SOME

PROS AND CONS

OF

THE OPIUM QUESTION;

WITH

A FEW SUGGESTIONS REGARDING

BRITISH CLAIMS ON CHINA.

"Ratione non ira."

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TO

ROBERT SMALL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have solicited permission thus publicly to address you, because I am well aware of the interest you take in the establishment of British trade in all quarters of the world on a secure Christian basis, and because your name is ample guarantee for the honesty of purpose with which this sketch is made public. As to details and reasonings, I hope some may be induced to examine and determine for themselves.

I am,

My dear Sir,

Yours, with affectionate esteem,

THE AUTHOR.
SOME PROS AND CONS

of

THE OPIUM QUESTION.

December 10, 1839.

Many well-meaning persons appear to me to have erred on both sides of the question regarding opium dealing in China, and consequently also to have fallen into mistakes as to our present position with reference to that country, and our claims on the Chinese authorities. And as truth is always valuable, whether embodied in facts or displayed in argument, but more especially so when circumstances call for the vigorous application of principles to practice, my efforts to throw some light on this subject may not be altogether useless.

In attempting to avoid what seems to us the dark bold rocks of shameless iniquity, we are in danger of rushing unawares into the vortex of mistaken zeal and misapplied sensibility, —*in vitium ducit culpae fuga si caret arte*. Our anxiety to do right often misleads us. It is our duty, however, to avoid, on the one hand, all approximation to indifference regarding moral obligation, and on the other, superstitious timidity and bondage — both are displeasing to God — both are injurious to man.

I throw my ideas before the public because a
sense of duty compels me to do so; and if any are excited to interest themselves in the question—to examine the subject more deeply—and use their influence for the establishment of our relations with China, on a secure, respectable, Christian basis, and by the use of lawful means, my object is accomplished, and my hopes fulfilled.

As it is only by each individual giving of his ability into the treasury of knowledge, that the truth in any matter can be expected to gain ultimate prominence and power, I am very far from disparaging the efforts of others, but, on the contrary, think we are under obligation to all those who, though differing in opinion from us, and from each other, are lending their aid to the elucidation of this subject, by contributions of greater or less value.

Mr. Thelwall deserves the thanks of the Christian community for his well-intentioned work, which, with the assistance of some praiseworthy persons connected with the China trade, he published shortly before the excitement occasioned by the news of the late disastrous occurrences in Canton had reached their height. This book seems to have been a rallying point to many who previously knew little of the subject, in those discussions to which the fever of circumstances gave birth and interest. Though I am quite inclined to go along with him in many of his principles, I cannot quite agree with him in several of the applications; nevertheless I respect his effort, and rejoice in his success in leading many
to examine the matter more fully for themselves. I must however hasten on to my own slender performance, making very few preliminary observations.

There is at all times a prejudice in many minds against mere theorists; that is (as the word is generally understood), men who speak and write on subjects regarding which their information is obtained indirectly, and not, as with practical men, from participation in, or close personal observation of, events in their progress. Some allow this not-unnatural distrust to influence them much too strongly against those, (as Cowper elegantly expresses it)

"Whose thoughts contemplative have dwelt
On situations, that they never felt,
Start up sagacious, covered with the dust
Of dreaming study and pedantic rust;
And prate and preach about what others prove,
As if the world and they were hand and glove."

On the other hand, at present the Christian community seem unduly alarmed at any evidence or reasonings presented to them by men who have been in Canton, and have seen what they write about, lest they should be parties concerned, or lest their residence there should have perverted their minds; either on the principle that

Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
or on the ground that a man may be known by his associates. This seems to me something like pre-judging the case—or at least like a throwing away
the chances of gaining correct opinions on this subject, through despair of authentic evidence. I am therefore constrained to give my reasons for thinking I have peculiar claims to calm attention on the part of all those who desire some honest suggestions, which may be useful to them in the further prosecution of their enquiries. My friends and acquaintances, knowing my sentiments and connections, will not accuse me of any mystery or affectation of concealment in not putting my name on the title-page; and other readers may perhaps see the necessity for my pretensions being stated, and may at the same time perceive no impropriety in my making the statement myself, since I do it anonymously.

I went to Canton a few years ago—remained there upwards of a year—carefully considered the state of the trade generally, and especially the opium branch of it—enjoyed the friendship whilst there of several very intelligent persons, clerical and lay, official, non-official, and medical, entertaining various shades of opinions on the many topics which I had many opportunities of hearing discussed, and of discussing with them.

After anxious and (I think) deliberate considera-
tion of the matter, I came to the conclusion that whatever the character of the opium trade might have been formerly, and however highly I might esteem some who then began to be engaged in it; yet now for myself it would be wrong to enter into it.—In consequence of having so concluded, I left Can-
ton, and may be allowed to say it, was not with the expectation of forwarding my immediate interests I did so. — This seems enough for the public to know. In the following pages I propose —

1st, To make a few remarks on the article opium, not chemical, agricultural, or even strictly commercial, but moral, as regards its effects on the Chinese:

2ndly, To bring forward a few facts and reflections connected with the mode of introducing the commodity into China:

Finishing with some hasty suggestions regarding our duty in the present crisis, and what may be anticipated from vigour or supineness on our part.

1st, Then referring to the commodity, per se. — What effect has the opium on the Chinese?

