

Big Opium Farm-- China's Great Curse

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MACAO, Dec. 2, 1900.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—There is a great opium farm at Macao, where about \$10,000,000 worth of opium is made every year. There is a similar farm at Hong Kong, and there are others scattered over China. The Chinese consumption of opium is steadily growing. Two hundred years ago it was practically nothing. Today it costs more than the liquor bill of the United States. It probably amounts to more than \$400,000,000 annually, for the foreign doctors in some of the districts estimate that 70 per cent of the people are addicted to its use. In other places the percentage is less, falling among some classes as low as 20 and 30 per cent. Say, for instance, that on an average it amounts to only 50 per cent and you have 200,000,000 people who are opium eaters or opium smokers. Some of these annually spend hundreds of dollars for the drug, others hundreds of cents, but at the low average of \$2 a year the opium consumed would cost \$400,000,000.

I visited the opium farm here today. It is situated in the heart of the city. It is surrounded by great buildings, and all told it does not cover an acre of space. Nevertheless its produce is worth \$200,000 a week, or more than \$10,000,000 a year. The Macao people call it a farm, but it is not that in our sense of the word. It is an opium factory, a monopoly farmed out by the government. The rent of the farm is \$130,000 a year, and the farmer pays this for the privilege of turning the crude juice of the poppy into the little tin boxes of opium ready for the pipe of the smoker.

The most of the opium used comes from India. It is raised on the plains of Hindoostan under the superintendence of the English government, shipped by it to Bombay and Calcutta and from there sent to Macao. It comes in great boxes and balls of four pounds each. The balls are of a brown color. They are as rough as sandstone and they look as though they had

been registered on my brain since I went through China.

Kneading the Poppy Juice.
I leave this room to go into another. Here the opium, having been boiled to the consistency of taffy, is being kneaded, rubbed and stirred into a paste-like mass. The men who do the work are coolies, bare to the waist. They are perspiring and the white drops stand out upon their skin and roll down into the mass which they are kneading. The stuff is boiled several times. It is mixed with water and strained. It is boiled again and strained again, until finally it has been gotten down to the right consistency and condition for sale. It is now put up in tin boxes and is ready for shipment to China, the United States and other countries where opium is used.

The increase in the use of opium among the Chinese is enormous. Last year letters were sent out to 100 foreign doctors stationed in different parts of the empire. They were asked for statistics as to opium and its effects in their respective districts. These reports were gathered together by Dr. Park, the surgeon of the imperial maritime customs, who has charge of the big hospital at Soo Chow. I have the copy before me, and from it take much of the following information:

Many of the doctors estimate that from 30 to 80 per cent of the Chinese are opium smokers. They say that the mandarins smoke the most and that thousands of wealthy people are impoverishing themselves by the use of the drug. They say that the laboring men smoke less because the act of smoking takes a great deal of time. It cannot be done while work is going on, and the smoker is almost sure to lose his job. No one will employ an opium smoker if he can help it. He is, as a rule, unreliable, generally weak and often a thief.

The Chinese themselves denounce the habit. They class it among the three greatest of sins, and attempt to regulate it



OPIUM PARLOR OF A CHINESE MILLIONAIRE—EVERY VISITOR IS INVITED TO HIT THE PIPE.

and stopping being well expressed in the following, which was written on the walls of the opium refuge at Soo Chow by one of the inmates:
"While smoking opium we are transported to Paradise; while breaking the habit we are tortured in hell."
The tortures are usually too much for the patient. Some of them pretend to be permanently cured, but upon investigation it is usually found that they have changed from opium to morphine. A vast amount of morphine pills are consumed by the Chinese. They are for sale at all the drug

stores, and in some places the pill-takers are as many as the opium smokers. In some cities along the Yangtze the hypodermic method of injecting morphine has become common. There are professional morphine peddlers who go about with hypodermic syringes up their sleeves and given injections at the rate of 1 cent apiece. They visit the tea houses and are ready to give you a jab in the arm upon asking. In some places the customers stand up in a row and hold out their arms with the sleeves rolled up to the shoulders. The usual place for the injection is the biceps, but many arms are tattooed from shoulder to wrist with injection scars, and some persons have such marks extending over the greater part of their chests and shoulders. The morphine injectors make their own solutions. They carry the stuff along with them, and when the solution gives out they take the dirty water from the shop and mix morphine with it in a dirty cup for a fresh supply. They never cleanse their syringes, and the danger of disease communication must be great. Such men are to be seen also in the native city of Shanghai.

