests.
1805-6	3,657	.....	.....
1806-7	4,384	.....	.....
1807-8	4,255	.....	.....
1808-9	4,639	.....	.....
1809-10	4,246	.....	.....
1810-11	4,909	.....	.....
1811-12	4,713	.....	.....
1812-13	4,832	.....	.....
1813-14	4,272	.....	.....
1814-15	3,872	.....	.....
1815-16	3,848	.....	.....
1816-17	4,325	.....	.....
1817-18	3,708	.....	.....
1818-19	4,299	.....	.....
1819-20	3,091	.....	.....
1820-21	5,147	2,278	7,425
1821-22	2,591	3,855	6,446
1822-23	4,100	5,535	9,635
1823-24	5,209	6,063	11,272
1824-25	7,076	5,563	12,639
1825-26	5,165	5,565	10,730
1826-27	6,568	4,504	11,072
1827-28	7,903	7,709	15,612
1828-29	6,554	8,099	14,653
1829-30	9,678	12,856	22,534
1830-31	7,069	9,333	16,402
1831-32	7,427	14,007	21,434
1832-33	9,485	11,715	21,200
1833-34	11,930	11,678	23,608
1834-35	11,050	12,933	23,983
1835-36	14,807	11,724	26,531
1836-37	12,734	21,073	33,807
1837-38	19,317	10,627	29,944
1838-39	18,221	17,515	35,736
1839-40	18,510	5,292	23,802
1840-41	17,410	15,762	33,172
1841-42	19,739	16,356	36,095
1842-43	16,670	18,321	34,991
1843-44	17,774	.....	.....
1844-45	18,794	.....	.....

McCulloch's
Commer-
cial Dic-
tionary,
1850. Ar-
ticle,
Opium.

TABLE 2.—*Different Species of Indian Opium imported into China.*

YEARS.	Patna and Benares.	Malwa.	Total No. of Chests.	Value in Dollars.
	No. of Chests.	No. of Chests.		
1816-17	2,670	600	3,270	3,657,000
1817-18	2,530	1,150	3,680	3,904,250
1818-19	3,050	1,530	4,580	4,159,250
1819-20	2,970	1,630	4,600	5,583,200
1820-21	3,050	1,720	4,770	8,400,800
1821-22	2,910	1,718	4,628	8,314,600
1822-23	1,822	4,000	5,822	7,988,930
1823-24	2,910	4,172	7,082	8,575,100
1824-25	2,655	6,000	8,655	7,679,625
1825-26	2,442	6,179	8,621	7,608,205
1826-27	3,661	6,308	9,969	9,610,085
1827-28	5,134	4,401	9,535	10,425,075
1828-29	5,965	7,771	13,736	12,535,115
1829-30	7,143	6,857	14,000	12,057,157
1830-31	6,660	12,100	18,760	11,904,263
1831-32	5,672	7,831	13,503	10,934,695
1832-33	8,167	15,403	23,570	15,322,759
1833-34	8,672	11,114	19,786	13,056,540
1834-35	7,767	8,747	16,514	9,655,010
1835-36	6,173	10,612	16,785	10,539,875
1836-37	8,078	13,430	21,508	14,287,330
1837-38	6,165	13,875	20,040	10,883,157

N.B. During the first ten years of the present century the exports of Opium from India to China averaged about 2500 chests of 149½ lbs. each.—*McCulloch's Com. Dict.* 1850.

TABLE 3.—*Statement exhibiting the Number of Chests of Opium sold in Bengal or exported from Bombay from 1840 to 1849.*

YEARS.	Number of Chests of 164 lbs. each.	Number of Chests of 140 lbs. each.
	Bengal.	Bombay.
1840-41	17,858	16,773
1841-42	18,827	14,681
1842-43	18,362	24,337
1843-44	15,104	13,563
1844-45	18,350	20,660
1845-46	21,437	12,635
1846-47	21,648	18,602
1847-48	30,515	15,485
1848-49	36,000	16,509

Statistical paper
printed for the
Court of
Directors
of the East
India
Company
in 1853,
quoted
from page
76, Churh.
Mission-
ary Intel-
ligencer,
April
1857.

TABLE 4.

Quantity and Value of Opium exported from Bengal and Bombay in each of the years ending 30th April 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854, 1855. (Calculated at 2s the Company's rupee).

YEARS.	Bengal Chests.		Value.		Bombay Chests.		Value.		Total Chests.		Total value.	
			£.				£.				£.	
1851	24,162	3,155,075	19,200	2,304,060	43,362	5,459,135						
1852	23,274	3,137,781	28,242	3,377,433	52,966	6,515,214						
1853	36,178	4,020,094	25,219	3,013,981	61,397	7,034,075						
1854	41,917	3,688,963	26,258	2,748,135	68,175	6,437,098						
1855*	53,319	3,711,137	27,688	....	81,007	....					

Board of Trade Returns.

Pamphlet "The Opium Revenue of India," p. 10.

TABLE 5.

Quantity and Value of Opium exported from British India, by sea, in the year ending 30th April, 1853, and the countries to which it was sent.

	Pegue.		China.		Penang, Singapore, Malacca.		Coast of Africa.		Total.	
	Quantities.	Value.	Quantities.	Value.	Quantities.	Value.	Quantities.	Value.	Quantities.	Value.
Bengal.	28	£. 3,097	31,433	£. 3,482,948	4,717	534,049	nil.	£. nil.	36,178	4,020,094
Bombay.	nil.	nil.	24,979	2,987,967	239	25,950	1	64	25,219	3,013,981

Board of Trade Returns.

N.B. The above return does not include the quantities shipped to ports in British India, or to Ceylon.

TABLE 6.

Gross and net amount of Revenue derived from Opium, and net Revenue from other sources in British India, in each year ending 30th April, from 1840 to 1854.

Board of
Trade
Returns,
Part I.
1856,
p. 13.

YEARS.	OPIUM.			Total net Receipts from other sources.
	Gross Receipts.	Charges.	Net Receipts	
	£	£	£	£
1840	784,266	446,489	337,777	17,029,595
1841	1,430,499	556,221	874,278	17,695,487
1842	1,599,628	580,862	1,018,766	18,447,223
1843	2,087,696	511,114	1,576,582	19,261,739
1844	2,638,766	613,940	2,024,826	20,119,254
1845	2,848,786	667,498	2,181,288	20,154,863
1846	3,578,002	774,652	2,803,350	20,766,111
1847	3,678,207	792,005	2,886,202	22,527,831
1848	2,735,129	1,071,745	1,663,384	21,162,423
1849	3,913,091	1,067,328	2,845,763	21,781,395
1850	4,497,254	966,974	3,530,280	23,917,625
1851	3,795,300	1,044,952	2,750,348	23,904,690
1852	4,259,778	1,120,532	3,139,246	23,945,300
1853	5,088,184	1,370,252	3,717,932	24,376,833
1854	4,777,231	1,418,211	3,359,020	23,681,842

Opium
Trade
with
China.

The opium is conveyed from India to China in well armed, well manned, clipper ships, and of late years even in the Peninsular and Oriental Company's monthly steamers; and on its arrival it is stowed to a great extent in receiving ships, from whence it is conveyed to different parts of the coast, according to the demand. The official returns from the colony of Hong Kong show that as many as 36,499 chests of opium were imported into that island in 1853, and

Board of
Trade
Blue
Book,
Part I.
1856,
p. 361.

46,765 chests in 1854, in the steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company.

In order to give an insight into the proportion of legal and illegal trade carried on between the British and Chinese empires, it may be stated, that the value of the opium imported from India is equal to three times the value of all other British imports, (exclusive of bullion and specie,) and that it amounts to three-quarters of the value of all the produce that we receive from China; so that more than half of the whole trade which passes between the two empires is contraband.

Relative
proportion of
legal and
illegal
traffic.

Such is the nature, and such the extent of the Indian opium trade with China; and such are the leading facts connected with the cultivation of opium in our Indian territories. The Indian Government enjoys what is believed to be an illegal monopoly in producing and manufacturing the drug, specially prepares it for contraband purposes, and, by publicly selling it in Calcutta for the Chinese market, does its best to encourage a lawless race in an unlawful calling. It must next be stated what are the effects of this opium upon the Chinese, and what means the Chinese Government has adopted to prevent its importation.

Well known as a valuable medicine, opium is in many countries employed as a narcotic, but when thus used it has always produced lamentable effects upon its votaries. It is sometimes eaten and

Effects of
opium.

sometimes smoked, the effect being somewhat similar in both cases ; but the process of smoking produces a more immediate result, and appears to be more seductive and more hurtful than that of eating it. It has been stated that opium smoking and alcohol drinking may be considered much in the same light, and that opium smoking is in one respect the lesser of the two evils, inasmuch as the alcohol drinker is led on to criminal actions, and is an offence to society, while the opium smoker stupifies himself, and is harmless to his neighbours. But this is not altogether correct. Opium has exciting qualities, though not to the same extent as alcohol ; the want of it to a regular opium eater, or opium smoker, leads to the commission of the worst crimes, as well as the use of it ; and it acts differently upon different dispositions and temperaments, and according to the amount of the dose. We may see in this country, and unfortunately too often, some stupid, others furious, and others again who are amusing under the influence of alcohol ; and, in fact, any qualities that a man may happen to possess are liable to be exaggerated when he is intoxicated. So also in other countries may be seen the Tartar, who, by the use of the stimulant opium, is enabled to perform enormous journeys upon scanty fare and without rest ; and the “Cut-chee horseman who shares his store of opium with his flagging steed.” We read of the excitement of the Malay, and also of the Javanese, who rushed

“Chemistry of Common Life.”
Johnston,
vol. ii.
p. 71.

under its influence upon the pike's point, and continued fighting with the weapon in his body, utterly regardless of his wounds. We hear that in 1840, "one-half of the crime in the opium districts (of India), murders, rapes, and affrays, had their origin in opium eating." We are told that confirmed opium eaters will commit any crime, will sell their wives and property, and even be guilty of murder, in order to obtain their accustomed dose.

Mr. Sim's letter of 13 March, 1840, p. 18, Genl. Alexander's first pamphlet.

Vide p. 22.

There are strong reasons why alcohol cannot compare with opium in regard to the injury which it inflicts. Alcohol is taken by whole nations in various forms, and is productive, no doubt, of much crime and evil: but a state of habitual, constant drunkenness, is the exception amongst those who drink spirituous liquors. Opium is indulged in by vast numbers of Chinese, Indians, and others; but the exceptions amongst its votaries appear to be those who can eat it, or, more particularly, smoke it for any length of time in moderation, and without becoming more or less victims to it. Alcohol affords, in different forms, a luxurious beverage, and sometimes a beneficial, and even a necessary one. Opium is only admissible as a medicine, and the constant use of it for other than strictly medicinal purposes, is a vice. A regular partaker of beer, wine, or other spirits, may be, and is generally, a sober man; and he can give up his stimulants at any time, when it may be necessary for him to do so; but the

Alcohol and opium compared.

opium smoker, when once he has become habituated to the practice, loses his life if suddenly deprived of his drug, and can only be broken of the habit by means of such an ordeal as few can be induced to undergo, however much they may lament the vice that possesses them, and fear its ultimate consequences. The Rev. Carstairs Douglas, of Amoy, in writing to England in 1856, stated that so many of these unhappy opium smokers were anxious to give up the habit, that the manufacture and sale of pills which somewhat assisted the attempt to abstain from it, covered the necessary expenses of the mission. The only fair comparison between alcohol and opium is, as has often been stated, that which places the habitual drunkard, and not the habitual partaker of wine, beer, or spirits, in moderation, on a par with the regular opium smoker.

It is impossible to do more here than lay before the reader a few extracts from the writings of those who have testified to the effects of opium; but further evidence on this subject will be found in the several works which are referred to at the end of the present pamphlet; and under the head of Narcotics, in Johnston's "Chemistry of Common Life," may be seen an able and impartial description of opium and its effects.

In an official report, dated Hong Kong, 8th August, 1845, Mr. Consul Alcock says, "The use of " it (opium) in China seems to extend to the very

P. 5, Mr. Mathe-
son's
pamphlet,
1857.

Forbes—
"Five
Years in
China,"
p. 347.

“ lowest classes ; coolies and even beggars are in
 “ the habit of taking a pipe, though it may often be
 “ at the price of their meal of rice. They allege
 “ that having once commenced the practice, they
 “ become unable to follow their avocations if the daily
 “ stimulus be withdrawn.”

A Chinese paper says :—

“ I have learned that those who smoke opium,
 “ and eventually become its victims, have a periodi-
 “ cal longing for it, which can only be assuaged by
 “ the application of the drug at the regular time.
 “ If they cannot obtain it when that daily period
 “ arrives their limbs become debilitated, a discharge
 “ of rheum takes place from the eyes and nose, and
 “ they are altogether unequal to any exertion ; but
 “ with a few whiffs their spirits and strength are
 “ immediately restored in a surprising manner.
 “ Thus opium becomes to opium smokers their very
 “ life : and when they are seized and brought before
 “ the magistrates, they will sooner suffer a severe
 “ chastisement than inform against those who sell
 “ it.”

Davis's
 Chinese,
 pub. 1846,
 vol. iii. p.
 204.

A quotation in No. 52 of the North British
 Review is thus given :—

“ There is no slavery on earth to be compared
 “ with the bondage into which opium casts its victim.
 “ There is scarcely one known escape from its toils,
 “ when once they have fairly enveloped a man.”

“ Chinese
 Repository,” for
 1836,
 quoted in
 Dr. Allen's
 pamphlet.

Mr. Marjoribanks, who was president of the select
 “ Rise and
 progress

of British committee at Canton, is thus quoted by General Alexander:—

opium
smug-
gling,"
p. 60.

“Opium can only be regarded, except when used
“ as a medicine, as a most pernicious poison. To
“ any friend of humanity it is a painful subject of
“ contemplation that we should continue to pour
“ this black and envenomed poison into the sources
“ of human happiness. The misery and demoralization
“ occasioned by it are almost beyond belief.
“ Any man who has witnessed its frightful ravages
“ and demoralizing effects in China, must feel deeply
“ on this subject.”

Mr. Bruce, too, the Superintendent of the tea plantation in Assam, was quoted in 1840, and has several times been quoted since, in proof of the evils that opium has inflicted upon Assam. Amongst other statements on the subject he makes the following:—

“Few but those who have resided long in this
“ unhappy country know the dreadful and immoral
“ effects which the use of opium produces on the
“ native. He will steal, sell his property, his children,
“ the mother of his children, and, finally, even
“ commit murder for it;” also, “That dreadful
“ plague (opium) which has depopulated this beautiful
“ country And has degenerated
“ the Assamese from a fine race of people, to the
“ most abject, servile, crafty, and demoralized race in
“ India.”