If the influence were only evil—Christians, aware of such results of their labour in this traffic, ought entirely to have abandoned an employment so totally opposed to the spirit and commands of the gospel.—Love, which is the fulfilling of the law, "worketh no. evil to our neighbour."

If again the use of the drug by the Chinese produced much misery and much crime, with little happiness or real benefit, then the desire of a Christian man to promote the well-being of his fellows would at least make him hesitate—enquire carefully regarding proportions of advantage and disadvantage; and on receiving full information in such a case—I think, forbear. If, lastly, he felt satisfied the present evils resulting from the mere use of the drug were
not great, the comfort and advantages considerable, he would still be prepared to give weight to any extrinsic circumstances, which, thrown into the scale, might demonstrate a trade in it allowed as regards the commodity—to be sinful and hurtful in a high degree—as for example, when persisted in contrary to the laws of the land.

Have we sufficient proof then that opium is really prejudicial to these semi-barbarians? and that the traffic was illegal?—Many deny it to be either the one or the other.

If the trade were decidedly open to both objections, how could any one bearing the name of Christian participate in it in the very remotest or smallest degree? Carefully avoiding it himself his advice to others, also should have been “Touch not the unclean thing.”

Supposing it was only open broadly and palpably to one of these imputations—this were enough to have deterred any benevolent and honourable man from sharing its gains for a day after discovering its iniquity.

So far as it was obnoxious to the one or other, or both these accusations—so far it called for enquiry, and a conscientious retreat on the part of all who were satisfied of its impropriety—of all such also as were not fully convinced of its suitableness to their profession and status as followers of the Redeemer, who went about continually doing good, and whose disciples are bound not to permit their good to be
evil spoken of,—avoiding the very appearance of evil. The very darkness and indecision as to its propriety, ought to have deterred such from entering it, as the cloud on the tabernacle forbade the Jews to go forward in the wilderness—"When the cloud rests on the tabernacle, ye shall rest." Still if the matter admitted of lengthened discussion and hesitation, it certainly admits of charity toward such as adopted, in the hurry of events, different and opposite views of duty.

My own conviction is, that on the whole the trade was disgraceful to Great Britain, and very unbecoming in Christians, as lately carried on. Yet I do not equally condemn every mode adopted of carrying it on, nor unqualifiedly censure as unchristian all the parties engaged. Who are these parties? They are too numerous to mention here. In the mean time I must remember I gave myself something like a first head of argument.

Opium is a most useful medicine; but by the Chinese is reported to be used chiefly as a luxury, being by them carefully prepared with spices, and smoked in a peculiar pipe.

If asked what proportion the quantity used as a medicine bears to that consumed in smoking, and what is the ratio of use to abuse as a luxury? I am forced to reply,—it must be admitted by all, that these questions cannot be determined with any degree of accuracy!

Foreigners are not permitted to penetrate into the
interior of China; they cannot therefore draw up statistics for themselves, neither can they directly verify or refute the reports made by the Chinese, who can scarcely ever be believed in anything in which they either naturally take a pride in misleading foreigners, or where their interests, individual or national, seem to require falsehood. We must, therefore, while we do not absolutely reject Chinese testimony,—take it *cum grano (et magno),—test these documents by reference to such facts as we have personal knowledge of, and—by the possibilities and probabilities of the case; in fact, use analogy and theory, wherever better evidence is denied us.

By examining the Chinese witnesses, we find, that, like all semi-barbarians, they deal largely in the two extremes of minute painful accuracy of detail, when they treat of individual cases of debauchery and misery, on the one hand; and of almost infinitely vague magnificence, when they speak of the number of smokers and the awfulness of general effects on the other; they reason and write like special pleaders,—first creating sympathy by one overdrawn picture, and then persuading us it is the least distressing case of a hundred millions they could describe. This is all plainly for a purpose, and, therefore, setting aside for the moment what this purpose may be, let us consider what comes under our own observation, and that of our countrymen in Canton and Macao. Here our first impression is, that as the mass of the people seem healthy, in-
dustrious, and cheerful, where the greatest quantity of the drug is consumed, we cannot help disbelieving the greater part of the fearful picture, given on Chinese authority, of general depravity and misery throughout the country, as resulting from British trade in opium. But though, on a cursory glance, our conviction regarding the mass of the people is, that they are uninjured,—on minute enquiry, what appears?—Opium is a sleepy poison, not a noisy one; those who are under its influence do not show themselves. Certainly there are many degraded debauchees with whom our highly respected friends the missionaries and other benevolent persons have come in contact, and the account of particular cases of intemperance, disease, and ruin are very harrowing, though not more so than that of many in our own land, victims of intemperance in wine and spirits.

The taste is said to be universal, and still the population seem generally healthy and strong, industrious and cheerful, whilst some are sunk in degradation and misery, through intemperance in opium smoking, samshoo*, drinking, and other vices.

Lastly, let us test Chinese and other evidence, by the possibilities as well as probabilities of the case. Mr. Medhurst supplies us with data which every one is acquainted with, and I will just shortly, from memory, recall his facts and make my deductions.

* Samshoo, an ardent spirit, distilled from rice.
He mentions the quantity of opium imported annually, say 40,000 chests; this he reasons would ruin three millions of human beings, were they to smoke it all. Or supposing we take into account the habit of smoking the refuse over again, it might injure five millions. Now he expresses his conviction that the population of China amounts to 360,000,000, and he may be right; also that they universally or generally use the drug as a luxury: thus he proves enough opium enters the country to demoralize or injure five millions out of 360 millions, that is,—one in seventy-two. Say, on the most timid calculation, among twenty smokers enough opium is annually distributed as would enable one to be intemperate, which in my estimate amounts pretty nearly to a demonstration that very few indeed can possibly do themselves any harm, excepting in Canton or other ports, where, on being landed, the drug must be cheapest and most easily and safely got at.