Old Alaskan Graveyard

Alaska has some of the weirdest and most curious cemeteries in existence. The columns shown in the illustration are monuments to dead Shimans, or medicine men, of the Haida Indians. The main figure of the column in the foreground is an eagle, that bird having been the token of the Haida Shaman. Shimans are always buried in remote localities, usually on a heavily wooded hillside. Many of their monuments are centuries old. The Alaskan Indian of today has not the same respect



AN OLD ALASKAN GRAVEYARD.



THEATRICAL PEOPLE ALL SMOKE OPIUM.

been dusted with oatmeal. Each ball is about as big as your head. It consists of the juice of the poppy as it was gathered from the pods by the Hindoos and made into these balls under the English. I asked the head of the factory to allow me to photograph one of these balls, but he refused to permit the camera to be used in the works.

How Opium is Refined.

He permitted me, however, to go through the establishment and I spent several hours in the different rooms making notes. It is one of the busiest places I have seen in China. Take the melting rooms, where the opium is boiled and refined. It is more like a foundry than anything else. It is 500 feet long and not more than twenty feet wide. It has an earthen floor and along each wall, running the full length of the room, are scores of little ovens, in each of which is a great flat brass basin, in which the opium is cooking. The stuff looks like a thick, black molasses. It seethes and boils as the half-naked Chinese worker stirs it to and fro with a great ladle.

Some of the basins are as big around as a washtub and all are sending forth opium fumes. The room is filled with white vapor from the hundreds of boiling pans. The fumes get into my nostrils, my head aches and for the time I have all the sensations of the opium drunkard.

I sit and watch the Chinese devils at their hellish work and as I do so it seems to me that I can see the pictures of the ruins which it is to create as it is scattered throughout the Chinese empire. I can see dens in which scores of haggard-eyed, yellow-faced mortals are lying and smoking away the wages which should go to the support of their families. There are women as well as men, and children as well as grown-ups. Here is a mother with her baby at her feet lying before the opium lamp. The pipe has fallen from her mouth and the little one is playing with it, sucking it. I can see the opium parlors of the rich and the hells of vice which I have seen at Shanghai—a score of pictures which

by law. They license the opium-selling shops, collect taxes upon it and treat it much as we do drink in the United States. The people call opium smokers opium devils, and although nearly all use more or less opium, they despise the opium drunkard as much as we do the alcoholic drunkard. Some of the officials are attempting to put a stop to opium smoking. One of these is Chang Chi Tung, who has denounced its use among the officials, and who would like to see a stop put to opium raising in his province.

Opium Suicides.

The number of opium suicides in China is alarming the authorities. Soo Chow has not to exceed 500,000 people and Dr. Park states that there are a thousand attempts at suicide on the average there every year. This is one for every 500 of the population, or two to the thousand, and, supposing there be 400,000,000 Chinese, if the same average exists elsewhere, it means 800,000 attempted opium suicides annually. The percentage of suicides is said to have doubled since opium was introduced. The Chinese are an excitable people and the having of such a poisonous article as opium on hand is a temptation. They know that an overdose will cause death and use it for this purpose both in the raw and manufactured state and in opium ashes.

Indeed there are charitable institutions in different parts of China that offer doctors at any time, day or night, to treat opium suicides free of charge. One such institution at Soo Chow treated 111 cases of this nature in six months.

I heard of many curious opium suicides during a trip that I made through the country a hundred miles or so back of Shanghai. I stopped one night in the city of Kow Shing at the hospital of the Southern Presbyterian Medical mission. One of the doctors of this hospital is Mr. Venable, an American who has worked long in that field. He told me that he had last year treated something like 9,000 people and that the most of the cases before the hospital resulted from overdoses of opium. Said he:

"The Chinese often commit suicide to

avenge themselves upon an enemy. There is no greater disgrace here than to have a person kill himself on your account. You are then supposed to be his murderer. The people say you must have been a very bad man to have brought him to such a state of mind and are hence disgraced. Wives often commit suicide to avenge themselves on their husbands and I know of instances of fathers killing themselves to spite their sons. This is an awful calamity for the son, for it means his social ostracism. We had a case of this kind in connection with the mission. One of our native preachers, a very good fellow, had an ill-tempered father, who became angry and killed himself in his son's house. This caused such an outcry among the man's congregation that he had to give up the ministry.