“The
opium

The author of a pamphlet published in the course

of the present year, for the express purpose of supporting the opium monopoly, says:—

revenue
of India,"
p. 8.

"The condition of the Rajpoots of Central India is universally held up as an evidence of the demoralizing, enervating, life-destroying effect of this "drug."

These extracts have been given as bearing most strongly against the use of opium as a narcotic; and it is only right to add, on the other side, that Mr. Meadows, Dr. Burnes, Dr. Eatwell, and others who have seen much of those who use opium, represent that it does not produce such bad effects as have been attributed to it, and that it appears to be used without much ill effect by great numbers of people. Mr. Meadows, however, who is our latest authority, admits that the "daily whiff," *must* be obtained when the habit has been once contracted; and that the Chinese Court, the Opium merchants, and the Tae Ping rebels, equally discourage the use of opium amongst their own people; as well as that he "never heard opium smokers, themselves, justify the practice."

Opinions
in favour
of the use
of opium
as a nar-
cotic.

Meadows,
"Chinese
and their
rebel-
lions," p.
487.

The bad effects *may* have been exaggerated by many who have written on the subject; but few who take the trouble to study the evidence on both sides of the question, and seriously to consider it, will have any doubt that the use of opium as a narcotic, is an ensnaring, a seductive, and a deleterious habit; and most Englishmen would deeply regret to hear that there was a prospect of its being

Conclu-
sions
from the
above.

brought into constant use amongst any class of their own countrymen. The right-thinker and the true Christian, also, of whatever nation, must deeply lament the spread of such a vice, either in his own or in any other country, and must regard with but little respect those who, for the sake of pecuniary profit, promote, and, still more, are employed in increasing the evils which it occasions.

The
opium
war.

But, what are *we* doing? For more than fifty years our fellow-countrymen have been engaged in smuggling this pernicious drug into China, in direct opposition to the wishes and utmost efforts of the Chinese Government. Ever since the year 1800 the trade has been contraband; but the annual importations from British India into China have gradually increased from 2000 up to 80,000 chests. By the year 1834 the trade had assumed a regular character, and the Chinese Government had become much alarmed, both on account of the increased consumption of the drug, and in consequence of the drain of silver which it occasioned. They therefore made strenuous efforts to put a stop to it; and the violent measures which they adopted—in publicly strangling one of their own subjects in front of the Canton foreign factories for participation in the trade; in virtually imprisoning the British merchants, as well as the Chief Superintendent of Trade, who hastened to their rescue; and in destroying 20,000 chests of opium which they induced him to deliver up to them;—were the principal causes that led to the Chinese war of 1841-2.

We were successful in that war; we upheld our Its result. smugglers with a strong hand; we made the Chinese pay for the opium that they had destroyed; and we still furnish them with the same "black dirt," as they call it, in continually increasing quantities.

Since the termination of that war the Chinese State of the opium trade since the war of 1841-2. authorities have made no great effort against the opium traffic. Torn by internal dissensions, and in want of money, they are powerless to prevent, and are even compelled to allow their mandarins to profit by encouraging it; and the result is, that it has acquired more than three times the dimensions it had at the time of that war, and has almost assumed the appearance of a regular authorised trade. British merchants of great respectability are engaged in it, and we are even told that if they did not join in it they would be unable to compete with their neighbours, and would be compelled to leave China altogether. This helplessness on the part of the Chinese cannot, however, be brought forward as any excuse for ourselves. On the contrary, the Matthe-son, p. 16. greater their inability to carry out their just prohibition against an injurious trade, the more blameable and the less worthy of the British nation is our infringement of it.

The Chinese have been accused of insincerity in their attempts to put down this traffic; and it has been alleged against them that they cared not so Disinterested conduct of the Chinese. much for the opium that was imported, as for the silver that went out of the country to pay for it; as

well as that, after having once prohibited it, their pride alone has prevented them from retracting that prohibition. But the arguments that have been brought forward in reply to this accusation are of an overpowering nature. It is stated, on the other hand, that if the Chinese Government had chosen to legalise the admission of opium upon payment of a fixed duty, they might all along have made a large revenue out of it; that if they had not most materially checked the growth of the poppy in their own country, enough opium might have been produced there, at one-fifth of the price they now pay for it, for internal consumption; and that the drain of silver that they so lamented might thus have been effectually stopped. Looking at their conduct in this light, it would really appear that their efforts have been most disinterested, and that they have patriotically and persistingly striven, to their own detriment, and solely for the good of their people, to check a national evil of vital importance. The well known reply of the Chinese Emperor is deeply striking:—"It is true, I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison; gain-seeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes; but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people."

Dr. Morrison says, too, on this subject:—

Quoted in "Davis's Chinese," vol. i. p. 114. "It is a principle of the Chinese Government not to licence what they condemn as immoral. I know they glory in the superiority, as to principle,

Vide Narrative of Rev. G. Smith, present Bishop of Victoria, quoted by Gen. Alexander, p. 63.

“of their own Government, and scorn the Christian Governments that tolerate these vices, and convert them into a source of pecuniary advantage, or public revenue.”

How different our own conduct! While the Chinese Emperor has been so largely sacrificing pecuniary interests to his people's welfare, our Indian Government has been involving our countrymen in, and inciting them to, a smuggling trade; has been sacrificing its native subjects, and has been itself flavouring the pernicious substance, so as to make it as tempting as possible to its wretched customers. How great, too, our ingratitude! The Chinese furnish us with the most harmless, the most refreshing, the most pleasant, for constant use, of all beverages—with a beverage which is equally appreciated by our young sportsmen in distant countries, and our old women at home—which is in almost universal use amongst us, which we designate proverbially as the “cup that cheers but not inebriates,” and the loss of which to our poorer classes would be one of the greatest evils that a general war could produce: they thus contribute largely to our comforts, and even to our daily necessities, and we smuggle into their country, in return, a drug which is poisoning more or less slowly vast numbers of their people.

It is, of course, impossible to determine the exact number of regular opium smokers in China, or the number of smokers of Indian opium. But an approximation to these numbers has been already given

Our different policy and conduct.

Vide ante p. 19, line 5, *et seq.*

The amount of the injury to the Chinese.

at page 11, where it appears that, allowing 20 grains a day for an average smoker, the Bengal monopoly of the Indian Government would supply 3,200,000 victims, and the Bombay opium 1,500,000 more. It may therefore be estimated that the Indian opium is continually in process of poisoning 4,700,000 Chinese. The average life of an opium smoker is stated at 10 years, after he has contracted the habit; but, if twice that term of life be allowed him, it may even then be further estimated that the Indian Government, with the Bengal monopoly alone, kills its customers at the rate of 160,000 a year, and derives a net profit of £14 from each victim during his 20 years of opium smoking existence. But this is not all, for the evil is an increasing one. It has increased forty-fold in the last half century, four-fold in the last 20 years, and two-fold in the last 10 years; and the production of the Government monopoly has been more than doubled in the last four years. If the evil be not now checked, it is impossible to estimate to what further extent it may be made to grow.

This, then, is the Christian forbearance that has guided for a series of years the policy of those who have administered our Indian Government, and this the respect that they have shown for the rights and liberties of the Chinese nation. They expressly stated in 1834 that they retained the opium monopoly, not so much for the purpose of revenue, as to restrain the use of this pernicious

Profession and practice of Indian Government.

Mattheson, p. 18.

drug. They said, "Were it possible to prevent the use of the drug altogether, except strictly for the purpose of medicine, we would gladly do it in compassion to mankind;" but between 1834 and 1857 they have nearly quadrupled their exportation.

In spite of the struggles that the Chinese authorities formerly made to avoid the ruin thus brought upon their country, and fifteen years after the termination of the war which was mainly caused by their violent efforts to stop the contraband importation of opium, the Indian Government still persists—not merely in winking at, or tacitly permitting, but absolutely in conducting the manufacture of this drug, for the express purpose of selling it to those who import it into their helpless country. There can be no question about this fact, no dispute about it. The opium thus manufactured by the Indian Government is quite different from that which is prepared for medicine. In this case, let it be repeated, they flavour the drug in the most tempting manner, and make it as attractive as possible; they prepare it in the most approved form for smuggling, that it may elude what little vigilance and opposition the Chinese Government is yet able to exercise; they thus encourage and enable those to whom they sell it to carry on an illegal, a hurtful, and an iniquitous trade, little less demoralizing to those employed in it than it is destructive to their Chinese victims; and they depend upon opium receipts for a sixth part of their whole revenue.

Alexander, p. 80.

Their present policy.

Its ten-
dency.

Could Commissioner Yeh disgrace the British Empire, or dishonour the British Flag, to the same extent, by any means within his power? Does not the Indian Government, by persisting in, increasing, and profiting by, this wretched traffic, do more to dishonour the British name, to demoralize British commerce, and to injure Christ's religion, than all that the Chinese Commissioner has done, or can do? Does it not do more real permanent injury to the British nation, than all the insults that all the nations of the world could offer us?

Official
opinion.

The Noble Lord now at the head of Her Majesty's Government once wrote as follows on the subject of the opium trade:—"No protection can be afforded to enable British subjects to violate the laws of the country to which they trade." That principle has since been departed from; let it now be returned to; let us no longer permit our Indian Government to act in opposition to it, or promote its violation. Captain Elliot, who was Her Majesty's Superintendent of Trade at Canton, said in a despatch to his own Government, "No man entertains a deeper detestation of the disgrace and sin of this forced traffic on the coast of China than the humble individual who signs this despatch. I see little to choose between it and piracy." But since this despatch was written the traffic referred to has more than trebled in amount, and it has become, therefore, the more important that some steps should be taken in regard to it.

Alexan-
der, p. 35.

Ibid.
p. 62.

The Spaniards have prohibited the export of opium to China from Manilla, the Dutch from Batavia. The Americans, who are, in common with ourselves, under treaty to prohibit the smuggling of opium into China, do not employ their clippers in this trade...

Conduct
of other
countries.

It is the British flag—the flag that ought to be the sign of civilization, honour, and Christianity—the flag that we all love—the flag that we wish others to respect, which is thus dishonoured. We are right to love our flag, we are right to cause it to be respected; but we should also be particular about what it covers and protects. The Chinese now fear not opium from other countries, nor under other colours. The “Union Jack” is its protector in the waters of Canton, the British ensign its emblem on the coasts of China. Every vessel under British colours is associated by the Chinese with the demoralization and ruin of their country; every British subject reminds them of the drug which he represents. All good Chinese, Imperialists as well as Insurrectionists, dislike the British, who bring ruin to so many of their countrymen; and all bad ones hate the British, by whom they are ruined. The merchant is cursed for it, the man is detested for it, the missionary is reproached for it, and applied to for remedies to counteract it. Let Englishmen reflect on these things, and approve them if they can.

Alexander,
p. 69.

Chinese
feelings
towards
the
British.

The British and Chinese empires contain together more than half the population of the whole world; the former possessing 200,000,000, and the latter

Our Mer-
chants
and our
Missiona-
ries.

from 350 to 400,000,000 inhabitants ; an eighth part of the former being Protestants, and hardly any of the latter Christians. To the nation which has given its name to the former, has been entrusted the privilege, the responsibility, the duty, of extending civilization, and promoting Christianity. The people of the latter, ignorant, though highly educated, and barbarous, though old in civilization, vast in number, and capable of great utilities and mighty improvements, present the largest, the most unoccupied, the most fertile field for the exercise of these duties, responsibilities, and privileges. In obedience to their destiny, our countrymen visit China either as merchants or missionaries ; either in the cause of commerce, or in that of Christianity ; either for their own pecuniary profits, or for the religious benefit of their fellow-creatures. In the capacity of merchants, they are engaged in a most useful and highly honourable calling, so long as they obey the just laws of the country with which they trade, promote friendly intercourse with it, and tend to improve the condition of its inhabitants ; but they bring discredit on their profession, and disgrace on their nation, when they infringe those just laws, and injure those inhabitants. As zealous missionaries, they receive but little of this world's goods, but they are honoured by all good men, and they look for a higher reward.

Their
respective
doings.

It is of the greatest importance to ourselves as a nation to consider well the proceedings of our coun-

trymen in this distant part of the globe. Our merchants are amassing wealth there:—are they doing so with advantage to themselves and their customers? Our missionaries are engaged in their holier calling:—what are the principal difficulties in their path? Let us answer these questions fairly, and without exaggeration. The merchants are amongst the most respectable of their class, and they rank high in our commercial nation; but they carry on a trade, half of which is illegal; they procure from the Chinese that which is most beneficial, and has become a necessity to us; and they supply to them, in return, in large and increasing quantities, a substance which is hurtful, and even destructive to them as individuals, and demoralizing to them as a nation. The missionaries complain, and apparently with great justice, not that the Chinese will not hear them, not that their task is rendered impossible by the laws, customs, or insensibility of the Chinese themselves; but that the almost overwhelming difficulties which they encounter, are placed before them by their own countrymen; that the opium manufactured by the Indian Government, carried to the coasts of China in British vessels, and supplied by British merchants, has so awful an effect upon the minds and bodies of those to whom they preach, and prejudices the minds of their would-be-converts so strongly against everything coming from their country, that their task becomes nearly an impossible one. Dr.

“China, Medhurst tells us, that “almost the first word uttered by a native, when urged to believe in Christ, is, ‘Why do Christians bring us opium, and bring it directly in defiance of our own laws? That vile drug has poisoned my son, has ruined my brother, and well nigh led me to beggar my wife and children. Surely those who import such a deleterious substance, and injure me for the sake of gain, cannot wish me well, or be in possession of a religion that is better than my own. Go, first, and persuade your own countrymen to relinquish this nefarious traffic; and give me a prescription to correct this vile habit, and then I will listen to your exhortations on the subject of Christianity.’” The statement of the Amoy missionary, who provided for the necessary expenses of his mission by the sale of pills which he manufactured, which somewhat assisted the attempt to give up opium smoking, has already been quoted. Vide p.20.

Quoted at p. 85, No. 4, vol. viii. of Church Missionary Intelligencer.