Well, I must say, there is some comfort in having such authority for the belief that the evil (if evil it be) cannot be very great, which England brings on China by giving her opium, considered per se. But if the smoking is the only use—and if any smoking, however moderate, is pernicious, the effects being only bad, the traffic must on this score be still decidedly condemned.—The opium is certainly by some in China, used medicinally, to what extent no foreigner can tell—but is the smoking only evil?
This is a matter of more difficult treatment, because, in the first place, I do not think a sufficient field of observation on this point, has been laid open to scientific men. Those medical gentlemen with whom I have conversed, in reference to the effect on health and morals of an occasional and moderate use of opium, have differed widely from each other, and some have expressed great hesitation regarding it; the same may be seen of opinions regarding the use, in the way of mere enjoyment, by persons in perfect health, of tobacco, spirits, and wine.

Now, I am not a member of a Temperance Society, and most decidedly disapprove (after careful consideration) of the principles on which these societies are based; though I am well acquainted with many excellent persons, who adopt such opinions.

As a nation, we have not been led away by this old delusion. Paul says, "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused;" but they say, "touch not, taste not, handle not." Our Saviour made wine for the marriage guests after they had well drunk; and both in the Old Testament and the New, we read of holy men using wine at feasts, and the use of it is expressly enjoined in the religious festivals of the Jews, forming also part of a great Christian sacrament. But Temperance or Abstinence Societies declare any use of wine by a man in perfect health, injurious to his health and to his morals. I hope this gross delusion may be dissipated, ere it have prepared many of our fellow
Christians, for other, and still more, pernicious errors.

Opium is certainly used in China as a medicine, and so far it is not merely allowable, but a duty in Christians to provide them with the necessary supply. A moderate trade in opium is quite right in China, as well as elsewhere; but when the quantity imported becomes so great as to provide many with the sure means of self-destruction, then it will be proper, perhaps, to cease for a time from good, because the evil is so great; yet, in such a case, the question of christian duty becomes one of great difficulty, and should be left to each man's conscience; we must be charitable to those who differ from us.

There are many very puzzling queries connected with such topics. If I am entitled to provide the good man, or the individual who uses this opium as a medicine, with what he requires, and yet do not know him from the debauchee, and sell my imports to a wholesale dealer, and he again to a retailer, am I to give up my trade, because some abuse the article? And what proportion of abuse to use, requires forbearance from such a trade? Many merchants think effectual demand—i. e. paying demand,—is the only guide importers have any concern with; for everything is in itself good, and may be raised, bought, sold, and distributed all over the world, unless some law or peculiarity, pro tempore, interfere; I think this is a fair general rule; and if the trade in opium
were legal, I would engage in it; that is, I would not abstain from the general trade with China, for fear of being occasionally a participator in this department. In moderation—let us give every temporal blessing to all the inhabitants of the earth; let us send with these the greatest of all blessings, the gospel of peace—the hope of heaven; for only such a hope can enable any people to use, without abusing, the gifts of Providence.

The effect of this drug on the Chinese was in some instances beneficial as a medicine—in many cases grateful as a luxury, without evil result shown,—and sometimes very pernicious. As it is impossible for us, in the present state of our relations with China, to gain accurate acquaintance with their internal affairs, or obtain genuine statistics on this and other important subjects, we cannot determine the proportion of good and evil resulting from the use of opium; and even if we could arrive at the truth in this respect, a moderate trade would always be right, though an excessive use of the article, or immense importation, were sinful and pernicious; then who are the parties entitled to engross the good portion of this or any trade? In such a case, he who is satisfied in his own mind, and participates, may do well, but he who forbears, pro tempore, being in doubt, perhaps does better.

Does not the illegality of the trade, however, remove all doubts?

Certainly I consider the doubtful advantage to
the Chinese of the opium per se, taken in combination with the very strange, and, at any rate, not quite obviously legal, honourable, and praiseworthy mode of carrying on the trade, stamped its character and sealed its condemnation?

But many who have resided long in the East, and have for many years studied the character and customs of these polished semi-barbarians, tell us—the trade was not really illegal,—that, though not placed on a proper footing, the faults of the system were not attributable to the parties suffering the inconvenience and the scorn, but to that Government, whose vanity prevented it making proper commercial treaties with other governments—and also prevented its repealing laws felt to be worse than useless,—that many of these regulations were practically repealed by desuetude at the very time new edicts appeared loudly threatening all breakers of the law,—thus, whilst they put it on record that these laws had not been repealed, and that the emperor had never acknowledged his fallibility—they proved at the same time their theoretical and written, to be very different from their real practical law.

