

# RELIGION-AND-SOCIAL-SERVICE

## "POISONING" THE CHINESE

WHILE TRYING TO AFFORD full protection to their own citizens, this country, Great Britain, and Japan are shipping tons of opium to China, and engaging, it is charged by the International Reform Bureau, in the "greatest poisoning case in the history of crime." For generations opium has been China's curse, but in a happy hour of realization she passed laws prohibiting the growth and use of the poppy within her borders, and set about to cure her "sleeping sickness." Conditions improved after the edict, but there are evidences to-day, we are informed by missionaries, travelers, and newspaper correspondents, that the situation is especially alarming; latest statistics, say writers on the subject, show that the deadly habit of drug-taking is once more on the increase. For this "international scandal," as it is described by one wrathful critic, Japan, Great Britain, and the United States are held responsible in the order named. Christian leaders protest that self-seeking traders undo much of the good accomplished by missionaries. That there is good reason for alarm is seen in customs records of this country, which, according to press reports, show that within the short period of five months enough morphin and opium were shipped from the one port of Seattle to give a dose to each of the 400,000,000 men, women, and children of China. This and other revelations have united the religious press to support the Jones-Miller Bill (now pending in Congress), to make unlawful the exportation of morphin, heroin, and other derivatives of opium. The bill, if passed, may lead other countries to do likewise, as it authorizes the Secretary of State to request all foreign governments to communicate through the diplomatic channels copies of the laws in their respective countries which prohibit the exportation of derivatives of opium. "Having recently seen the growing trade that enters China from our western nations, and having talked with leaders of the Christian faith," writes A. B. Parson to *The Living Church* (Episcopal), "I feel that this matter has a very close bearing on Chinese welfare. It is strange that after China herself with one blow did away with the growing of the poppy and the trade in opium, it was left for the United States and Great Britain to revive this iniquitous traffic." Restriction of the traffic, says *The Continent* (Presbyterian), voicing a general opinion, "is of immediate importance as a hindrance to the contemptible Japanese exploitation of China's increasing morphin habit, for much of the drug sold so lavishly by Japanese dealers in China is drawn from the United States or is bought in Britain and shipped by way of the United States. . . . Every business which, like the liquor business, makes its money by killing bodies and souls of men and women made in God's image is fated to be wiped out by the social justice of the American citizenship." Two questions, says *The Baptist*, are involved in the stoppage of the traffic:

"The first is a business matter. Newspapers on the Pacific coast are stating that the preservation of our commerce with China is directly involved. There is also a moral question. The very life of China is threatened by this traffic, which has been forced upon her by Japan, the United States, and Great Britain. While in America there are some 4,000,000 drug addicts, there are in China more than 60,000,000. . . .

"The United States, for its own sake, must get heartily and effectively into this antinarcotics campaign. Even more should it play fair with China. It will be to our everlasting disgrace if Christian nations either themselves promote, or allow other nations to foster, such a tremendous evil."

Testifying before the subcommittee of the House Ways and

Means Committee, William F. McKibben, secretary of the China Club in Seattle, said, according to press report, that Japan is securing these drugs for distribution in China as American products, and that because of this "our American prestige in China is extremely jeopardized." He urged that we "shut off all American participation in this crime, so that it will be known in China, where we have vast commercial interests, that America has no commerce in this business." As things are at the present time, *The Christian Science Monitor* comments, "Great Britain and the United States are simply accessories to the crime of Japan." As this paper views the matter—

"It may not be possible for the United States Government or the Government of the United Kingdom to prevent the export of drugs from Japan to China, but it is possible for these governments to make certain that there shall be no participation on the part of their nationals, directly or indirectly, in such an entirely immoral traffic. Measures to this end ought to be taken at the very earliest moment possible, in both countries."

The necessity for immediate action is emphasized by Edmund B. Chaffee, who writes in *The Freeman* that "in China to-day more people are addicted to opium than can read or write." The charge that the Chinese Government is mainly responsible can not be maintained, he holds, since "from the days of the Empire till to-day it has constantly fought this gigantic evil." It has persistently tried to make agreements with the Powers to keep out the drug, and has gone to the length of making use of opium a capital offense. In January, 1919, says the writer further, \$20,000,000 worth of opium was publicly burned in Shanghai. Yet such measures seem to avail little or nothing. Trafficking in opium is exceedingly profitable, and "that is why the great Powers of the world have prevented China from stamping out this trade." But, he explains,

"It is not to be supposed that the Great Powers are themselves growing opium and forcing it on China; the truth is that this trade is in the hands of a few citizens of these countries; and their profits are so vast that a powerful 'ring' has been created which can influence legislation, bribe officials, and use the machinery of government to further the traffic. The business in opium is a vested interest. The opium 'farmer' in Hongkong and Singapore pays a royalty of \$2,000,000 per year for the definite privilege of converting every day five chests of raw opium into prepared opium. It is easy to figure his cost, on the basis of the royalty plus the cost of the material and its conversion into prepared opium. His legitimate income is the amount he derives from his sales. But this has never equaled even the amount of the royalty paid by the 'farmer,' yet the contract is eagerly renewed year after year. Where, then, does the profit come from? It comes from the illegitimate side of the business, for the 'farmer' deals in morphin and the profits from this are so great that customs men can be bought and occasional fines paid, and still there remains hundreds of thousands of dollars' profit."

What, then, is to be done to put an end to this "soul-destroying evil"? The writer suggests that there be plenty of publicity, that there be government control of the manufacture of opium by-products, that no exportation be allowed to any country whose laws do not guarantee that the use of the drug will not be abused, and that there be an "International Opium Board to find out the measure of the world's need of the drug and to aim at limiting the world's production to meet that amount and no more." Whether these suggestions be acceptable or not, he believes it is necessary at least "that the American public should know that indirectly it is at present a consenting party to the steady debauching of the Chinese people."