The Rev. W. Welton, also, writing in Feb. 1856, says, “When recommending Gospel truth to this people, we are constantly taunted with being the introducers of this noxious drug; and when we endeavour to dissuade them from the use of it, they say, ‘You bring it to us, and yet tell us not to use it,’ venting their indignation at our apparent hypocrisy in so doing; and it is very difficult to convince them of the contrary.” The same gentleman, alluding to the evils and effects of opium smoking, and the physic which he also employed to assist the victims to break them-

its State
and Pros-
pects.”—
Med-
hurst,
p. 91.

selves of it, says, "This has given me more influence among the Chinese than all my other practice combined. The natives themselves are Ibid.p.81. most anxious to devise means to relinquish the habit, without suffering the dreadful and distressing bodily ailments and symptoms already detailed. In proof of this, at the time I write this, numerous handbills are posted in every direction in the streets, pretending to have discovered some such precious antidotes to the evil effects of the drug. Empirics, as in England and America, avail themselves of the credulity and urgent necessities of their countrymen, by advertising a nostrum for the evils of this vice, pretending to be derived from America, Spain, India, the Red Haired Country, Western Ocean Country, &c. Handbills for six of these different nostrums are now to be seen in the streets and suburbs of this city; and the natives tell us missionaries how anxious they are to be rid of this appalling vice, and ask whether these pretended nostrums, with our country's name and letters attached, are genuine. I have had the anxious, solicitous wife accompany the husband, enfeebled by the practice of opium smoking to my house, to see him deposit the opium pipe with me, and obtain the remedy; and then leave with joy at the prospect of being freed from the greatest of all curses. I have seen the husband dying with incurable diarrhoea, induced by the inability to obtain the drug any

“ longer, the poor surviving wife left to earn a scanty
 “ pittance by making baskets. Missionaries never
 “ commend themselves nor their work to the Chinese
 “ in so favourable a light as when they denounce
 “ the evil of opium smoking, and exhort them to
 “ desist from it. The interest upon such occasions
 “ is genuine, and accompanied by earnest requests
 “ whether the missionary has medicine to aid in
 “ breaking off the habit. Missionaries find, as the
 “ Chinese declare and fully know, that those who
 “ smoke opium are useless as servants, or in busi-
 “ ness, or in any responsible situation, and cannot
 “ be trusted or depended upon. A person engaged
 “ in the sale of opium at this port, an Englishman,
 “ lately told me that he would not keep a servant,
 “ *i.e.* a native, whom he knew to smoke opium, as
 “ one quite unworthy of credit and confidence.”

Religious
 bearing
 of the
 question.

Unfortunately, there can be no manner of doubt that our merchants are spreading vice in China, by means of opium, much more rapidly and more extensively than our missionaries can introduce antidotes to it, either physical or moral. Our countrymen at present go to China “ with their Bible in one hand and their opium in the other.” They teach the Chinese, amongst the other commandments, “Thou shalt do no murder,” but they provide them with a drug which, as Dr. Medhurst says, and as all other testimony goes to prove, “annually destroys myriads of individuals.” They teach them to say, “Lead us not into temptation,”

Medhurst,
 p. 84.

while they are pandering to their vices. They preach to them, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," Matt. xix. 19. while they shew to them that they care much for their money and little for their lives. They proclaim to them, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink," Hab. ii. 15. while they present to them the means of intoxication. They tell them not to "do evil that good may come," Rom. iii. 8. while they themselves do evil that money may come. They echo to them the memorable words, "It must needs be that offences come, Matt. xviii. 7. but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh;" and at the same time they appear before them in the character of gross, unmistakable, persevering public offenders, against principles human and divine. Truly, the individuals who persist in this course will receive their rewards: the missionaries, for the good they have preached; the manufacturers, the merchants, and the speculators, for the evil they have practised; and the nation, itself, which knowingly allows this course to be continued, and neglects to employ the constitutional means within its power for stopping it, must not expect to escape the just vengeance of an avenging Providence.

It will be seen by the following paragraph that Opium at Sarawak. opium smuggling is believed to have been the immediate cause of the horrible transactions at Sarawak, of which the news has just reached us:—

"The immediate cause of this frightful attempt "The Times," to destroy the whole of the Government European 29 April, 1857,

quoted
from the
"Straits"
Times"
of 21
March,
1857 ;

" authorities at Sarawak, is stated to be the stringent
" measures which Sir James Brook has found it
" expedient to adopt, to prevent opium smuggling.
" Some heavy fines have been levied on the smug-
" glers, the amount being paid by the Kungsi, and
" latterly some of the offenders have been impris-
" soned ; but these seem scarcely sufficient to ac-
" count for such ruthless slaughter and destruction,
" not sparing age or sex."

and Mel-
bourne.

And the latest accounts from Australia bring news of an " opium question " there also. The following letter on the subject appears in the " Melbourne Argus " of the 20th December, 1856 :—

" Sir,—There has been a great deal written and
" said about the propriety of imposing a heavy duty
" on opium imported into this colony, and there
" seems to be a certainty that Government contem-
" plates a measure of this kind. I should be sorry
" to see opium taxed merely because its chief, and
" almost only, consumers are Chinamen, but I would
" heartily applaud the total prohibition of this ener-
" vating drug, on account of its demoralizing influ-
" ence both on mind and body.

" Is it in the delicious swoons produced by this
" infamous drug that our missionaries and advocates
" of the Gospel expect to convert to Christianity the
" infidel hordes now squatted on our shores ?

" Mauritius, with her numerous Malay and Chi-
" nese population, might add considerably to her
" revenue by admitting duty-paid opium : but, con-

“scious of the evil produced by its use, she strictly
 “prohibits its introduction.

“The punishment for smuggling, as you are
 “aware, is very severe there; and any captain
 “caught in the act not only forfeits his ship, but is
 “sent on the roads for several years.

“Is there no one here who would agitate this
 “most important question? It seems to me that a
 “law to this effect could meet with no opposition,
 “either on the part of our Legislature or the public.

“Feeling confident that by mootng this question
 “you will confer a lasting benefit, not only on the
 “colony generally, but also on the well disposed
 “portion of our Chinese population, I trust that the
 “suggestion may find a place in your valuable
 “columns.—I remain, Sir, &c. &c.

“VOX POPULI.

“Melbourne, Dec. 13th, 1856.”

As no account of opium admitted into the Mauritius Government in-
 appears in the statistical returns of that colony, the consis-
 above statement in regard to it would appear to be tency.
 true. Shall we deny to the Chinese that privilege of
 prohibiting the importation of opium which we exer-
 cise ourselves, through the Colonial Government of
 the Mauritius, for the good of our subjects there? Is
 it not a strange anomaly that one branch of our Im-
 perial Government should be occupied in excluding
 from one portion of our empire, on account of its
 hurtfulness, a substance which is manufactured for
 the sake of profit by another branch of our Imperial
 Government?

Speech to
consti-
tuents,
vide
"Times,"
24 March,
1857.

The noble words of our noble Premier still ring in the ears of the country. "I also," said he, "want Peace, but I want Peace with honour and safety, Peace with the maintenance of national rights, Peace with security to our fellow-countrymen in foreign lands." England wants all this, and even more than this. England wants also

Our duty
towards
the Chi-
nese.

peace with *international* honour, peace with *international* justice. All her good patriots wish England to fulfil her *highest* destinies, and not to be content with providing for her national rights, while she persists in her national wrongs. No, let her by all means secure her national rights—there is fortunately little fear at present of her not doing so—but let her also avoid all wrong to other nations. She does so in the case of the strong, let her do so also in the case of the weak. Lord Clarendon judiciously refrained from doing all that he might have done, in order to avoid the risk of giving offence to the Government of the United States, when recruits were required for the Russian war; let him now adopt a similar policy when it becomes his duty to conclude a Chinese peace. Let him declare to the Chinese victims of the Indian Government, that their case has at length been favourably considered; that from this time forth, the importation of opium into China from British India will gradually cease. Our Ambassador will otherwise be placed in a false position, when it becomes his duty to enter upon terms of peace: for thus, and thus only, can we have peace with honour to our country.

The first step that should be taken is an obvious ^{Course to be adopted.} one. As the Government monopoly for the manufacture of opium in India is a disgrace to us as a nation, so we should as a nation unite for its suppression. No question of revenue, no question of policy, should be allowed to influence us in the matter. The monopoly is a grievous national sin, ^{Monopoly to be abolished.} and a grievous international wrong: therefore it should be put down: therefore a limit should be assigned to it: therefore it should be decreed, that in—say five years time, it should be no more. The Indian Government has no just claim to compensation. It has inflicted a grievous injury upon its own ^{Vide p.11.} subjects, and upon the Chinese, for a number of years, and it should be compelled to refrain from such a course for the future. If any compensation be due in the matter, it is from the Indian Government itself, for the wrong it has so long persevered in.

Not a poppy can be grown in British India without the permission of the Indian Government; and the ^{Cultivation to be checked.} next object, as well for the sake of our Indian population, as for their Chinese customers, is to prevent all cultivation of the poppy, and manufacture of opium, for other than medicinal purposes.

The exportation of Malwa opium from Bombay, ^{Exportation to cease.} is also under the control of the Indian Government; and the third step to be taken, is gradually to put a stop to this branch of traffic. It should be limited to,—say 10 years, after which time all exportation of

opium from British India should cease. The £3,250,000 of net revenue that the East India Company would thus lose, should be made up, partly by more honest means, and better employment of the 400,000 acres which are now under poppy cultivation; and, for the rest, Lord Dalhousie's advice should be adopted, loans of British capital should be properly invited and freely obtained, and it should no longer be attempted to defray out of the income of the Indian Empire the expense of "the innumerable and gigantic works which are necessary to its due improvement." The opium monopoly, the opium cultivation, and the opium exportation, are a sin and a wrong. They should cease.

Minute,
quoted
North
British
Review,
Feb. 1837,
p. 537.

Probable
effect on
the
Chinese.

The Chinese are well aware that the manufacture of opium in Central India is a Government monopoly, and a large source of revenue. Such knowledge is intensely aggravating to them; and it would be the greatest satisfaction to them to be informed that the monopoly was about to cease, and the exportation from British India to be checked. If, therefore, they were informed of these facts, it is by no means improbable that they would gladly avail themselves of the opportunity that would be thus afforded them, of saving their pride, and benefiting their people; and that they might be induced to admit, upon payment of duty, for the next few years, the opium that they cannot keep out of their country. If such duty were not fixed at too high a rate, smuggling would be no longer advantageous,

and would necessarily cease ; and a great obstacle to amicable intercourse would be removed. But, even if the Chinese should refuse to consent to such an arrangement, the duty of gradually putting a stop to the opium monopoly, and gradually suppressing the growth of the poppy, and the exportation of opium, is not a whit the less imperative upon the British nation. The first step to be taken, therefore, is the abolition of the Government monopoly ; the second, the gradual cessation and final prohibition of the cultivation of the poppy ; and the third, the prevention, by degrees, of the exportation of opium from British territory.

It would appear, then, that an occasion has arrived, Summary on which this opium question may be most appropriately re-discussed. Hostilities having broken out, a new treaty with China will be required. The British nation has, through its Indian Government, been manufacturing opium, for a series of years, for Chinese smoking ; and its subjects have been conveying it to the Chinese coast, for the supply of a contraband trade. It has thus been inflicting a grievous wrong, and an illegal injury upon the helpless Chinese people. It has supplied the means for breaking, and the temptation to evade the Chinese laws, and it has pandered to the vices which consume great numbers of the Chinese inhabitants. It will now be afforded an opportunity of gracefully declaring, in the plenitude of power, and in the hour of victory, that such a course shall no longer

be pursued. It would thus act in a manner creditable to itself, and extricate itself from the false and unworthy position which it at present occupies ; and it would thus, also, in all probability, conciliate the Chinese, and form relations with them more amicable than any which it has hitherto been found possible to establish.

Conclu-
sion.

So long as the opium stumbling-block remains, the Chinese cannot but look upon us with deep feelings of animosity : they must regard us as their bitterest enemies, individually and nationally. It can never be otherwise, whether the reign of the present dynasty be continued, or whether the insurrectionists gain the upper hand. For every genuine reason of state policy, for the sake of humanity, for the cause of legitimate commerce, for the honour of the country, for consistency of religious profession, on every other account but that of temporary pecuniary profit, this offence should be discontinued. Unite, then, my countrymen, as a nation, for its suppression ! You, who have done so much towards abolishing the trade in negro bodies, let it be your object and your pleasure, as it is your duty, to put an end to a traffic which has such pernicious effects, mentally and physically, on a considerable proportion of the vast Chinese nation. Employ all the constitutional means that are placed within your reach, for this great object ; and you cannot but succeed. If your voice be lifted up, it will at once be heard. You will thus have the satisfaction of

promoting amicable intercourse between the two nations which together form half the population of the world; of extending commerce between them; and of assisting, more than by any other means in your power, in the spread of the Gospel from the 25,000,000 Protestants, that your own empire now contains, to the 350,000,000 subjects of the empire with which you are at war.

The following recent publications on the subject of the Opium Trade are recommended for perusal.

“The Rise and Progress of British Opium Smuggling,” by Major-General Alexander. Judd and Glass, Paternoster Row.

“Contraband Opium Smuggling,” by the same. Seeley, Jackson and Haliday.

“What is the Opium Trade,” by Donald Mattheson, Esq. Hamilton, Adams and Co.

“The Trade in Opium,” article in the North British Review, No. LII.

“The Opium Question,” article in the Church Missionary Intelligencer for April 1857.

And particularly,

“The Opium Revenue of India,” published by Wm. Allen and Co. Leadenhall Street, with the replies to it which have been published by Major-General Alexander and Mr. Lewin.

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4
OPIUM REVENUE OF INDIA.

THE QUESTION ANSWERED,

THAT

IT IS NOT RIGHT TO BREAK THE LAWS OF ENGLAND AND OF
CHINA, AND INJURE THE COMMERCE OF BOTH COUNTRIES,
FOR THE SAKE OF TEMPORARILY OBTAINING £3,000,000
STERLING, BY DESTROYING THE LIVES, MORALITY,
AND COMMERCIAL RECIPROCITY, OF 300,000,000
OF OUR FELLOW-MEN.

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL ALEXANDER.

LONDON:

SEELEY, JACKSON, & HALLIDAY, 54 FLEET STREET;

B. SEELEY, HANOVER STREET.

MDCCCLVII.

LONDON :

Printed by G. BARCLAY, Castle St. Leicester Sq.

OPIUM REVENUE.

IN a pamphlet on the Opium Revenue of India, the anonymous author commences with a somewhat energetic outburst against that ignorant impatience of taxation which characterises the people of Great Britain. He tells us that direct taxation has been found worse than indirect, and gives us the comforting assurance, that "no ministry will dare to propose a new tax of either class." Had such an harbinger given us his name, it might have inspired more confidence; but if even his susceptibility should have been imposed upon in this instance, he will find many tax-payers who will think that when they have brought the Chancellor of the Exchequer to that point in which "it will be as much as he can do to maintain a sufficiency of existing resources to meet existing wants, without adding to debt," they will have accomplished the great economic desideratum of providing for the necessary expenses of the State, and allowing no scope for waste or superfluities. So far then there will be much agreement as to his conclusions, though not improbably some difference regarding the way in which they are arrived at.