Again, the whole system of government is corrupt. The theory of the choice of officers is admirable. They advance to eligibility for office by passing through certain strict and impartial examinations, and as they have fulfilled a lower office, they are advanced to a higher. In practice it is understood, in most instances, the man who makes the
largest presents is the most worthy; and, to maintain his position, every mandarin has annual presents to make to the emperor, his mother, wife, son, and minister, which often, it is said, exceed the value of his legal income. Bribery is strictly forbidden. How can a mandarin,* (be he viceroy or mere policeman,) keep his situation,—live up to his rank, and lay by a little? The law provides him with the power; the Chinese say of their own law, it was made for the officers, not for the people; it is a net no one can escape if the mandarin throws it; for a fee, anything is declared legal, and every thing is illegal to extract a fine, especially as regards trade. Duties are said among themselves to be almost always matter of bargain, not regular established charges; and certainly this is very much the case in the foreign trade, the linguists sometimes giving great annoyance in settling duties—a most vile system.

Again, what obedience do foreigners owe to a tyrant who will not allow them to learn the language of the country,—will not afford any official means of communication to their own government through which his will might authoritatively be announced to them—who confines their trade to one port—their residence to one row of houses on the banks of a crowded muddy river—forbids their taking the exercise necessary to health,—will not allow them to walk

* Mandarin is not a Chinese word, but derived from the Portuguese, meaning a person in command.
in the city of Canton, or even freely in the country—prohibits intercourse with the natives, especially gentlemen, (if there are any)—prohibits their hire of the requisite number of servants—refuses them access to his courts of justice (so called,)—and not to mention the ten thousand absurd and impracticable regulations of the trade, deprives them of the society of their wives and families, who are obliged to reside at Macao, several days' journey (by water) from their place of business at Canton.

Without advocating the doctrine of the social compact, it must be admitted that when a ruler ceases to be a minister of good, he lessens (if not destroys) his claims to obedience.

The British government sent out a superintendent of trade, understood, of course, by the community there to be possessed of the mind of Government on this and all other branches of the trade; and under his eye this trade was regularly carried on with the British flag floating over the receiving vessels, and no fault found, that I have heard of, with the general system.*

The British Indian Government raised the article and prepared it specially for the China market; saw it start for "China direct," in British vessels, from British ports, unquestioned, unimpeded: nay, a short time ago, say two years, the British Indian Government showed how entirely it sanctioned the traffic by

* I speak not of the private opinions of any superintendent, but of the superintendent, as such, finding no fault.
paying a large sum to those engaged in the trade, and who had suffered in consequence of a stoppage occasioned by unwonted severity and activity on the part of the Chinese authorities. Many very rich and influential houses in England and India, as well as China, were the active or most deeply interested parties in this branch of the China trade.

But does the sanction of two Governments make smuggling no smuggling? or does the example of many rich and great, or even good men, make a crime innocent? Whether governments, or all other men in every station, do right or wrong, we are bound to follow the dictates of conscience—to obey the commands of God—to do good (and good only) to all men as we have opportunity, and to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Certainly, yet there is room for modest hesitation before we condemn so many whose situation demands respectful consideration, and whose characters, (I speak of individuals,) in other respects, claim our warmest regard. I detest the opium trade as lately carried on in China, and I hope and pray most sincerely that our character as Christians may no more be disgraced by so disreputable a traffic; yet I admire and most affectionately esteem some most intelligent, and useful, and charitable persons with whom I have often pain-fully discussed this question, who thought it their duty, pro tempore, to submit to inconvenience and
seeming degradation in this as in other parts of the China trade, because they had despaired of anything being done by our own or the Chinese government to relieve them from a condition they deeply deplored.

I hope, however, that now, the people of England, have at last risen from their torpor, and are taking some interest in the moral dignity of the empire, as well as the happiness and safety of our countrymen, whose energy carries them to the ends of the earth, and by whose talent and activity our native land is enriched and her fame and power extended round the globe.

Let us hastily run over part of this question of legality or illegality.

The traffic cannot properly be termed smuggling—it neither defrauded Government of any part of their revenue, in the shape of duties, nor interfered with the honest gains of the legal traders in the article. The simple question is—were these transactions according to law, or not?

The emperor will not directly communicate his wishes, and the other laws of the land, to foreigners, through such channels as they can have confidence in—that is, through their own national representatives, resident at the Chinese Court. On the contrary, he confines them and their trade to one port—subjects them entirely to the local authorities, without the possibility of their discovering whether the edicts published to them as Imperial, were really written in Pekin or Canton.
He leaves them, in fact, to the tender mercies of these subordinates, without appeal; they cannot then tell what the law or Imperial will really may be—and these minor officials become (quoad foreigners) the law of China.

Must, then, their orders be scrupulously obeyed, and their prohibitions carefully attended to in all things? Certainly it is our duty to "submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake;" but this divine injunction, though put absolutely, admits of consideration and modification. "Where there is no law, there is no transgression." We are not bound to obey every man who claims authority—nor to believe every official as to the existence of a law—nay, many laws on the record have, by mere desuetude in every country, been repealed, requiring no obedience.

Whatever may be our feelings of disapprobation and dislike towards the man who habitually refuses obedience to "the powers that be," in a land where the laws are practicable, plain, and published on undisputed authority,—the question of submission, it must be acknowledged, becomes a very involved and difficult one in China, where the authority is very doubtful, and the laws far from plain and practicable —where, indeed, the local officers issue so many absurd, frivolous, vexatious, inconsistent, and contradictory regulations, that foreigners of all nations, and all ranks, British, American, French and Dutch, the missionaries, superintendents, consuls, mer-
chants, &c., disregard them, apparently without scruple. Out of this perplexing, disagreeable system, spring numerous evils; and thence arises the conviction in many minds, that really, so far as foreigners are concerned, there are no laws in China demanding conscientious obedience—beyond the universal law of truth, justice, and mercy—and that all questions there regarding legality or illegality, are questions of prudence, not of principle.