"Another case of opium suicide was that of a mother and daughter-in-law. They got into a quarrel over the breaking of a tea cup and each committed suicide to spite the other."

Men, Women and Children Use It.
Dr. Venable tells me that there is a vast deal of opium used in the Yangtze valley. There are more opium dens than rice shops or tea shops, and men, women and children are to be found in them. The theatrical people and singing girls all use opium. It is smoked by the army and almost everywhere.

Kow Shing is a walled town of 100,000 people, but it consumes opium to the value of a thousand dollars in gold every day. This would be an average of a cent a day per person, or \$3.65 a year, for every man, woman and child in the town. At five to the family it would be \$18.25 annually for every family in Kow Shing. Considering the fact that the poor make on an average from 5 to 10 cents a day this is enormous. Suppose an American laborer getting \$2 a day should pay 50 cents daily for drink or opium, he would not pay as great a proportion. From one-fourth to one-half of each man's daily earnings goes for opium.

The children of opium smokers soon learn to use the drug. In some districts there are whole families who take their daily smoke. "In one rich family," says the report of Dr. Park, "every member smokes, and a 12-year-old boy had an allowance of \$1 a day for his opium. Another doctor reported that he knew of a father and six sons, all of whom were opium smokers. The youngest son died at the age of 6, a little, withered old man. One of the sons married a girl of 16. She was pretty and healthy until married, when she became an opium fiend."

Children Sold for Opium.

The craze for the drug is beyond description. I am told that Chinese mothers often sell their little girls to buy opium. Fathers sell their sons and husbands their wives. Dr. Beebe, who is in charge of the big hospital at Nanking, said that he had a neighbor who was an opium smoker. He spent all of his money in gratifying the taste, and when that was gone sold his three children, one after the other, and finally his wife, to satisfy his opium hunger.

The Chinese look upon those who are the slaves of the habit much as we look upon confirmed drunkards. A beggar of Soo Chow, who sleeps next door to an opium den, was asked where he lived. He replied: "Next door to hell."

Many of the opium smokers desire to be cured, and for this purpose opium refuges have been established. They are more common than the Keeley cures, or gold cures, of the United States. They are well patronized. An institution of this kind was recently opened in Foo Chow. It had applications from 500 opium smokers the first year. There are quacks in the different cities who make a specialty of treating opium cases. There are also charitable families who keep emetic powders on hand to give to any one who asks for them. These emetics are for use in cases of attempted suicides.

The doctors say that few opium smokers are ever cured. They usually increase their allowance from year to year until death. When they endeavor to break off the habit they suffer the agonies of the damned, the contrast of their condition while smoking

for the Shiman's power of warding off disease as his father had and the profession of medicine man is dying out.

What Happened to Jim

"Just to show what a little thing will turn the tide," said an up-the-state politician to a New York Sun man, "I'll tell you a little yarn about a friend of mine who ran for sheriff of St. Lawrence county last year an' got licked out of his boots."

"Jim is a big fellow and ordinarily he has a voice like a bull, but when he gets excited that voice just narrows down and runs away into a sickenin' squeak."

"Well, Jim stopped one night to address the voters at Ogdensburg, our biggest town, about eleven miles from Canton, the county seat, an' to make a good showin' a lot of the boys from Canton came over with a brass band. When the local democrats heard that we would have a brass band they got up one, too, but they kept it hid in a barn until Jim should get well under way, when they intended to bring it out an' stop our meetin'."

"We knew somethin' was in the wind, but we couldn't make out what it was until Jim had got well under way. He was bellerin' out the iniquities of the democrats, dwellin' particularly on the mean things they'd done to him in the past, when somethin' happened in the barn an' Jim's speech was punctuated by a big 'boo! boooo!' from the brass band."

"Well, sir, Jim he went to pieces an' just in the middle of a grand threat he was going to perpetrate on the democrats on election day his voice giv' clean out an' left his jaws a-fannin' the air without givin' forth a sound. To see Jim workin' to resurrect that voice would have melted the heart of a stork, for it was pathetic. Every muscle in his face writhed till the tears ran down his cheeks. An' one old feller in the crowd sung out:

"'We know they did treat ye pow'ful bad, Jim, but I wouldn't cry about it!'"
"That done it. Jim never held his head up again that campaign. An' he got only ten votes in Ogdensburg."

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