Turning from British finance we find our Anonymous less tolerant towards a party which, according to his description, is composed of most heterogeneous minds; not only devoted to inquiries affecting their own welfare within the encircling seas of our native isles, but venturing to expose the errors of principle and demoralising ten-

dency of taxes levied on our Indian fellow-subjects, thousands of miles off, with which neither these agitators nor the Parliament and public whom they address have any direct concern. To this, I believe, we may demur. Principles for good and evil are the same in all lands, and are but differently expressed in various languages; the discordance which he deprecates is the evidence of incremental error, and constitutes the cry or groan of violated harmony for a restitution of its rights. India has been by no exaggerated metaphor termed the brightest colonial jewel in the British crown, and whatever affects the spiritual and temporal welfare of its 150,000,000 people, is not only a legitimate object of interest to our higher qualities and feelings, but is most intimately interwoven with our whole system of national advancement and prosperity. Our author may be as right in his denunciation of tyros in political economy, and unfledged statesmen, as he is delicate and refined in his allusions to those whom he would instruct by his wisdom and warn by his experience; but after all, it is rather with their arguments than their personalities that the public has to deal; and gladly would I borrow from the plumage of his knowledge a feather with which to endorse the words that he somewhat hypothetically utters, viz. "that monopoly of production is opposed to free-trade principles; that opium is noxious; that the Government of China has condemned and prohibited its use; and that the Government of India, by increasing the supply, is helping to poison the population of a nation," with which we profess a friendly alliance.

The question that our author propounds is, "Is it right to take three millions sterling from the Chinese beyond the cost price of the drug, as the condition of their enjoying the forbidden indulgence of opium smoking?" To which I unhesitatingly answer, No, it is not right; and proceed to prove the wrong.

A generation of the human race has hardly passed away since there was so small an opium trade between India and China, that 200 chests, admitted through the Chinese custom-house at a moderate duty, constituted the whole. In the latter part of last century, when the East India Company was a trading corporation of mer-

See a Pamphlet on the "Opium Revenue of India," published by Allen & Co. Leadenhall

chants, entrusted also with something more than viceregal power, they established for their own profit a monopoly of the drug. Avarice suggested, and despotism enabled that suggestion to be carried into effect, that a rigid monopoly of production and capability of supplying demand to any extent to which it might be stimulated, would afford a more certain income than could be relied upon from the ordinary course of commercial export on account of the East India Company.

In a few years, the result more than bore out the most sanguine expectations that had been formed; the monopoly, as shown in evidence before Parliament by the servants of the East India Company, extended over all India; and Lord W. Bentinck when Governor-General, informed the Court of Directors that "the final effect of an increase, beyond assignable limit, in the quantity of the drug exported to China from both sides of India, is a result beyond the power of our foresight to discover, or even at present to hazard any speculation upon."

But while this progress was contemplated with such complacency in India and the councils of Leadenhall Street, there was a very different view taken of it by the Imperial authority and statesmen of China. The demoralisation of the people became alarmingly rapid, and its ratio might be estimated by that of the increased importation of opium, prepared, not as formerly for medicinal purposes, but expressly for the indulgence of a vicious propensity. The drug was declared to be contraband by law; penalties were enacted against its importation and deleterious use; and in the course of diplomatic intercourse between friendly nations, every law, edict, and proclamation promulgated by the Chinese, was communicated to the authorised representatives of Great Britain, with strong remonstrances against the traffic, and earnest entreaties that it might be suppressed.

In order to keep before my readers the simplicity of the great principles at issue, I shall put aside as much as possible all details, and avoid entering into particulars regarding the manner in which the opium traffic has been conducted in China for more than half a century. It dates no further back than I have intimated, and is

not one of those sources of revenue which our instructor on this occasion describes to be "as old as the hills."

We have two great nations that ought to be reciprocally beneficial to each other, in direct antagonism upon one point. Great Britain having caused, stimulated, and supplied the demand for what is injurious to the moral and commercial prosperity of China, derives in one branch of her many sources of revenue and to the detriment of others, an annual income stated by our author to be 3,000,000*l.* sterling. China, too weak to offer successfully an armed resistance to our armies and navy, and incapacitated by the demoralisation of her people from presenting such an opposition to unjust measures as was exhibited by the fathers of American independence, when they made virtuous self-denial the means of counteracting arbitrary taxation, has hitherto pleaded in vain for pity or relief. England and the world are unhappily too familiar with the blood-stained atrocities of the Opium war, and circumstances are now forcing upon public attention the question, whether the measures that caused that war, and continue to disturb the even course of commercial intercourse, are to be abolished or continued.

In the debates in Parliament, in the many publications on the subject, in all that has been alleged by those interested in or opposed to opium-smuggling in China, I do not remember to have met with one instance in which there has been such an attempt as this to deny its immorality, or prove that the monopoly and its consequences are sound in principle, and, like all legitimate commerce, beneficial to mankind. The small number of merchants who are more or less engaged, either on their own account or as almost involuntary agents for others, palliate as they best may what none can justify, and which several would most gladly be emancipated from. The East India Company—or, more properly speaking in the present day, the President of the Board of Control—pleads nothing but a miserable and short-sighted expediency and 3,000,000*l.* sterling of income, in answer to the overwhelming proofs that the income is illegal and precarious; that it is derived from a source injurious not only to Great Britain, but to India and China, and bearing on its front the certain condemnation that what

is religiously and morally wrong never can be politically right, honourable, nor eventually advantageous.

I concede at once that the opium revenue has increased, is increasing, and while affairs continue as at present, will for a time increase still more. I admit that it is an important—far too important—source of Indian revenue. I am quite of opinion that an equal revenue cannot, while circumstances remain as they now are in India and China, be realised with such facile readiness. But thus admitting all that its advocates plead for as expedient, I say at once that the degrading immorality of the whole system cries to God and man for its condemnation, and the interest dictates of prudent foresight and common sense imperatively require that the stability of the finances of our Indian empire shall be placed on a sounder basis.

The advocates of the system urge that monopoly is in its nature restrictive, and therefore operates as some check to extended use. Lord Cornwallis argued thus when he stated that maximum taxation would ensure minimum consumption. Now, instead of bewildering ourselves with theories, look to results. Lord W. Bentinck has shown us the object and anticipations which Lord Dalhousie, in his celebrated minute on his own administration, proves to have been so largely realised. The East India Company's monopoly is used, *not for restriction*, but for obtaining the largest profit on the largest quantity of opium for which the largest demand can be excited. Opium agents are allowed a per-centage upon what they can sell, or cause to be sold, in India; and if Lord Dalhousie's estimate is to be reached, there ought now to be an importation of not less than 120,000 chests annually into China.

It is as impossible to calculate the amount of opium used by each individual in China as it would be to know from the aggregate Excise returns the quantity of gin drunk by single persons here. If the opponents to opium smuggling mention large quantities, and count consumers by millions, they are accused of ignorance and exaggeration; while, on the other hand, such reasoners as our unknown author, plead for the harmlessness of moderation. Some of them have argued that this is evinced in the common use

of the drug by all classes, and that cases have been known where three hundred grains a-day have been smoked and the man still lived. From what has been published on the subject, it seems that six grains a-day may be taken as the quantity used by a beginner or a very moderate smoker. The same authorities tell us almost unanimously that moderation in opium-smoking* is, as a general rule, an impossibility. Some of them have thought that from seventeen to twenty grains a-day will represent a fair average. Now this, at the rate of importation in 1855-6, would give, in round numbers, about 8,000,000 of smokers of the pure drug in China; but, from the same sources of information, we learn that very few—and those only among the richest of the people—can afford to smoke the drug as it arrives with the brand of the East India Company. As soon as it gets into the hands of the native dealers, it is adulterated; and thus calculation of the number of smokers from this data is baffled. The melancholy experience of hospital practice, however, affords a nearer approximation to accuracy in the statistics of mortality. There is a very general accordance, that though some men have smoked opium for more than thirty years, yet the general duration of life from the time that a person commences the habit, does not average more than ten years. Some writers set it down at less.

There is a charge of inconsistency brought against those who would abolish the monopoly and retain restriction upon growth and production. The author under consideration points to the baneful

* Perhaps few instances of roundabout reasoning can exceed that of Mr. Meadows', quoted approvingly by our author as authority for the harmlessness of opium smoking. I will put his facts in juxta-position:—"Smoking a little opium daily is like taking a pint or two of ale, or a few glasses of wine daily; smoking more opium is like taking brandy as well as beer and wine; smoking very much opium is like excessive brandy and gin drinking, leading to *delirium tremens* and premature death. *When once the habit of opium-smoking is taken up* [the Italics are mine], the discontinuance of the *daily whiff* thus habitually taken as a luxury, produces discomfort in the extreme; so that, howsoever the price of the article may be raised, the opium-smoker will still not deny himself the luxury, *so long as by any means* he can purchase the drug:" and so Mr. Meadows recommends that the price may be lowered, and the drug rendered more generally and easily accessible. Our author says, that "this is the most unexceptionable and best testimony of an official personage;" and there I leave it.

effects of unrestricted produce in Rajpootana and Assam, and asks, "If more opium were grown in India, is enlarged consumption a good?" No, I reply; it is because I would not inflict or allow these evils that I would abolish monopoly and maintain restriction; and if I may be permitted an analogy, I would point to what is done in a country where no Minister of the Crown dare propose a monopoly, and in which the people would not bear with the milder application of the system that existed under the disguise of Corn-laws. In England the restriction is imposed for fiscal reasons; I claim it for India and China, on the higher grounds of religious principle and moral right.

In Ireland, and in many parts of England and Scotland, tobacco might be grown to any extent, and yet the laws of Britain prohibit the cultivation of a single plant. Moreover, they impose a duty of, I believe, about 300 per cent on the imported leaves. Now let what is here legally and on justifiable principle done to assist the revenue, be applied to the moral benefit of the East;—prohibit the growth of poppies, and put any duty you please upon foreign opium.

Our author asks, at page 7, what is to be substituted for the existing system with its machinery? I have already elsewhere said, the cultivation of cotton, tea, sugar, indigo, and other commercial reproductives, without any such machinery or government interference as now exists. Let me show what this last is, from the select records of the Bengal Government.

An Indian having a certain number of cultivators under him, obtains from the Government an advance of money, for which he is bound, under severe penalties, to give at a fixed price a certain quantity, and all other opium above that quantity, produced on his lands. To encourage the extension of poppy cultivation, larger advances are given to those who bring new lands under the crop, and themselves under the privileges of that peculiar legislation, which I have indicated in a pamphlet "On the Rise and Progress of Opium Smuggling;" and which (the legislation, not the pamphlet) seems to find no disfavour in my critic's eyes.

In the Benares district alone, in 1849-50, there were 107,823

beegahs of land under poppy cultivation. The first officer in what our author calls the machinery is the opium agent. The agency is marked out into eight divisions, each under a sub-agent. In every district in which there is a sub-agency, the Government collector of revenue (and I hope my readers know what his powers are) is *ex-officio* a deputy agent, charged with a supervision of the sub-agent, and with the investigation of all suits that may arise *in re* Opium.—Vide Regulation XIII. of 1816, Bengal Code of Regulations, for the law upon the subject.

Every division is again partitioned out under Gomashtas, under each of whom is a treasurer and suitable establishment. The Gomashta pays the advances to the Ryots or farmers, measures their lands, receives and weighs their produce, and is responsible for its delivery. To assist in this department he has under him Jemadars and Zillahdars, whose duty it is to watch the ryots. Apart from these, there is in each division, *custos custodium*, a Mohotonim, who exerts a general supervision of every thing transacting therein, making frequent reports of every event that occurs. In short, this machinery presents to us the agricultural population of a district amounting to about 128,000 farmers and labourers, watched over in their daily occupations by 150 native officers of the first class, and about 1200 officials and paid servants in constant employ, besides the superior European officers. During the manufacturing season there are often upwards of 600 extra hands employed in the Ghazeepeer factory alone, including from fifteen to twenty European assistants and boys.

We are told, on the high authority from which I have taken the above, that all connected with the opium monopoly is "most wise," and all "works smoothly and well;" if so, this wisdom is still far east of Great Britain, and the well-working would be more easily accepted if it did not "afford the pabulum," upon which, according to our Unknown, "spare ingenuity will occupy itself," and which furnishes food for meditation on such a passage as the following. Writing of the arrears into which the cultivators fall, the official selector from the records of Bengal lets this incident crop out from the rich field of happiness enjoyed in opium districts,

Government being the creditor in the case:—“It is clear that, when such balances become so large that the cultivator cannot discharge them, he is no longer a free agent, but is perfectly subservient to the will of his creditor, for whom he must cultivate whether he desire it or not. Such burdens may even be handed down from father to son.” And yet our author asserts that “the poppy cultivation is not, and never has been compulsory.”

The advocates of opium monopoly and traffic delight in a comparison of the intoxication caused by the drug and by gin. I rather incline, if we must select a preference in such miserable degradation, to agree with them that opium smoking, though more destructive to its victims, is less dangerous to bystanders; under its effects the unhappy wretch sinks into helpless insensibility to all external objects, until waking from his sensual dream he needs the nursing that abates the horrors of *delirium tremens*. Those who have read or seen what running a “*muck*” is, or a Mahomedan Soonee population during the last three days of a Moharum, know well what are the effects of opium eating. My object, however, now is to suggest that the admirers of our laws of bankruptcy, chancery, &c., may contemplate hereditary insolvency and perpetual debt with its consequences, and institute as reasonable a comparison as between the results of gin-drinking and the use of opium. Taking these things also into consideration, I am constrained to repeat my “No” to the author’s question, and plead for India and the Chinese.

At pp. 8 and 9 of his pamphlet, the Anonymous admits an agreement with what I have stated regarding the unrestricted growth and sale of opium in Rajpootana and Assam. His own words are:—“The condition of the Rajpoots of Central India, where the growth of the poppy is free, is universally held up as an evidence of the demoralising, enervating, life-destroying effect of this drug.” I only ask to apply this description to the 300,000,000 millions of China; and again, as a Christian and an Englishman, to answer his question with sorrowful indignation—No—No—No!