Then specially as regards opium—the Emperor is said to be a smoker himself; certainly, members of his family and household use it, as do also many, if not a great majority, of the mandarins throughout the country. At Lintin, the trade was not carried on clandestinely, or by night, but for many years in the same spot—systematically, regularly, in the face of day—fees or duties being paid to the local representatives of Chinese law, who themselves speculated in the article. The Emperor has many friends whom he appoints to lucrative situations, and who, in return, make him handsome presents. Canton is a favourite spot for this corrupt arrangement, and this may possibly afford a clue to the obstinate adherence to such a system. The opium was, however, formerly delivered, chiefly in what the Chinese call the outer waters, the natives arranging duties, fees, &c., among themselves.

Who can determine precisely right or wrong, in such perplexing circumstances? Some have retired from the field, saying, We think it safest to seek em-
ployment; elsewhere, with an unclouded conscience. Others have remained, having no pleasure in this confusion; but influenced by regard to many private or public considerations; and some have rejoiced in this very darkness, as paving the way to iniquitous and merciless gain.

The Chinese have themselves chiefly to blame for the difficulties of their present position. They have systematically refused to receive British ambassadors, or to make any definite intelligible treaties of commerce; they praise themselves for their kindness to foreigners (and I could give a pretty sketch of their kindness in slander, restraint, and robbery, but I forbear), and then in many ways encourage the continuance of the general trade, and even practically fostered the opium trade till very lately. Had they really desired to put down that traffic in a proper manner, they should have addressed the English Government long ago, requested an ambassador might be sent to Pekin, or they should have sent one to London and arranged the matter quietly; or they might long ere this have sent a more respectful epistle than was lately addressed by Lin to our Queen, or at any rate, to show their sincerity, they should have systematically and perseveringly stopped the provisions of such ships as they knew perfectly well were opium receiving ships.

But I need not say how many ways they had of either stopping the trade entirely, or at least of proving their own sincerity, whilst they gave those
engaged in it time to withdraw by degrees;—by suddenly seizing the British superintendent of trade, and the whole community, threatening them with death, and robbing them of £2,000,000 of property, the Chinese have violated the principles of justice and mercy, thrown contempt on our country, and established a precedent which, if unpunished, they will certainly turn to fearful purpose against any one who may hereafter be led to trust his life or property in their hands.

Their numerous furious edicts were generally regarded as mere waste paper,—vox et preterea nihil; very portentous edicts made their appearance occasionally against this trade,—were duly read by the foreign community in Canton, handed down by them to their friends at Lintin,—probably laughed at through the fleet, or passed over by the older residents as words of course, meaning nothing which they were any way concerned with. This habit of crying wolf, wolf! begot absolute confidence in their insincerity, and renders all their late warning edicts next thing to no warning at all. The inconsistencies of their conduct seem to have made their actions almost as unintelligible as their words.

When we come to ask, who are chiefly to blame in all this? it may be easy enough to say the Chinese, or rather, perhaps Tartar Government, whose folly and vanity, and perhaps fear, created and perseveringly kept up that confusion, out of which our present perplexities have arisen. But we ask again—
considering that they are merely half-civilized partially enlightened Pagans, and we are well educated Christians, what proportion of guilt attaches to us for continuing to submit to such a vile system—or to participate in transactions having so much of the appearance of evil? The answer is very difficult.—Let us, however, make a bold guess at comparative guilt and comparative liability to loss—when all concerned were in the wrong (as it seems to me).

The Chinese Government having the power to arrange the matter quietly with, and through our government long ago, by embassies sent or received, are the greatest culprits; but being Pagan semi-barbarians—if they have really destroyed the drug, and are desirous of stopping the opium trade, through fears regarding the morals of their people, or the loss of their sycee silver, let us demand immediate payment, with interest, of only one-half the value of the opium seized, at an average of seven years' price—let our two governments pay one-fourth, and let those concerned bear the loss of the remaining fourth part.—say China pay fifty per cent., England and India twenty-five per cent., and the concerned lose twenty-five per cent.

I am not so silly as to imagine a definite arithmetical statement can be made of a moral question; but admitting the impossibility of reducing such problems to an algebraical formula, or a geometric enunciation, the necessity of putting thought into a tangible shape for communication and evolution
in practice, justifies the attempt in the present instance; and moreover the additional necessity for precision of idea, and great plainness of speech to the Chinese, more than justifies this all too palpable an embodiment of the mental process—itself only affording perhaps a hazy approximation to accuracy.

If our demands are definite and perfectly intelligible, and we are firm in adhering to and enforcing them, being at the same time as nearly correct in details and minutiae as the nature of the case may admit—we will prevent delay and useless discussion, in which straight-forward Englishmen would have small chance with the Chinese—by cutting off at once all hopes of a crafty arrangement, we will prevent much deceit and falsehood, and perhaps ultimately save many lives.

By sending out a Peer of the realm with as large a force as could be spared to such a distance, and by immediately insisting on instant attention to certain definite demands, our government will, it may be expected, secure great advantages, and avert great and pressing evils.

The Chinese are very particular about the rank of foreign officers, and they not being very sincere themselves, would appreciate our sincerity in threatening by the sufficient force actually within sight.

