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CHINA TO BANISH OPIUM

People to Be
Freed from
Horrible Slavery
to Drug.

FOR years China has been likened to a sleeping giant, unconscious of his great brute strength, his brain clouded by the fumes of the opium pipe.

Nations have fattened and made merry at his expense; they have even discussed the advisability of seizing his heritage and dividing it among themselves.

But now the long-drugged giant is awaking. He is struggling to throw off the fetters that have bound him so long.

China is making war on opium; its use in that country must cease.

An imperial decree has been issued, which not only limits the use of the drug now, but, while taking into consideration the weaknesses of confirmed opium users and treating them leniently, provides for the absolute banishment of opium from the country within ten years.

After 1916 not an ounce may be imported into China, if the Powers agree; not a poppy plant may be raised. Opium dens must be closed within the next two months. Within that time, too, all government officials must quit opium or the service. Opium users will be registered; those who refuse to reform will be treated as pariahs.



Chinese Women
Hitting the Pipe

opium must be registered. All smokers, men and women, must report to officials, giving complete information about themselves, and stating the quantity of the drug each consumes. It was learned by the Indian opium commission in 1895 that in some parts of India not a few of the natives took as much as fifty to eighty grains a day, and that consumption of 40 grains was common.

The natives of India, however, eat opium, while the Chinese smoke it.

Officials in China must set the example to the common people. All opium dens are to be closed within six months from the date of the decree—or early in the coming summer—and all high officials—princes, viceroys, government heads—under 60 years of age, must stop the use of the drug.

Some have a longer time allowed in which to overcome the habit, but most officials will have to stop in about two months.

In the new regulations drug users are divided into two classes, the Chia (a) and Yi (b). Chia license will be given to persons above the age of 60, and the other to those below that age.

Persons of 60 or over, in poor health, will be dealt with leniently, for to take their pipes from them suddenly would be considered cruel. The others must decrease the quantity of their smokes by a certain percentage each year.

The penalty for government officials who do not give up the practice at the time stipulated is dismissal; for government graduates, the humility of being deprived of their degrees, and for ordinary citizens, the posting of their names in public places as "the opium-smoking class," and their exclusion from public social gatherings.

From the very start, new opium shops will not be permitted to open, and those which are licensed must make returns to the government showing that they have gradually decreased the amount sold. All which do not close within the ten years will be confiscated.

Chinese officials have been ordered to negotiate with the British Minister to China with a view to having the quantity of opium received from India reduced in like proportion to that which is home-grown, and that when the ten years are up England may refrain from sending any more opium to China.

But there are other countries besides England with which to negotiate. Persia, the Dutch colonies and Annam send opium to China. In these cases where, like England, treaties have been made, diplomacy must be relied upon to effect amicable cessation of the commerce, but otherwise China may exercise her sovereignty to prohibit the import.

Especially will this be a blow to the Dutch Colonies in the Malay Archipelago, where the opium trade is under government ownership, and the monopoly of the sale of the drug is a profitable source of income.



Preparing the Raw Opium

This is one of the most remarkable moral revolutions of modern times; no one can foresee its far-reaching effects. When the giant of the Orient shakes off his drug-induced sleep, he may become a Titan; indeed, among the civilized nations of the world.

IN ORDER to understand how really remarkable is China's war on opium, one must remember the extent of slavery in that country to the product of the poppy plant. No one knows the exact population of China. Most authorities agree that it is about 400,000,000.

It is asserted that from 30 to 40 per cent. of the whole—approximately 140,000,000 people, at any rate—are confirmed opium fiends. Among these are a great many government employees, and even officers of the army.

Regulations for the suppression of opium growing and smoking in China were drawn up

last fall by the Council of Government, and were approved by imperial rescript. The work of reform is to be gradual, but at the end of ten years it is intended to have banished the drug, prohibited importation and stopped the cultivation of the poppy plant in China.

While most of the opium used there is imported from India, the Chinese have been growing great quantities of late, and have been increasing the poppy acreage.

First step in the plan is an investigation by viceroys and governors of provinces, who will report on the acreage of poppy lands, and licenses to continue will be issued only to farmers owning such lands on condition that the quantity of poppy grown on them be reduced a certain per cent. each year, and be replaced with whatever product the soil may be most suitable for.

Inspection trips from time to time will be made by the magistrates, and licenses will be renewed each year until the ninth year, after which any land upon which the poppy is grown will be confiscated.

No new ground can be placed in poppy



Gathering "Milk"
from the Poppy



Mixing Paste for Smoking

cultivation. If a magistrate can induce a farmer to stop growing poppy and devote his land to grain previous to the expiration of the ten years, he will be recommended for reward.

It is obligatory that every person using

One of the effects of this system is the smuggling of opium, which is carried on in Java, Sumatra and the other Dutch provinces in constantly increasing volume.

(CONTINUED ON INSIDE PAGE)