Our author is perfectly correct in saying, at page 9, that it is

not free production and free sale of opium in India that is advocated by the opponents of monopoly. There is evidently a confusion in his mind on the subject of free-trade principles. They are only applicable to what is just, right, and reciprocally beneficial: they cannot be brought in accordance with African slave-trade or opium smuggling in China, both being so irremediably unclean, that a clean commercial system can neither be brought out of, nor interwoven with them. Most truly does he state a fact and principle, neither of which, I fear, he either fully comprehends or appreciates:—"Free production benefits are secondary with them (myself and such-like) to high moral considerations." But only free productions of evil are so deemed secondary, because we hold that the freest production of what is unquestionably and reproductively beneficial to mankind, is not only compatible, but absolutely identical, with the highest principles of our nature, whether developed in the duties of religion or the legitimate pursuits of legislation, science, political economy, and commercial intercourse. Is not our author aware, that in this country where trade principles are, according to his view, "running upon wild freedom," there is no such unrestricted traffic in intoxication as he and others would impose as the alternative for abolition of a monopoly? No one can sell beer, wine, or spirits except under permission of a restrictive license, which magistrates may withhold from an immoral character; or refuse, if they think that the shops within their jurisdiction are too numerous for the general good of the inhabitants. Nay, more: there is even a restriction upon the evil freedom of the subject in this freest of all lands, and if my *vis-à-vis* should unhappily indulge too freely in what demoralises our population, he would render himself amenable to restrictive law, and liable to a penalty for an enjoyment correlative with that which he would sell so largely to the Chinese.

At pages 10, 11, I find a mystification about the opium monopoly and free trade, which I will endeavour to clear up in a few words. The science of political economy, like all other sciences, proceeds upon sound data and just principles. Introduce an error or incongruity, and you can never arrive at correct results. If you

try to compound from the dicta of arbitrary power, the selfishness of monopolised trade, and the violation of the laws of two nations, a system of commerce such as we have by these means established against, not with, China; then I say that you have but to leave these elements to work out their inevitable results, and the destruction of the compound is as certain as the analytic solution of substances in whose properties there is neither chemical affinity nor cohesion. There is a question of time, none of eventuality.

It is not, as our author would lead us to believe, a plain matter of demand and supply, the one healthily and reproductively alimending the other; but the whole thing is false and artificial. It is a vicious demand, originated and supplied by a government whose connexion with trade at all is an illegal intromission, and would be, even under better circumstances, an improper and unseemly competition with its subjects: it furnishes another opportunity to reply to the Unknown, No—No—No.

The best answer I can give to what, according to our author, is *not* "twaddle," (vide page 12,) is this:—Go down to some den of drunken debauchery and degradation; select which you will of the miserable objects before you, of whom there are thousands in this country more or less wretched than the millions of opium victims in China; and learn the practical lesson in political economy which our author suggests. Why is that poor creature, hatless, shoeless, shirtless, sunk from the high dignity of a being created to hold communion with his God, to a sad spectacle of humanity brutalised below the protective instinct of beasts? There is the very climax in a man, to which the opium trade is rapidly bringing China. As he gave his money for gin instead of wholesome food and clothes, so China gives her bullion for opium instead of British manufactures. And as the drunkard sinks into a dishonourable grave, no longer capable of consuming that which caused his ruin, so must China in her present course become impoverished and unable to pay for the opium which is now destroying her vitality. I need but refer my readers to the admirable argument on this head which is to be found in the just-published number of the "North British Review."

The author asserts that it is a fallacy to suppose that the payment for opium in silver deranges the monetary system of China. A select committee of the House of Commons, Mr. Montgomery Martin, and numerous authorities, mercantile and other, English, American, and Chinese, assert the contrary, and there I leave the question. The monetary system of China, however, is deranged; and if not by opium, then by what other cause?

As regards the Government being the very head and front of the system of smuggling, I must again borrow a feather from the author's plumage to record his own words, and then leave them to the support of his own vindication. "Now the Government is a contrabandist, because the article cannot reach the consumers except through the smuggler's intervention;" and, "the smuggler cannot get the opium except from the Government." That the Government provides and sells opium for the sake of the profit are the Unknown's *ipsissima verba*.

Our author adduces Napoleon's Milan decree in support of his argument. There is, however, one trifling difference which he overlooks. Napoleon's Milan and Berlin decrees were issued to shut out the manufactures of a nation with which he was at war. His object was to ensure his own success, and, if possible, to bring about a peace by means intended to be more efficacious and which were less dreadful than bloodshed and devastation. Britain's opium smuggling is carried on to intrude a contraband drug upon a people with whom she is at peace: against the laws of both countries, and enforced by those vindictive horrors which Napoleon's measures were meant to bring to a speedier termination. I confess that I cannot see any objection, moral, commercial, or political, to the open lawful sale of English manufactures in Heligoland, or any British colony or possession, under any circumstances, or at any time. The articles alluded to were those of sound legitimate commerce, and so far from being injurious were, wherever they found sale and use, beneficial to mankind. Let us deal as honestly with China, and leave her emperor as we left the first Napoleon, and still leave the third, to regulate his tariffs, and protect his coasts against invading contrabandists. We simply dare

not deal with France, nor any European or American power, as we have dealt, and still continue to deal, with the Chinese.

The author, at page 25, argues that the endeavour to get rid of the salt monopoly, "in deference to the known prejudices of the British public, will fail," because a considerable capital is required to prepare works for independent manufacture, or to make advances for produce. But at page 27 he urges, that if the monopoly of opium were abolished, and a duty levied on its export, so much capital would be embarked that we should have the poppy growing everywhere. Now it requires much more capital for the more precarious cultivation of the poppy than for the certainly profitable manufacture of salt; and from whence is the capital to come for that?

Notwithstanding the difference of our views, I feel no inclination to retract what my opponent calls "the summing up of my pamphlet," nor to withhold my acknowledgment of the perhaps too flattering designation which he gives it. I am glad that it is considered in any degree oracular; and as it is little else than a compilation of arranged facts, presented to the public for consideration and discussion, so far is it from my desire that when I speak no dog should bark, that I will hail with pleasure the music of the cry that shall hunt down even my own errors. Only let me observe, however, that the meaning which the Unknown puts upon my expression at pp. 35 and 36 of his book is his, not mine. So far from thinking that the suppression of the opium monopoly and smuggling will take one rupee from every five of the population of India, I do most firmly believe that it would be the means not only of enriching them to a much larger amount, but of affording increased wealth to Great Britain through her merchants and manufacturers. In this I am not singular, inasmuch as a Committee of the House of Commons reported, in 1847, that, unless we can look forward to an increased consumption of those products in which China has the means of paying England for her manufactures, the adjustment of the balance of trade can only be made at the cost of largely-diminished exports and of restricted employment to every branch of industry connected with them;

or, in other words, unless we take from China the products of her industry in exchange for our linens, woollens, hardware, &c. &c., instead of her current silver for East India Company's non-reproductive opium, our mills, factories, and operatives must be restricted in their employment. As this is the recorded opinion of the Parliament, I believe we may both respectfully subscribe Q. E. D.

There is an attempt to excite alarm, that if the East India Company, or President of the Board of Control, is forced into obedience to the Act of Parliament for the government of India, there must be a cessation of public works and improvement, that the progress of education will be stopped, and a doubt will remain whether the armies can be paid. Do not occurring events give a significant refutation to this fear? We have money enough to undertake two transmarine wars, unless the moral dignity of the country arises to prevent that in China which is neither politically expedient nor morally just.

If capital is wanted for legitimate purposes, look at the Indian railway companies, from whom money to any amount can be obtained on interest guaranteed at lower rates than is usual in India, and whose shares are at premium. The money paid into the Leadenhall Street treasury by those companies tends in some degree to relieve the extraordinary efflux of specie to the East, as it defrays the home expenses, for which funds would otherwise have to be remitted from India and enlarge the vacuum there. We have English capital in Indian banks, and vested in undertakings to navigate her rivers and irrigate her lands. We have a demand for English capital and enterprise to turn her waste and unimproved—and worse than either—her poppy fields into cotton grounds, tea gardens, and sugar plantations; to extract from the beegah of 27,225 square feet of India's richest soil, something more and better than about 14lbs. of opium, worth about 4*l.* sterling, per annum, cost of production included, which is the present outturn.

If a reduction of 20 or 25 per cent is made on the advances to opium-ryots, and the amount of opium thus annually diminished,

while the restrictive laws are maintained, the price of the drug will be enhanced as it is gradually being withdrawn from use. This will facilitate the transition of the East India Company's finances from a vicious to a sound state; and as the ryots will, in all probability, require assistance in turning to other pursuits, let the Government for a limited, but sufficient time, make them advances for the cultivation of cotton and other products of raw material, to be exchanged for English goods in due course of trade.

But if this or some better course is not adopted, what must soon be the result? Already the poppy is largely grown in China, wherever the Imperial authority is so weakened by rebellion within, and British aggression from without, that its laws can no longer be enforced. The native opium sells at about one-fifth of the price of the imported drug, and its manufacture is rapidly extending.

Again, the rebels, or patriots, or whatever they may be, under Tae Ping Wang, most rigidly prohibit the use and admission of opium wherever they have rule. These circumstances place our smuggling and revenue on two stools, between which we must eventually come to the ground. If cultivation goes on, we shall be beaten out of the market by a cheaper drug; if either the Imperial authority, or that of its rival, Tae Ping Wang, should be enabled to enforce a law common to both, then our revenue must be destroyed on that alternative. Sooner or later the Indian revenue must, if left in its present iniquitous and insecure state, collapse; and when that takes place, it may be too late to find the remedy which is now so plainly before us.

There is another plea for opium smuggling, in itself so curious that I must just touch upon it. Its advocates reply to Chinese remonstrances, and advance in the House of Commons, that if England did not carry on this wretched trade, other nations would. Then, why do they not? We cannot prevent them. In Southern America, and many other genial climes and soils, the *papaver somniferum* could be cultivated to any desired extent. The Americans know something about the traffic; they have capital and enterprise for any undertaking that promises to turn out well; and we find them, not raising a competition, but availing themselves—princi-

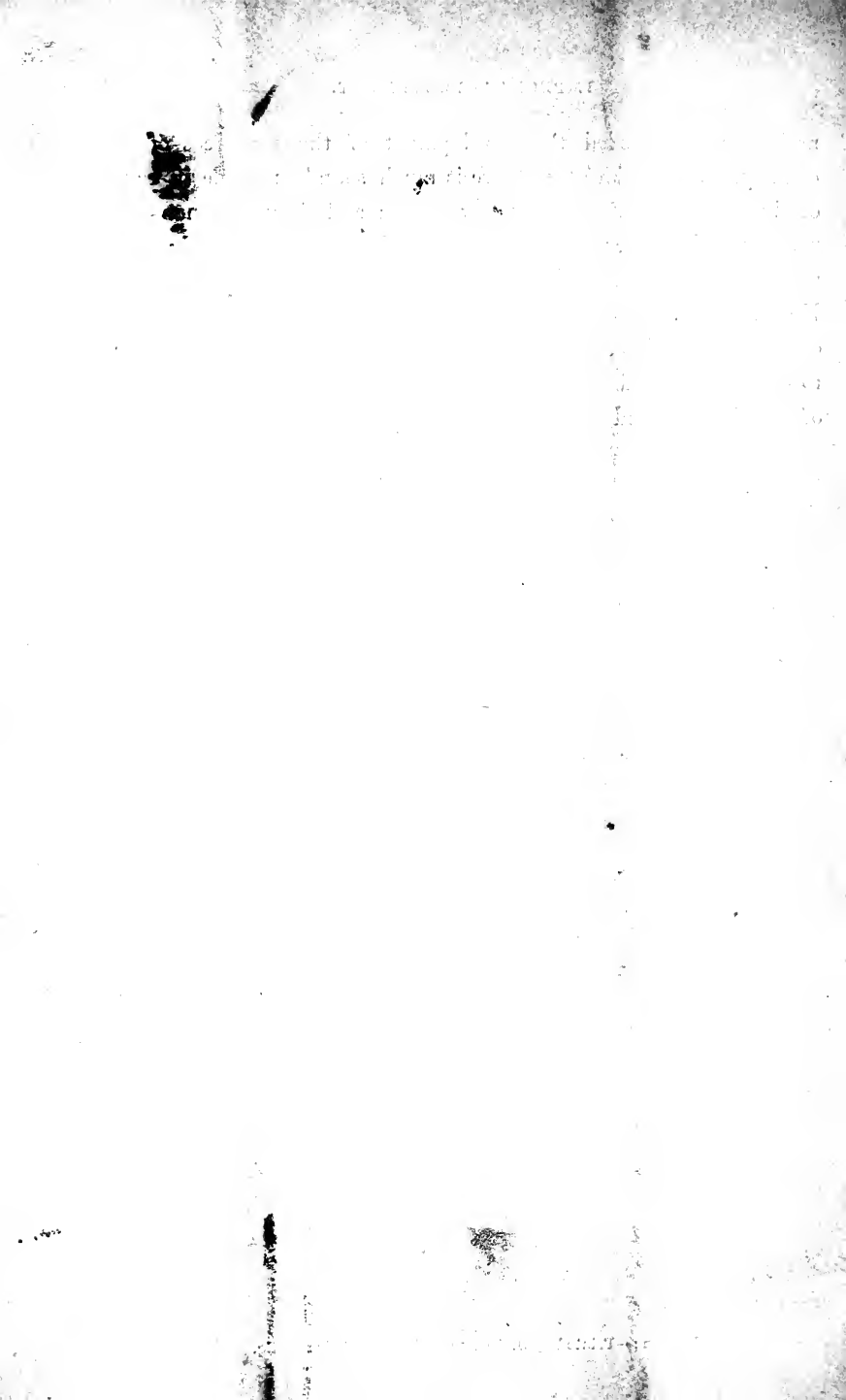
pally, I believe, for the purposes of exchange—of such facilities as the British system affords of enriching a few speculators in contraband, and I believe I may say almost necessitates, for the convenience of remittances in the general course of trade. If this argument of our opponents is good for anything, it only indicates another danger to our Indian revenue, whenever the Americans, French, Spaniards, or Dutch, in their countries or colonies, choose to encourage or allow their subjects to emulate, and thereby destroy our iniquitous policy and unsound basis of finance.

I believe I have now touched upon all that is necessary to reply to in the question propounded—all that is essential to the subject, though not all that is irrelevant to it in the book.

It may be inferred that the author has been in India; and with a laudable desire to render himself useful to his country has, like Lord Stanley, Mr. Danby Seymour, and others, sought information in the East. We are not the less indebted to his public spirit for the readiness with which he imparts the knowledge he has acquired, though we may observe that it is not so accurate as on the subject of British taxation, with which he is evidently more familiar.