Firmness on our part—a large force at hand to back our demands, made with courtesy, with clearness, and explicitly limiting the time for reply,
followed up on the very day mentioned, vigorous measures stated as the alternative in of rejection, silence, or delay—such conduct, satisfied, would bring about the happiest results.
the event should not be crowned with apparent success immediately, (which I do not however doubt,) we, as a nation, will at least have done our duty to our fellow-countrymen of England and fellow-subjects of India—will have punished an unjust power, and secured respect among the nations, or at least laid a proper foundation for such sentiment.

There cannot be a doubt about our being perfectly able to take an island and fortify it—first to punish the Chinese, if they will not listen to reason, and make such reprisals as we please, and then establish a respectable trade with such as come to us in our new territory; and, under any circumstances, the taking an island seems the safest, and therefore, perhaps, the wisest plan.

But have we any right, as a nation, to demand a treaty or the cession of an island?

If the Chinese will not pay back what they have taken by violence—will not discharge their debts—nor make any reparation in the way of treaty; then in part payment of her debts, we are entitled to seize an island plainly enough.

But suppose the Chinese pay our just demands, as regards opium and other debts, and make a suitable apology for their late insolence and violence,—can we make any further demands, or must we not
either submit implicitly to their arrangements, or retire from the country?

What ought we to consider a suitable apology and remuneration for the late gross insult to our nation, in the persons of our superintendent of trade as well as through the body of the English residents, and for the loss incurred by their capricious stoppages of the trade?

The only suitable and intelligible apology, where promises of future good conduct cannot be relied on without some extraordinary guarantee—must either be the immediate extension of our privileges by admission to other ports than Canton, which would be some protection against local exaction—or the cession of an island where we may carry on our trade without interruption. A mere payment of certain debts due, and then an order to our fellow subjects to submit to former or greater inconveniencies, or go away altogether, would be insolent and injurious in the highest degree; and though as individuals we might and perhaps if unsupported, ought to retire; yet as a nation our duty is very different—that duty clearly is to obtain indemnification for insult, as the only mode, (under existing circumstances), of securing the safety and respectability of Britons in all parts of the world—not as a gratification of pride, but as a step required by justice and prudence.

Our affairs in China can never revert to their former condition—they must either be greatly im-
proved by a vigorous effort, or become more miserable than ever.

If no treaty be made, with sufficient guarantee, of course, no superintendent of British trade could remain to have his country continually liable to insult in his person; and if all British superintendence and control were visibly withdrawn, I fear much—nay am fully convinced, smuggling and piracy would rapidly become systematized, and I need not attempt to describe the horrors of such a state of things.—All good men would then fly from the scene.

It may be said—Perhaps the Chinese would then intreat our official interference, and it might be as well to wait till these anticipated evils force them thus humbly to sue for what they now so scornfully reject.

It is, however, much easier to prevent than cure; and if a band of desperadoes once get possession of the Chinese coast and islands, it would be no easy matter to dislodge them and restore peace and order.

We have now a right to demand a treaty—definite, practicable, respectable, and secure,—or the cession of an island as a distinct amende for the injury and insult lately sustained at the hands of the Chinese; and if we allow this opportunity to pass, we may find another only too soon, but occasioned by events both dreadful and perhaps irreparable.

Some ask, very anxiously, will the Americans permit us to act in this way? or will other nations allow us? Will they allow us?—why we’ll do our duty to
our own subjects, and we don't think other nations have so little sense or principle as to attempt to prevent us; and if any one attempts it, possibly others may side with us, and at any rate, the righteous should be bold as a lion. Let us do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God in this matter as in all others,—"in all our ways acknowledging him, and he will direct our steps."

Mr. King (the highly respectable American author of "The Opium Crisis," ) thinks the Chinese quite justified in treating our fellow-subjects (and the Americans?) in the way they did, not because the way was in itself proper, but merely that is their way. He thinks they are not to be found fault with for imprisoning foreigners in masses, and threatening them with starvation to death and other penalties, as that is just their style of doing the thing—their mode, in fact, of coercing their own subjects; if foreigners are treated as they treat their own, there is no ground of complaint.

There are just two great mistakes in this: the first regards facts; the second regards inference.

We are not treated by the Chinese authorities as they treat their own subjects, but, on the contrary, are deemed unworthy to associate with the meanest of them, or to be classed for an instant with the inhabitants of the flowery nation. No, we are Fan-quis, foreign devils, and must be ever vilified and ill-treated; and seeing we are not sharers with the natives in any good in the land, it is not fair
to assert we are treated like their own children, when we get only the evil.

Besides, if the Chinese rulers act unjustly to their own subjects, that does not entitle them to injure foreigners; on the contrary, it affords foreigners of philanthropic spirit, who have perhaps a foolish regard for the principle of non-intervention, an opportunity of giving them a lesson in general justice, which they may afterwards apply at home in the treatment of their own people.

Many are alarmed at the idea of our demanding any treaty or island from the Chinese, as if such a step, though all very right in itself perhaps, would prove only the first of claims and aggressions altogether unjust and cruel. Shall we then refrain from listening to and obeying the call of duty, because there is danger of being tempted to pass over the line she draws? Shall we refuse to vindicate the national character, because we may be hurried into acts very injurious to our good name? Shall we allow our innocent fellow-subjects to be treated with contempt and violence, and our erring countrymen with wanton cruelty and injustice, because there may be (and is) some fault to be admitted, or because there is a possibility of cruelty on our side?

