

## SMUGGLING CHINESE AND OPIUM.

The movement on foot at Washington to secure for the revenue service on Puget sound two small and swift steam cutters for the purpose of putting an end to the smuggling from British Columbia of Chinese and opium, now carried on so extensively and successfully, is one that has the hearty approbation of every resident of this section; not that they care much about the opium feature of the business, for they look upon that as a matter concerning only the revenue officers and the smugglers. To the community at large the smuggling of opium is a matter of indifference. It has no effect upon the use of the drug for purposes of debauchery, against which stringent laws, but illy enforced, exist in every state, and the question of whether the government shall or shall not derive a small revenue from the importation of the damnable stuff fails to create any interest whatever. To be sure, the moral welfare of the nation requires that no one shall engage in any occupation declared to be unlawful by the constituted authorities, and for this reason smuggling of opium or anything else ought to be suppressed. But that is just a trifle too advanced a position for the masses to take, who, as a rule, take but little interest in public morality, except as it affects themselves or their business. It will be many long years before we will become educated to the point of becoming interested as a people in questions of abstract morality or those bearing solely upon the national welfare without affecting the individual in a financial, social or religious way directly. Else why so much popular indifference upon the subjects of restricting immigration, purity of elections, political bossism and official speculation?

In the subject of smuggling Chinamen, however, our people have a direct and profound interest, not so much in its moral aspect as in the harmful results. We made a long struggle for years against the ignorance, bigotry and provincialism of our eastern brethren before we succeeded in securing an act for the exclusion of Chinese, and it is very galling to see the act to a large degree rendered nugatory by the failure of the government to properly enforce it. There is no lack of zeal on the part of the local authorities charged with the duty of administering its provisions, but there is a woeful lack of means supplied to them with which to execute it, and this lack is chargeable much to the indifference of the higher authorities at the nation's capital.

Passing by the abuses of the habeas corpus act, the straw bail practices and the return certificate frauds, all of which operate to secure entrance into this country for a great many Chinamen not legally entitled to reside here, let us look at some of the methods employed to secure a foothold on American soil without even an attempt to make the act appear legal. It is impossible to say how many Chinamen succeed in crossing the boundary line from Canada or Mexico and losing their identity in the common monotony of some Chinese colony. It is certain that hundreds crossed in from Mexico, until last year the excessive vigilance of the officers, which resulted in the capture of a large number and the heading off of many more, as well as the inhospitable nature of the desert country over which they had to pass, and where the bones of more than one now lie bleaching in the sun, practically put an end to all effort in that direction. The Canadian border is the one now offering the easiest openings for the guileless Mongolian. The Canadian Pacific railroad runs parallel to the border from the Pacific ocean to Lake Superior, and there are many places along the route where a crossing can be made by a person willing to spend the time and money necessary to effect it; but it is on Puget sound where this illegitimate business has become a science.

Chinamen are compelled to pay a head tax of fifty dollars to land in British Columbia, and they cheerfully pay this in order to secure a foothold from which they may gain the coveted entrance to the United States, to secure which they would willingly pay many times that amount if they could come direct. By this arrangement Canada gets the money and we get the

Chinamen. Although a few manage to cross the line on foot and safely reach the sheltering domiciles of some of their countrymen, the great majority come by water. The numerous islands in Puget sound at the head of the Straits of Fuca, lying on both sides of the supposititious line separating the two countries, offer special facilities for the operations of smugglers, who, using small sailing vessels and taking advantage of dark nights and their knowledge of the movements of the revenue officers, have little difficulty in crossing the line with cargoes of opium and its smokers, landing both in the hidden recesses of some American Chinatown. The vessels engaged in this business are ostensibly fishing boats, from two to ten tons burthen, and are so registered at Victoria, the seat of operations. They frequently change their appearance by painting and making other external alterations, and occasionally adopt a new name and new registered owner, all for the purpose of confusing their identity in the minds of the revenue officers on both sides of the line, who keep a bright lookout for them, the officers on the Canadian side feeling that these slippery skippers are as willing to bring contraband goods back with them as to take them away, being neither respecters of persons nor governments. It is against the law for these vessels to go to any foreign port without first clearing at the custom house, so that in engaging in this traffic they lay themselves liable to seizure by the revenue officers of both governments. However, the conditions are such that, being simply "fishing boats," they can pass in and out of the harbor without attracting attention, and though it is in violation of law for them to carry passengers, a Chinaman or two could be claimed to be hired as assistants.

At the entrance to Victoria harbor there is a buoy off the Indian reserve, and this is where the smuggling vessels lie at anchor, presenting the most innocent aspect imaginable. When the financial arrangements for a cargo of opium and Chinese have been completed, small lots of the former are secretly taken on board, and enough Chinamen to make a load are told to get ready. Toward the close of evening two or three will stroll over to the reserve disguised as si-washes. They are taken aboard one of the boats, and in the morning she goes out to fish. If a customs officer happens to notice them he cannot say anything or attempt to stop the boat, which once out of the harbor is free from prying eyes, and she shapes a course for Cadboro bay. Or she may go up to James or Sidney islands, as Cadboro bay is getting rather too public, although a few years

ago it was a famous place for smugglers. When one or the other of these havens is reached the Chinese are landed and the boat puts back to Victoria. This is done two or three times until a sufficient number to make a good load have been concealed at one or the other of the points mentioned where there are camps. Then, all that is needed is a favorable wind and a dark night. The rest is easy. No curious eyes can see the start, they are far away from telegraph offices, and the run across is quickly made, the trip being so timed that the sloop gets by Port Townsend in the early evening. Or she may go down by way of Dungeness. Sometimes a bold dash out of Victoria harbor in the evening is made, but even then there is not much risk. The only trouble is, if the Canadian officers see them it is apt to cause unpleasant inquiries. The use of the telegraph is of no service whatever. Frequently have the officers in Port Townsend been notified, but it is of no avail. The means of detection on the American side are so small that the smugglers only laugh.

A SMUGGLER IN THE STRAITS OF FUCA.



When an opium cargo only is to be taken, small lots are cached from time to time on Salt Spring island and on other islands to the southeast where camps are maintained, and when the proper time comes a cargo is made up from the repository and a run made across the line. The landing of the opium is the most difficult part of the work. A Chinaman can be landed