After the controversial courtesy with which he has noticed my endeavours on a subject of interest to us both, I would in conclusion assure him, and all to whom he has addressed himself, that neither I, nor those with whom I associate, look upon the system by which “India has been won, and by which it is held and preserved, as one of unmitigated evil.” So far from thinking “the civil functionaries of India overpaid, pampered, and corrupt extortioners,” it is my happiness after much opportunity of witnessing their conduct, and forming the friendship of many, to believe, that as a body they are, for accomplished ability, self-denying, and I may add often self-destructive zeal, and the strictest integrity, unsurpassed, if not unequalled in the world; in my humble opinion to which the author refers, it is to be regretted that more of them do not return to this country rich enough to enter public life on their own accounts, nor sufficiently well known to be brought forward by others. I do believe, that among them, those with corrupt hearts and minds of inferior order have oppressed the

natives, and impeded the development of the resources of the country. I do believe that there is much sound principle in some of the many systems of Indian taxation ; and if my opponent will make himself master of what Lord Harris has done at Madras, he will perceive how that which is defective can easily be remedied. He will see the beautiful problem worked out, that relief from oppressive taxation and legislation emancipates and gives elasticity to the energies and industry of the people, and increases the riches of the kingdom and the revenues of the State.



5

CONTRABAND OPIUM TRAFFIC,

THE

DISTURBING ELEMENT IN ALL OUR POLICY AND
DIPLOMATIC INTERCOURSE WITH CHINA.

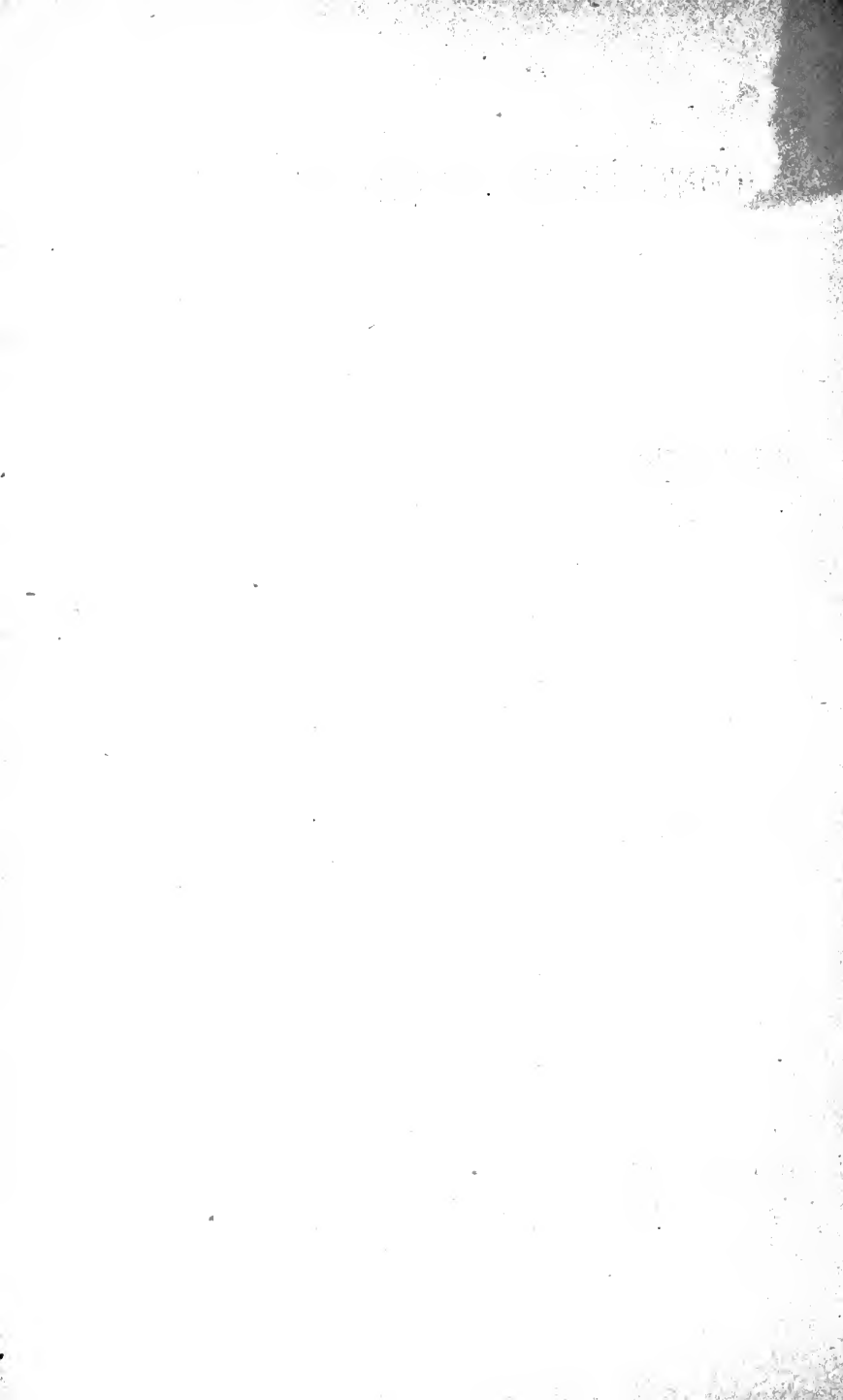
BY

MAJOR-GENERAL ALEXANDER.

LONDON:

SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET;
BENTON SEELEY, HANOVER STREET.

1857.



THE following Letters were all written and sent to the Newspaper to which they are addressed before the meeting of Parliament. The Editor could only publish them as Parliamentary and other intelligence afforded opportunity and space in his columns. The debates that have taken place in both Houses do not in any way alter or weaken the important question that is at issue, regarding the Opium Monopoly and its consequences; which are substantive evils, to be dealt with according to their own demerits.

It would be manifest injustice to impute the sole blame for the iniquity and impolicy of the opium traffic to any particular individual, or set of statesmen, who have been in power during the present century. Whig or Tory, Liberal or Conservative, Free-Trader or Protectionist, each in succession has received the system as it was before them; and the same may be said of the Directors of the East India Company. I believe that I can trace in the Blue Books and other authentic sources of information, an outline of policy indicated by Lord Palmerston, which, had it not been for the continually disturbing influence of the opium contrabandism, would have maintained a peaceful and highly beneficial intercourse with China. Of Members of the

Court of Directors, and Officers of the East India Company, with whom I have had conversations, and to whom I am indebted for information, I can but say that, whatever may be their views on this subject, whether they agree with me in part, altogether, or not at all,—so far as the best years of a life spent in a country and among a people to whom I am gratefully and sincerely attached, enables me to form a judgment—England has never had a body of gentlemen sitting in Leadenhall Street, among whom there were individuals more capable of administering the affairs of our Eastern Empire, were they entrusted with sufficient power and responsibility for such an important duty.

CONTRABAND OPIUM TRAFFIC.

No. I.

To the Editor of the Morning Advertiser.

SIR,—As this country is, or is about to be, engaged in another war with China, the moral guilt and material expense of which must fall upon the professedly Christian and most really tax-paying population of Great Britain, it may be well to review the policy that led to the former, which is generally known as the opium war, in order that the community may be enabled to bring the powerful influence of sound public opinion to bear upon their representatives in Parliament on the present occasion.

There are already before the public proofs taken, not only from Parliamentary Blue Books and official documents, but from the most unquestionable personal authorities, that the East India Company maintains an illegal monopoly of opium in India, for the sole purpose of indolently raising a smaller revenue where larger might be obtained; and that this revenue is principally derived from the opium sold for the notorious purpose of being smuggled into China, contrary to the laws of that empire.

Additional evidence that the East India Company is illegally engaged in trade will help to bring the subject more clearly before your readers. By an Act of Parliament, 3 and 4 Wm. IV. cap. 85, it was distinctly decreed that the East India Company of Merchants, trading to the East Indies, shall close their commercial affairs, sell all their merchandise and warehouses, and abstain from all commercial business. The charter

under which they had hitherto been privileged to trade was taken from them; and, ceasing to be merchants, they became what now the East India Company is—a Board of Administration for carrying on the government of India, as directed or permitted by the Board of Control. With only a semblance of power for good or evil, the East India Company, as now constituted, is little else than a buffer to bear the odium which should fall upon the Ministers of the Crown for the continuance of monopolies and the cause of unjust war.

Not only is the proof of the East India Company being engaged in trade palpable in the notoriety of the illegal salt and opium monopolies, but it is irrefutably borne out by the evidence of its own officers. Mr. W. Prideaux, holding high and responsible office in the India House, was examined before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on the 3rd of June, 1847; and speaking with reference to a return that had been laid before the House in the preceding session, he stated, “The return is not the value of opium exported, *but of opium sold by the East India Company in Bengal.*” He then shows that of the opium exported from India, roughly estimated at the amount of five or six millions sterling, the quantity “*sold by the East India Company*” amounted to about 2,577,500*l.*; the remainder of the revenue must, therefore, have been derived from the opium grown in independent native states, upon which the East India Company levies a duty of about 40*l.* a chest, in order to keep up the price of their own drug in Bengal. Mr. Prideaux was asked by Mr. Moffatt, M.P., (q. 4670), “Is it your belief that that quantity of opium goes exclusively to China?” and his reply was, “It is all exported; and by far the greater part goes to China.”

Mr. Prideaux was questioned by Mr. Harcourt, M.P., (q. 4679), “Is the amount realised from the opium sold by the Company to be considered as revenue derived by the Company, or does that include the cost?” Answer—“It includes the cost.” And the next question in the Blue Book elicits the cost and sale prices in the East India Company’s illegal traffic; it shows also the amount of revenue derived from the measure of imposing a duty, which, taken separately, may be justified. The simple fact is, that the Indian Government under the East India

Company derives a fiscal *revenue* from a duty on opium grown in foreign states, and a *profit* from the illegal monopoly of, and trade in, the drug produced in its own territories.

Hugh Stark, Esq., Chief of the Revenue department of the India Board, shows the nature of the East India Company's connexion with opium in the following words:—"The opium monopoly exists all over India; the cultivation has been largely extended, with a view of competing in Eastern markets with the opium of Malwa and Turkey. The Company have relaxed in their price of opium; their object is now to sell at a low price, to enable merchants, who buy at the Calcutta sales, to compete with the merchants who procure supplies from Malwa and Turkey, for the China markets;" and Lord W. Bentinck, in a letter to the Court of Directors, dated 21st September, 1830, which was produced before the Parliamentary Committee, in 1840, writes:—"The final effect of an increase beyond assignable limit in the quantity of the drug exported to China, from both sides of India, is a result beyond the power of our foresight to discover, or even at present to hazard any speculation upon." That of which Lord W. Bentinck could not foresee the final effect, has been borne onward by monopoly, until, as Lord Dalhousie shows in his celebrated minute on his administration in India, the revenue in 1856 was anticipated to realise 5,000,000*l.* sterling, which would require an importation, into China, of not less than 120,000 chests of opium.

To put the question still farther beyond dispute, we have the evidence of Mr. Jardine, one of the principal merchants in China, who, when examined before a committee of the House of Commons, in 1840, stated, "In Calcutta the Company's sales are recorded, and there is no difficulty in getting the price-currents; the highest and lowest prices are given, and the average struck by their own servants." Mr. Colquhoun, a member of the committee, asked him, "Have you ever had any communication with the Board of Salt and Opium in Calcutta on the subject?" Answer—"Yes, we have had musters (samples) of opium sent on to us in small quantities, packed in different ways, with a request that we would sell it, ascertain the kind of package that suited the Chinese market best, and report on the same to the board." The correspondence was

official, "signed by the secretary by authority of the board," and, as Mr. Jardine believed, emanating from the Supreme Government of India. There was also laid before the House of Commons that same year extracts from a letter from W. H. Fleming, Esq., formerly a judge of circuit and inspector of opium, in which that gentleman states, "that the system of monopoly, even in a commercial point of view, appears to me beneficial, as being perhaps the only means of ensuring a supply of the pure drug of a uniform quality, and prepared in a particular manner to suit the Chinese, which, if not attended to, would, I apprehend, greatly injure the trade."

Having thus established the *fons et origo malum* in the fact of the East India Company's illegal exercise of monopoly, I shall proceed in other letters to show the consequences that led to the crisis of the first opium war, and give an insight into British diplomatic relations with the Chinese.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

R. A.

No. II.

SIR,—In the latter years of the last century opium was a legal import to China on payment of a moderate duty, and the drug used for medicinal purposes did not exceed in quantity about 200 chests a-year.

About the year 1773 the East India Company of Merchants entered upon this trade, and, exercising delegated sovereignty in India, they instituted a monopoly of the drug. So rapidly did the importation increase, and so fatal was the use of opium to the morality and prosperity of the Chinese, that in a few years the Emperor made it contraband, and published laws to restrain his subjects from the deleterious use of it. As it has always been a principle of Chinese policy to avoid and forego every claim of jurisdiction over foreigners, even in Chinese territory, while the Emperor and his officers legislated for and punished his own subjects, remonstrances and admonitions only

were addressed to the English authorities, through the channels of communication recognised by both nations. In those days the only British authorities in China were the factors and agents of the East India Company; and as the Company was determined, in spite of remonstrances and expostulations, to push on the contraband trade, the difficulty soon arose of reconciling this with the political good faith to be observed towards a friendly power. The diplomatic course followed by the Company was to ignore and disclaim the trade which their monopoly had so suddenly increased, and by which alone it was sustained. Not a grain of opium was allowed to be taken to China in their own ships; the captains and officers were prohibited, under heavy penalties, from engaging in the traffic; and when they petitioned to be allowed to participate in what afforded such large profits, they received a peremptory refusal of their request. This sufficiently indicates the policy of the East India Company of Merchants, and that they acted under a perfect knowledge of the illegal nature of the opium trade, and of the political embarrassments which were always to be apprehended. The excuses made by the East India Company have been and are, that they do not export opium, nor smuggle it into China, and that the profit upon their illegal monopoly comes in aid of the revenue, and affords relief to their finances. But, *qui facit per alium, facit per se*; and the subterfuges to which I shall show that our diplomatists have been driven, brands our nation with the indelible stigmas of false policy, immorality, cruelty, and deceit.

In order to arrive at subsequent facts, I sketch but an outline of what has been perpetrated in defiance of Chinese laws, and is now carried on in continuous violation of our own Acts of Parliament. In 1840, a Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons to inquire into the trade with China, and *report thereupon*, concluded that important duty with these words:—"Your Committee feel that they shall best discharge their duty by laying before the House, *without any observation on their part*, the evidence which they have taken on the subject;" such evidence having gone largely into the opium question, and the political embarrassments in which it had embroiled us.

In 1847 another Select Committee, appointed to take into consideration the state of our commercial relations with China, did furnish the House with a report upon the subject, from which I extract these passages:—"The difficulties of the trade do not arise from any want of demand in China for articles of British manufacture, or from increasing competition of other nations." "The payment for opium, from the inordinate desire for it which prevails, and from the unrecognised nature of the transaction, absorbs the silver, to the great inconvenience of the general traffic of the Chinese."

"Unless we can look forward to an increased consumption of those products in which China has the means of paying, the adjustment (of the balance of trade) can only be made at the cost of largely diminished exports, and of restricted employment to every branch of industry connected with them."