He who refuses to do good because it may lead him into temptation and give rise to injurious surmises, is afflicted with superstition, bigotry, or vanity.

Many seem to have adopted the opinions and
reasonings on this subject of members of temperance societies, without really intending to support absti-
nence doctrines, and not being perhaps aware of the source whence their ideas have been derived.
Excepting on abstinence principles, the use and moderate trade in opium with China cannot be con-
demned; though persons doubting its usefulness and propriety do well to abstain; they do wrong to con-
demn such as would engage in it, were it legal. "Let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth."

I might have enlarged greatly on this first part of the subject, by quoting from Chinese edicts and memori-
als, and by extracting from works of foreigners (British, &c.) who have long resided in China; but at present I think such a proceeding would only unnecessarily lengthen what is meant (so far as it may be useful at all) rather as a spur and a guide than as a treasury of knowledge regarding these questions; and as this country has rejected the prin-
ciple on which alone any one can condemn a moderate opium trade in China, so far as the article is con-
cerned it seems absurd greatly to elaborate this department.

Every creature or article is in itself good, and unless under peculiar circumstances, may be cultivated, manufactured, bought, sold, and distributed all over the world. Opium is no exception as an article, nor China as a country. A moderate trade in opium with China seems to me quite proper, indeed it is
no easy matter to imagine the contrary; and unless where. Government may interfere every Christian must be left to judge for himself when the trade ceases to be moderate. I do not think that we have any proof that the quantity carried by the British to China is on the whole immoderate, 40,000 chests may not be too much for 360 millions of consumers.

But are we to be judges in this question? The Chinese government have a right to defend the morals and health of their people, and if they think the drug pernicious, we ought not to carry it to their shores.

Certainly. This, however, is the other question of legality. I should obey the law, not because it is good or wise, seeing I think it foolish and pernicious, but because I am required by the Word of God to obey the powers that be for conscience sake in every thing, not opposed to the express commands of Heaven, which take precedence of all human laws. Having passed entirely from the question of the use and influence of the commodity per se, to the separate question of legality, I will not again go over my reasons for thinking the Chinese have themselves to blame for the greater part of the evils arising out of a system so vile as that which they have adopted towards foreigners. By their inconsistencies and contradictions, by their violence and weakness, by their injurious and insolent conduct, they have created in the minds of strangers of all ranks and nations a feeling of great perplexity re-
garding right and wrong in the matter of obedience to authority, resistance to caprice and tyranny; out of which many evils, physical and moral, have sprung. Not only so, but the highest Chinese authorities in writing to their subordinates in Canton, have laid it down as a rule, that as foreigners, are all wild barbarians, it is needless to inform them what are the laws of China, and absurd to treat them in a gentle reasonable manner, or give them the benefits of lawful protection,—that, in fact, fraud and violence; cunning and force, are the proper mode of dealing with them.

On the whole I cannot approve of the opium trade as lately carried on, and anxiously contemplate its continuance under still more degrading circumstances; and without uncharitably condemning all engaged in this branch of commerce, and making in my own mind a wide distinction between the different modes lately adopted of prosecuting the traffic, I do most earnestly desire to see something done speedily to remove the gross and grievous darkness which hangs over the path of duty of our own countrymen in China, not merely as regards opium, but in many other departments.

Our fellow-subjects cannot but suffer in conscience under such circumstances. I am convinced that the young, and especially our seamen, are greatly injured by this vile system; they must become regardless of authority, reckless and violent. Mutinies in China ships are not rare, but the effect upon the crews of
opium clippers and coasters must soon become dreadful. I shudder to think of what we may soon hear from that quarter, of violence, reprisals, robbery, and murder, by our own exasperated fellow-subjects, deeply, perhaps hopelessly, involving the whole question. We have done very unwisely, in ever allowing matters to come to such a state, and will, as a nation, be very guilty if we do not now vindicate our honour and make a plain path for our fellow Christians in China and in all parts of the world. The system of non-intervention has already been carried to a sinful and ruinous extent.

Every government ought to be Christian, and being so, ought to instil religious principles into their people, and carefully, according to ability, defend and control her subjects in every quarter of the globe. It is not merely our duty as a nation to preserve the innocent from all injury, but also to defend our erring subjects from wanton cruelty or any undue punishment; when they sin they should suffer, but only according to their deserts.

Absolute justice—or what we deserve in the sight of God for every deviation, however slight, from rectitude—is a question too profound for the comprehension of the human intellect, at least in its present condition. Revelation is our guide in the enquiry what every sin deserves, not reasoning; and we are fortunately not required to make application of such a rule to our neighbours; on the contrary, we are expressly commanded not to make the attempt in
thought: "Judge not, that ye be not judged."
"Who art thou that judgest thy brother?"

But comparative justice between man and man, is an easier, though not always a simple matter.

When we ask what is just between the Chinese, our fellow-subjects, and the British nation, it is very unbecoming in us to say, "Oh, our countrymen were wrong—we cannot defend their conduct—we cannot find fault with the Chinese; the world, our own consciences, the word of God would condemn us, if we proposed to defend smugglers. We must let the late disturbances pass unnoticed." Such language I consider very foolish, and very pernicious; and in those who ought to know better, and speak more wisely, it is sinful to utter such absurdity.

Our innocent fellow-subjects have suffered violence, and sustained loss by imprisonment—the stoppage of their trade, &c. They must have their just claims attended to and enforced.