With regard to Ningpo and Foo-chow-foo, the Committee reports that "the British trade has hitherto proved but trifling. The opium trade, however, flourishes at Foo-chow-foo, with its usual demoralising influences on the population, and embarrassing effects upon the monetary condition of the place; the latter would be diminished by the legalisation of the traffic; the former, we are afraid, are incontestible and inseparable from its existence." Opposed to the suggested diminution, not entire removal, of a monetary inconvenience, and the continuance of a demoralising traffic, we have the noble declaration of him whom the opium smugglers call the barbarian Emperor of a barbarous nation, that "nothing will induce him to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of his people."

The expressions of Lords W. Bentinck and Dalhousie do but ill accord with the intentions of Lord Cornwallis, about the time that the monopoly was instituted. That benevolent, but often much mistaken, nobleman, justified the measure on the grounds of a maximum taxation restricting to a minimum the consumption of the drug. Lord Cornwallis seemed to have been as unconscious as many economists of the present day are, of the fallacy that vice will not bear any amount of taxation, so long as you invest it with the sanction of a legal recognition. Licensed gaming-houses on the Continent of Europe, and many places of public entertainment in England, afford a practical illustration

of what is common to every immorality which finds impunity in the protection that is paid for it in taxes or for license.

The vigilance with which the East India Company and its Government watched over the strictness of their monopoly, is exemplified in the following extract of a despatch from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Directors:—"We had anticipated the suggestion contained in the seventh paragraph of your despatch, having already, on the occasion of the importation of a large quantity of Turkish opium, given directions for inserting in the licenses to trade to China a condition that such license shall be void in case any foreign, or other opium than opium sold by the Company at their public sales in Bengal, be laden on board the ship in any part of the voyage, or imported into China on board of it."

In the licenses granted for thus smuggling opium into China there was this clause:—The East India Company "do hereby require and command all persons within or belonging to this Government, under our jurisdiction, and we do desire all persons that are subjects, friends, and allies to his Majesty, to suffer the said ship to pass," &c. &c.

In my next letter I will enter upon Anglo-Chinese diplomacy.

Yours, &c.

R. A.

No. III.

SIR,—In the year 1833 a Royal Commission was issued to Lord Napier and others, in which were these words:—"And we do further declare our pleasure to be, that one of you the said Superintendants shall be specially charged with the duty of ascertaining, by all practicable ways and means, and with the utmost attainable precision, the state of the trade carried on between our subjects, or the subjects of any other foreign power, with the inhabitants of China, and especially the number of vessels annually arriving . . . from the territories of the said

Company in India, and the tonnage of such vessels . . . and the amount and nature of the goods from time to time imported in such vessels into China . . . together with all material facts illustrative of the course and nature of such trade, and of the difficulties by which the same may be impeded." Again, in section 19:—"And we do require you constantly to bear in mind and impress, as occasion may offer, upon our subjects resident in or resorting to China, the duty of conforming to the laws and usages of the Chinese empire, so long as such laws shall be administered in justice and good faith, and in the same manner in which the laws are or shall be administered towards the subjects of China," &c. In announcing his arrival to the Governor of Canton, Lord Napier, on the 26th of August, 1834, informed that functionary that, "as bearer of a Royal Commission, he was empowered to promote and protect British trade. . . . The exclusive privileges and trade hitherto enjoyed by the East India Company having ceased and determined by the will and power of his Majesty the King and Parliament of Great Britain." Here let me beg that particular attention may be paid to the above extracts, and that they may be carefully remembered as I proceed with my subject.

The short period of Lord Napier's administration in China may be described as of that professional diplomacy which is only admirable in naval officers in times of war, when civil negotiation having ceased, the simplest alternatives are offered, and shortest periods for deliberation allowed. *Veni, vidi*, and Lord Napier summarily proposed, with the help of some frigates and a few hundred British soldiers, to wage a triumphant war with China, and add the *vici*. The Chinese, however, adhered to their laws and usages, to which Lord Napier was instructed to conform, and the British representative, baffled in his endeavours to enforce a change of Chinese policy, and having caused a suspension of all intercourse, was obliged to succumb, and leave Canton before the Chinese would allow legal trade to be resumed.

On the death of Lord Napier, Sir George Robinson assumed the direction of affairs, and he thus described the conduct of our countrymen, in the following extract from a despatch to Lord Palmerston, dated 13th of April, 1835:—"It now becomes a painful but imperative duty to express unfeigned regret at the

dissensions and violent party spirit that has so fatally prevailed, and even now exists to a fearful extent, amongst the commercial community at Canton. Your Lordship will, I feel certain, acquit me of any other feeling save a sense of duty, when I call your attention to the dangerous state of society, and express my conviction that the untoward reception at, and disastrous removal of his Majesty's commission from Canton, was mainly attributable to the bitter party feeling which, I am sorry to assert, reigned at the very moment when general unanimity and cordial co-operation should have aided and strengthened the efforts of its officers."

Sir George Robinson's despatches show that during the time he held office, between the time of Lord Napier's death and the arrival of his successor, Captain Elliott, opium smuggling was the insuperable disturbing element in all our intercourse with China. In writing to Lord Palmerston, from Lintin, on the 10th of December, 1835, about the embarrassment caused by the lawless conduct of British subjects, of whom Sir George says the Chinese "are ever in dread," and with allusion to "innumerable causes of dispute and altercation," he observes, "to one point alone it is possible that their (the Chinese) attention may be attracted, and that is the circumstance of my being in the neighbourhood of the great and increasing emporium of the outside (*i.e.* the contraband opium) trade. In the event of their remarking on this part of the measure, I conceive it will be easy to remove their objections, simply by changing my position to Chuen-pee, the legal and usual anchorage to which the resort of our men-of-war has usually been sanctioned."

Here we have the British representative marking his own position as illegal. He informs Lord Palmerston that he will still remain there, "should no great opposition occur," and informs him that "he has seen upwards of fifty ships assembled here on one occasion," and that there were "between twenty-five and thirty ships, constantly lying here in full and active employment," smuggling opium, for which Lintin was the grand *dépôt*!

Much as the East India Company and Ministers of the Crown wish to keep the opium traffic out of sight, as the cause of our troubles in China, the truth will intrude. Sir George

Robinson, in another despatch, emphatically points out the bane and antidote of Britain's commerce:—"Whenever his Majesty's Government direct us to prevent British vessels engaging in the traffic, we can enforce any order to that effect; but a more certain method would be to prohibit the growth of the poppy and the manufacture of the opium in British India."—Despatch to Lord Palmerston, dated Lintin, Feb. 5th, 1836.

Sir G. Robinson was succeeded by Captain Elliott, who, on the 2nd of February, 1837, wrote thus to the Governor-General of India regarding the opium and general trade at Canton:—"It must be quite unnecessary to press upon your lordship's attention the many extremely important considerations connected with this subject; and I trust I shall be excused for submitting the most hopeful means which suggest themselves to me to draw to a close so disquieting a state of things." The Captain then suggests means very similar to those which his bellicose predecessor had recommended, and in asking for a man-of-war and some Company's cruisers to be sent to his aid, he informs Lord Auckland that "he had solicited the Commander-in-Chief to send a man-of-war to these seas, with instructions to afford such countenance to the general trade as may be practicable *without inconveniently committing his Majesty's Government upon any delicate question,*" or, in plain, undiplomatic English, the very indelicate question of opium smuggling.

In his letter to the Admiral on this occasion, the representative of the Majesty and people of Great Britain is driven to the humiliating necessity of providing an excuse for the appearance of a naval force; so he trumps up the case of a brig that had been plundered two years before by some pirates, out of sight of the roads to which European vessels resorted, "as a plea that I can have no doubt the provincial Government would *find itself obliged to accept!*"

In the first year of his administration, Captain Elliott informed the Minister of the Crown that there was some hope that the importation of opium to China might be legalized, as formerly, for medical purposes, under strict rules and severe penalties; and, though he could not but think that this would afford his Majesty's Government much satisfaction, yet the "fact that such an article should have grown to be by far the

most important part of our import trade is of itself a source of painful reflection ; and the wide-spreading public mischief which the manner of its pursuit has entailed, so ably and faithfully represented in some of the papers I have had the honour to transmit to your lordship, aggravates the discomfort of the whole subject." The papers alluded to as having been transmitted to the Minister of State, were written by the Chinese authorities ; and, so far as they have been published by order of Parliament, they, by the superiority of their commercial, political, and moral arguments, put to shame and confusion the short-sighted policy, shuffling diplomacy, and eventually suicidal expediency by which our national character is so lowered in comparison with the conduct of the Chinese so-called Barbarians. Take an incident in illustration of this : Fifteen British subjects were landed on the coast of China by some mutineers, and abandoned to what might be their fate ; in despatching a man-of-war to their rescue, Captain Elliott feeling, it is to be presumed, the twitches of political conscience, instructs Captain Quin of the Royal Navy : — " But upon this topic I will presume to say that it would be well to avoid those parts of the coast upon which the opium ships are usually anchored." Here there is an ample, though indirect, confession of the guilt of smuggling, of its possibly evil influence even in the cause of common humanity, and of another of its embarrassing effects in our intercourse with the Chinese. Now, mark the contrast between this caution to the captain of a British man-of-war and the report made to Lord Palmerston of the result of the expedition : — " The fifteen people belonging to the late brig *Fairy* were despatched to Canton by the Governor of Fuh-kein, and they were all safely delivered over to my hands by the authorities of this province. Their generous treatment by the Chinese authorities has been in the highest degree honourable to the humanity of this Government, and I have not failed to convey my respectful sense of such conduct to his Excellency the Governor." — Captain Elliott to Viscount Palmerston, August 29th, 1837. At the very time that the Chinese were thus acting, they were addressing remonstrances against the opium-smuggling on the coast of Fuh-kein, and urging Captain Elliott to apply to his Sovereign to prevent it !

In November, 1837, we find, with shame and sorrow, a palpable falsehood addressed to the Chinese, in these words, sent in reply to an edict dated in September:—"He (Captain Elliott) has already signified to your Excellency, with truth and plainness, that his commission extends only to the regular trade with this empire; and further, that the existence of any other than this trade has never yet been submitted to his gracious Sovereign." This paper was written on the 17th of November, and on the 19th of that month Captain Elliott commences a long despatch to Lord Palmerston on the opium trade, commencing thus:—"I now beg leave to resume the subject of my despatch of yesterday's date." He enters fully into details of the opium trade; and after informing Lord Palmerston that "We have now arrived at a stage in the passage of circumstances when it appears necessary that the subject should *once more* be drawn under your lordship's serious attention," he adds, "Setting aside the interference of the mandarins, it is not to be questioned that the passage of this valuable article in small and insignificantly armed vessels affords an intense temptation to piratical attack by the many desperate smugglers out of employment, and by the needy inhabitants of the neighbouring islands. And another Ladrone war directed against Europeans, as well as Chinese, is a perfectly probable event. That the main body of the inward trade (about three-fifths of the amount) should be carried on in so hazardous a manner to the safety of the whole commerce and intercourse with the empire, is a very disquieting subject of reflection. But I have a strong conviction that it is an evil susceptible of easy removal." Both Sir G. Robinson and Captain Elliott had, as we have seen, already indicated this easy removal to be the abolition of the East India Company's illegal monopoly of opium.

Painful as it is to contemplate the above departure from truth, it is remarkable that, however fully the distant representatives of the British Crown enter into the details and circumstances of the opium trade, our more astute diplomatists in this country do not, in any of their replies that have been published, commit themselves to either knowledge or recognition of the fact. In July, 1836, Captain Elliott had warned Lord Palmer-

ston, "Sooner or later, the feeling of independence which the peculiar mode of conducting this branch of the trade has created upon the part of our countrymen in China, will lead to grave difficulties. A long course of impunity will beget hardihood, and at last some gross insult will be perpetrated that the Chinese authorities will be constrained to resent—they will be terrified and irritated, and will probably commit some act of cruel violence that will make any choice but armed interference impossible to our Government." Outrages by the English are smoothed off under the term "gross insult;" but the legal acts of Chinese self-defence, not so cruel as were the laws of this country less than half a century ago, are described as "acts of cruel violence, necessitating the horrors of vindictive war."

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

R. A.

No. IV.

SIR,—On the 20th April, 1838, Captain Elliott addressed the following Report to our Minister for Foreign Affairs:—"In the course of the last two months the number of English boats employed in the illicit traffic between Lintin and Canton has vastly increased, and the deliveries of opium have frequently been accompanied by conflict of fire-arms between these vessels and the Government preventive craft. It is plain that British subjects and property engaged in these pursuits are within easy grasp of the provincial authorities, whenever it may suit their purpose, or they may be driven by the Court to act with vigour. In the edicts forwarded to your lordship in my despatch of November 18, 1837, the Governor had already charged me with countenancing the outside trade; and in the event of disaster there can be no doubt he would immediately connect the growth of these last irregularities with my own departure from Canton."

Bear in mind that the English are the aggressors, and that

their Government has always had the power of putting an end to the smuggling, as now carried on on such a gigantic scale, by the simple abolition of the opium monopoly by which the trade is supplied.

I will continue Captain Elliott's instructive despatch. For, as he writes, "the purpose of being prepared for such devices," as the above, he turns from the subject of trade and smuggling, and enters upon a long-pending controversy about the Chinese word "pin" being written on the envelopes of official letters. Having informed Lord Palmerston of this stroke of diplomacy, he reverts to his ever-present difficulty, the opium smuggling, and proceeds:—"Should any serious disaster ensue, threatening the lives of her Majesty's subjects engaged in these pursuits (and in my judgment this result is perfectly probable), I shall not fail to found the strongest remonstrances against such extreme measures upon the Governor's rejection of these last proposals;" that is, upon the use of the monosyllable "pin," and other points of red-tapery, about which there had been discussion for many years, in which the Chinese were not inclined to make changes, and regarding which Lord Palmerston at last directed Captain Elliott "to avail himself of any proper opportunity to press for the substitution of a less objectionable character on the superscription of communications which you may have to address to the Viceroy." This, therefore, did not involve a *casus belli*, and we learn from a subsequent report that the mighty events which hung upon a "pin" were satisfactorily disposed of, when the British representative reported "that, in return for a substantial concession, I have agreed to incur the responsibility of communicating with his Excellency under the character 'pin.'" And this grand *coup* winds up with a consignment of it to the department of rites, buttons, peacocks' feathers, and points of etiquette.

Now, will it be believed in Great Britain, that up to the outbreak of the opium war there was no authority granted for the control of British subjects in China? no British tribunal or magistracy to which they were amenable, or by which they could be restrained? nor any jurisdiction recognised, but that which was indicated by the Royal Commission, quoted in my last letter? The consequences of this will be apparent as I carry

on my narrative in the historical language, which I take from Parliamentary Blue Books and Reports.