Many of our fellow-subjects who have erred (in my opinion) have yet not broken any of our laws or injunctions; they have only shared with the Chinese authorities the guilt (if guilt it should be called) of submitting to carry on business in the midst of many discomforts, doubts, and perplexities. How far they were sinful in remaining, I shall not attempt to say absolutely; but certainly the half at least of the relative blame belonged to the rulers of that country, and we are bound to stand forward and insist on the loss being properly shared.
Our nation has been insulted in the persons of our superintendents of trade, who by restraint, violence, and threats of starvation, have been compelled to lend themselves to robbery and injustice. We must, on general principles of justice and prudence, demand an ample, tangible apology, for these affronts and injuries.

The people of this country have taken on themselves a great additional responsibility by the adoption of the Reform Bill, and by claiming and receiving so far the control of their rulers—should we not then, en masse, petition against any further sanction by our Government of a vile system of trade in China, by which the honour of Great Britain has been tarnished, much property lost, many consciences vexed, and perhaps perverted,—much iniquity produced,—the happiness of our fellow-subjects in that distant region almost destroyed, and the progress of the Gospel fearfully impeded?.

The proprietors of East India stock ought, surely, long ago to have refused to reap the fruits of the opium trade with China, if they disapproved of its prosecution; and now undoubtedly ought to use their influence to have this traffic annihilated, or placed on a proper footing; for, if not amended by vigorous interference, it will, in all probability, be henceforward carried on in a manner not merely degrading in the eyes of the world generally, but especially destructive of that respect and confidence among our Indian fellow-subjects, which maintains our em-
pire of opinion in the East—and they are bound to petition that justice may be done to our Indian fellow-subjects, who have suffered by the late vio-

tences.

The Court of Directors, Board of Control, and the whole Government of England and India having shared in the faults of the late system, are now, it is to be hoped, zealously endeavouring to secure justice, and prevent a recurrence of such untoward events; and ought not our clergy of every denomina-
tion and every rank, but especially our venerable Prelates, to cast their eyes abroad, as well as over our own land, and contemplating the unscrupulous mode of seeking wealth, too often adopted by British subjects, with the sanction, or at least connivance of British authority, rebuke the sins they discover, and demonstrate, in this particular, as they do in many ways so ably, the great advantage in a moral and religious light, of their presence in the Upper House among the legislators of the land.

In Gibraltar, a trade very similar to that carried on at Macao, is, I understand, prosecuted by British subjects, with official connivance, not exactly in either case a smuggling trade, but rather a trade with smugglers.

In South America, I hear of smuggling dollars, &c. with official sanction.

There are, I believe, many similar instances; such things ought not to be; they do not lessen the evils in China because they resemble them; but
the multitude of them surely prove the great fallacy
of the principle of non-intervention; carried so far as
to prevent our restraining our subjects from smuggling;—the results are always morally bad—often commercially and politically injurious and perplexing—always pernicious. Better we had no trade at all than grow rich in sin; and better our government should adopt the maxims and customs of the Chinese emperor, by outlawing every subject who quits their realm, or who leaves his native land for any purpose; laudable or the reverse; than by half measures and confusion of principles, bring disgrace on the nation by a seeming sanction of unjustifiable, and therefore unchristian, conduct. I have already mentioned that some, deeming the traffic allowable as regards the article, but of doubtful propriety in reference to legality, retired from the field, conscience claiming: a more unclouded region. Others, feeling deeply the discomfort and perplexity of the circumstances, remained, being influenced by many considerations, public and private, which could not have had influence with any good man, had the trade been palpably and inexcusably wrong, but which had very great effect in determining many who confessed the evils of the system, and yet were in doubt as to the line of conduct they should adopt.
think the balance rendered favourable by the advantages derived to the Indian Government in the shape of a revenue amounting to between one and two millions sterling, and by the great benefit accruing to myriads of human beings, as the consequence of the firm administration of a Christian Government in the East, which might be greatly weakened were this source of wealth cut off or diminished. This could not prove that to be right which was before wrong; but certainly might demonstrate that to be on the whole useful which before seemed of doubtful advantage.

Again, if the opium trade were to be given up on the ground of illegality, many other departments of this trade would require to be forsaken on the same ground,—nay, the illegality of many essential matters in trade and life would render not merely the whole commercial intercourse, but residence itself, improper. Therefore, as the benefits derived from the general China trade are very great, providing the English Government with an annual revenue of upwards of four millions sterling, and the British Indian Government with more than one million sterling additional—employing nearly ten millions of British capital—thousands of our sailors—hundreds of our vessels—and supplying England with a delightful and harmless luxury, now grown almost a necessary of life—Tea,—the general rule requiring diligence in business—the duty of providing for ourselves and friends the necessaries and comforts of life—the ad-
vantages political and commercial—and the comfort resulting to so many individuals and families, justified, or seemed to do more than merely justify the prosecution of this general trade, notwithstanding its many inconveniencies and perplexities.

Do I defend the continuance of such a state of things?—or do I say those who have hitherto been carrying on this trade are altogether blameless? No.—Yet I think that when we endeavour to put this branch of our commerce on a Christian footing, as well as every other branch in all parts of the world, we should not take the first step in injustice.

I have no interest in the opium lately seized by the Chinese—nor, so far as I am aware, are any of my intimate acquaintances or friends personally interested in the repayment; yet we all have a deep interest in the vindication of the national honour, the establishment of justice, and the settlement of this question on Christian principles.