Again, referring to Captain Elliott's despatches, and passing on from the episodic "pin," our diplomatist, forgetful of an old proverb regarding honour, threatens to *peach* or *split* upon the Governor of Canton, for taking the bribes, which our smugglers had so systematically given that they have actually argued that their receipt by corrupted officers is equivalent to a duty paid to the State—another of the many proofs of Chinese barbarism and British integrity in our intercourse with that people.

Ireland was a trifling difficulty to Sir Robert Peel compared with opium smuggling to our representative to the Chinese. Captain Elliott having to contend with such disheartening anomalies, without legal power to act summarily, or organise either judicial, fiscal, or commercial administration, thus touchingly depicts the embarrassments in which he is involved. He had been warned by the Minister of the Crown against assuming authority in criminal cases, and he well knew the storm of vituperation that was ready to crush him if he should allow the most flagrant crime to be adjudicated upon by the Chinese tribunals. On the 2nd of January, 1839, he writes:—"I would with great deference take the liberty to observe, that when I assumed this office, recent Imperial commands were in existence (specially pointed at the British nation) to the effect that no foreign officers should reside in this empire. That chief obstacle has been removed, and . . . it involves a principle of great and comprehensive importance; namely, a permanent and direct official intercourse between the two countries. I shall offer no further excuse for the moderate manner in which I have been content in the present emergency to accept this concession, because I am sure your lordship will make every allowance for the difficulty of peacefully extracting any formal relaxation from this watchful Government.

"These observations, my Lord, may perhaps serve to excuse the respectful request I have now the honour to prefer. I humbly hope that her Majesty's Government (taking into consideration the novel, responsible, and undefined situation I fill,

and casting a thought upon the many embarrassing circumstances which have beset me) would be pleased to determine whether I have a claim to such an expression of support as I may be permitted to publish to the Queen's subjects in this country.

“There is certainly a spirit in active force among British subjects in this country, which makes it necessary for the safety of momentous concerns that the officer on the spot should be known to stand without blame in the estimation of her Majesty's Government; and it is not less needful that he should be forthwith vested with defined and adequate powers for the reasonable control of men whose rash conduct cannot be left to the operation of Chinese laws, without the utmost inconvenience and risk, and whose impunity is alike injurious to British character, and dangerous to British interests.

“It is my deliberate conviction, that the security of the Chinese trade, and the maintenance of our peaceful intercourse with this empire, depend upon the early attention of her Majesty's Government to this subject; and I take this occasion to repeat, that the assent of the Chinese Government to institutions of this kind is beyond all doubt; indeed, your lordship will perceive from the Governor's answer to my note of the 23rd ultimo, that he supposes they either are actually in existence, or, at all events, that they ought to be.”

Captain Elliott, after remarking that it would be difficult to make the Chinese understand that their permission was necessary for British officers and courts to exercise authority over British subjects, which authority they actually thought to be in existence, informs Lord Palmerston—“Your lordship may be assured that the theory is, even when they demand a homicide, that we have already tried and convicted him by our laws.” He then recounts a conversation with one of the Chinese authorities, How Qua, who “referred me with earnestness to the requests which had been made before the Company's monopoly was abolished, to make provision for the government of her Majesty's subjects; and he asked me what more was wanted, and how it was possible to preserve the peace, if all the English people who came to this country were to be left without control. He fur-

thermore entreated me to remind my nation's great Ministers, that this Government never interposed, except in cases of extreme urgency, upon the principle that they were ignorant of our laws and customs, and that it was unjust to subject us to rules made for people of totally different habits, and brought up under a totally different discipline. I must confess, my Lord, that this reasoning seems to me to be marked by wisdom and great moderation ;" a confession in which most men will agree with Captain Elliott, whatever his superiors may have felt on the question.

But that estimable officer's words in conclusion are very emphatic. "In fact, my Lord, if her Majesty's officer is to be of any use for the purposes of just protection—if the well-founded hope of improving things honourable and established is not to be sacrificed to the chances which may cast up by goading this Government into some sudden and violent assertion of its own authority, there is certainly no time to be lost in providing for the reasonable and defined control of her Majesty's subjects in China. I could not have concealed these opinions without betraying my duty to her Majesty's Government and the British public."

In another despatch on the subject of an important dispute which had arisen between the Chinese and English are the following passages:—"The establishment of some simple but efficacious civil jurisdiction would no doubt be a necessary accompaniment of this change of system, and your lordship may, I think, rely, that the Chinese would refer all contested points with her Majesty's subjects to this tribunal, either placing the disputed sum in deposit, or at least giving security that it should be paid, if the decision were adverse to them. I offer these opinions because I am sure the Chinese have great confidence in the good faith of Europeans, and because, too, I believe they are, in many important respects, the most moderate and reasonable people on the face of the earth." Thirteen days after these words were written, Captain Elliott informs Lord Palmerston, by a "hurried opportunity," that "in the meantime, however, there has been no relaxation in the vigour of the Government, directed not only against the introduction of opium, but in a far more remarkable manner against the consumers. A

corresponding degree of desperate adventure on the part of the smugglers is only a necessary consequence; and in this situation of things serious accidents, and sudden and indefinite interruptions to the regular trade, must always be probable events."

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

R. A.

No. V.

SIR, — Enough has, I think, been written to show the true nature of our conduct and diplomacy towards the Chinese. I must hasten to a catastrophe and to a conclusion. For further information, and for facts not stated in these letters, I must refer your readers to a pamphlet published by Judd and Glass, of Paternoster Row, entitled, "The Rise and Progress of British Opium Smuggling," &c.

On the 22d of March, 1839, Captain Elliott reported to the Secretary of State that he had received edicts from High Commissioner Lin, who had been invested with extraordinary powers by the Emperor, for the especial purpose of putting down the opium contraband traffic, and that he, Captain Elliott, having a man-of-war at Macao, "would take the most prompt measures for meeting the unjust and menacing dispositions of the High Commissioner." He had also forwarded a note to know, "whether it was the purpose of the Chinese Government to wage war on the ships and men of my country."

Commissioner Lin's edicts are to be found from pp. 350 to 355 of the correspondence relating to China, laid before Parliament in a Blue Book of 1840, and ought to be read by every Englishman who takes a patriotic interest in the pending crisis. He commences by reminding of the length of time and extent to which legal trade had been carried on, and of the benefits of reciprocity in commerce. He points out the illegality and evil effects of opium smuggling, and proclaims, that as every other measure had failed, as the laws of China were violated, and

edicts, remonstrances, and requests had all been disregarded, he, by order of the Emperor, had come to demand that the opium actually in the dominions of the Emperor, stored at Lintin and other ports, should be delivered up, in order that it might be destroyed, and that the foreigners should give a bond "that their vessels which shall hereafter resort hither will never again dare to bring opium with them," under penalty of amenability to the law and confiscation of the drug.

"I have heard," writes the Commissioner, "that you foreigners are used to attach great importance to the words '*good faith*,'" and, notwithstanding the object of his mission, he proceeds with us as if it was a reality, and promises "that if the English will deliver up the contraband drug, and relinquish for ever the unlawful traffic, he will implore the Emperor to vouchsafe extraordinary favour, and not alone to remit the punishment due to past errors, but also we will further request to devise some method of bestowing on you his Imperial rewards. After this you will continue to enjoy the advantages of commercial intercourse; and as you will not lose the character of being '*good foreigners*,' and be enabled to acquire profits, and gain wealth by an honest trade, will you not stand in a most honourable position?" Lin informs the foreigners that he has an exact account of all the contraband opium, knows the names of its owners and where it is stored, and that he is prepared to discriminate between the foreigners who deal in it and those who trade lawfully. Such was the conduct of a so-called barbarian, and the evidence before Parliament shows that some of the merchants in Canton inferred from the above proclamation, that it was the Commissioner's intention to have petitioned the Emperor to restore the drug after it had been given up, on condition that it should be taken out of the country, and the trade put an end to for ever.

Captain Elliott, in a despatch dated 30th March, 1839, reports:—"Resolved, in any pressure of emergency actually threatening the continued peaceful intercourse of this empire, to incur most heavy responsibilities regarding the ships engaged in this illicit traffic, I had also determined to resist sudden aggression upon British life and British property at all hazards." Captain Elliott, then, without one iota of authority, called upon the smugglers to give up their opium to him, and pledged his

Government to indemnify their loss. To carry this out he had come up from Macao to Canton, and having placed himself under the embargo placed upon his countrymen for violating the laws of the empire, he addressed to them these words:—"The justification of this immense responsibility will need more full development than it would be desirable, or indeed practicable, to make in my present condition. I am without doubt, however, that a great mass of human life hung upon my determination; for if I had commenced with a denial of my control over the subjects of Great Britain, the High Commissioner would have seized that pretext for reverting to his measures of intimidation against individual merchants, obviously the original intention, but which my sudden appearance had disturbed."

If tenacity to rank and emoluments is considered justificatory of all the degradation through which a member of our diplomatic disservice must struggle, it may seem hard to hold the Captain too strictly responsible for the particular plank to which he might cling amidst such a shipwreck of national honour, commercial interests and honesty, and Christian morality. The representative of our country chose his difficulty, though warned by a friend that he was acting without authority. He stepped between the Chinese and their just dealings with the smugglers, and engaged to indemnify the latter for the loss that Lord Palmerston had before warned them they would have to bear if ever it should occur. *Vide* his lordship's despatch, dated 18th June, 1838.

When the news of these events reached England, so great was the doubt that the Government would recognise Captain Elliott's assumed responsibility, that his bills for payment of the opium fell to a heavy discount, and their holders were driven to great exertions to insure their being honoured. In an ably written anonymous pamphlet, the author, who was evidently a merchant in or connected with China, thus argues with much apparent justice:—"On the other hand, it is not asserted that no moral responsibility attaches to a participation in a traffic of evil consequences to the morals of the people among whom it is carried on. This is a question into which the present claimants have no occasion to enter, great as are the prejudices existing against them on no other grounds. The parties primarily con-

cerned in keeping such a traffic alive are the consumer and the producer, and upon them, if conscious agents in the matter, the higher degree of responsibility may well be supposed to rest." And Mr. Jardine informed the House of Commons, "when the East India Company were growing and selling it, and there was a declaration of the Houses of Parliament, with all the bench of bishops at their back, that it was inexpedient to do it away, I think our moral scruples need not have been very great."

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

R. A.

No. VI.

SIR,—Sir John Bowring is, though more concise, hardly more clear in exposing the injustice of battering down Canton and slaughtering its unwarlike inhabitants, because the police had taken Chinese pirates out of a Chinese vessel, lying in a Chinese river, than is Captain Elliott in his history of our national proceedings, which has been laid before your readers in his own words.

I shall make but one more quotation, which will be a fitting pendant to the instructions to Capt. Quin, R.N.; to the Pin controversy; to the denial of the existence of opium smuggling being known to the sovereign power of England; and to the bullying note demanding to know whether Commissioner Lin, when he, in terms as friendly as could well be used, demanded the contraband drug to be quietly given up, "intended to make war upon the ships and people of his country?" Finding that Lin was not to be frightened, we have the representative of the majesty, honour, and dignity of Great Britain, eating the words of one of his own haughty, overbearing communications in the following very edifying specimen of Ancient Pistol-ism:—

"Elliott, &c. sincerely anxious to fulfil the pleasure of the Great Emperor, as far as it may be in his power, and as soon as may be authentically made known to him, requests that your Excellency will be pleased to depute an officer to visit him this

day, to the end that all matters may be peaceably adjusted. And if Elliott is left at liberty to communicate with the men and ships of his nation at Whampoa, he will solemnly pledge himself, that he will take care that they do not repair to the provincial city, under the apprehension that he and all the people of his nation are prisoners and without food, thus producing conflict and disturbance.

“Elliott, therefore, moves your Excellency to let the native servants return to their occupations, to permit the supply of provisions, and to remove all the barriers from before the factories. By such means, confidence and tranquillity will be restored in the minds of all men, both native and foreign.

“Elliott has, in all respects, since he filled the station of superintendent, manifested his earnest desire to keep the peace, and fulfil the pleasure of your Excellency; and, as an officer of his country, he now asks for reasonable treatment for himself and all the men of his nation, and claims your Excellency’s confidence in his peaceful dispositions on this occasion of perilous jeopardy.

“It may sometimes happen, when Elliott addresses your Excellency concerning affairs, that unsuitable terms find place in his communications; and whenever that be the case, he entreats your Excellency to believe that the circumstance is attributable to the want of perfect familiarity with the native language, and never to any intention to manifest disrespect to the high officers of his Government, which would expose him to the severe displeasure of his own Sovereign.

“And he has now to request that your Excellency will be pleased to return him the address he submitted this morning.

“With highest consideration, &c.

(Signed) “CHARLES ELLIOTT.”

Now, would it be believed if unseen, that by the last paragraph the British representative withdrew a note of the same date, demanding that passports should be given for all English ships and persons to leave Canton, and that if in three days that was not done, this same respectful Elliott, without consideration for the pleasure of the Great Emperor, or for the high officers of his Government, “would be reluctantly driven to the conclusion that the men and ships of his nation are forcibly detained, and would act accordingly?”

I have thus endeavoured to bring before the public facts from our parliamentary records which are of importance at the present crisis, and may assist in the formation of sound opinion regarding our intercourse with China, and the butchery and devastation with which its inhabitants are threatened.

The Chinese have faithfully carried out their part of the treaty, by the cession of Hong-Kong, and by opening four ports fully to legal trade, in every one of which our smugglers are importing opium, contrary to the treaty; there is an imperfect fulfilment of the treaty at Canton, where we have free opportunity to trade, but not access to the city, outside of which our factories and dwellings are conveniently situated. This state of things arises from the hatred which the inhabitants bear to the English, the cause of which is, I think, made evident by Captain Elliott and other diplomatists. For peace sake, and to avoid any interruption to legal commerce, Sir George Bonham had amicably condoned with the Governor of Canton, that that part of the treaty should remain in abeyance; and there most certainly is now no reason why we make a pretext, as frivolous and unjust in itself as it is dreadful in its consequences, to carry by force of arms what is open to friendly negotiation and justifiable pressure. China has its faults, and its exclusive system is far behind European ideas of international intercourse; but on a fair comparison with the passport regulations of the Continent, that empire is hardly more behind Russia, France, Austria, and Italy, than those countries fall short of our free ingress and egress; and yet we do not dream of destroying Cronstadt, Cherbourg, Trieste, or Civita Vecchia, because the policy of their sovereigns is less liberal than our own.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

R. A.



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