

**THE OTHER SIDE OF
THE OPIUM
QUESTION**

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The Other Side of the Opium Question by W. J. Moore

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PREFACE

THE following articles excepting the first were recently published in the 'Indian Medical Gazette.' But the scope of a purely professional journal must necessarily be limited. I have therefore determined to reprint the papers in a separate form in order that they may reach a wider circle of readers. In this procedure I am actuated by the firm impression that the British public are being misled by probably well meaning but certainly mistaken persons, who erroneously regard the use of opium as the crying evil of the times. Should such persons succeed in their endeavours the result could only be increased taxation on the people of India, which neither they, nor, in these days of a depreciated rupee, the Europeans employed in the country could endure. For I regard as chimerical, and without the limits of possibility, that, as proposed by some enthusiasts, the British tax payers would ever consent to bear the loss of the six millions annually, which the abolition of the opium trade would entail on the revenue of India. Especially when they would be doing so

for the purpose of preventing a comparatively few Chinamen, suffering from the abuse of an agent, which many more Chinamen find to be a source of enjoyment, of comfort, a necessity, and even a blessing. If the opium trade were really productive of all the evils attributed to it by anti-opiumists and missionaries, it would still be questionable if its abolition would not be productive of far greater evils, both to India and to China. To India by the sequence of increased taxes; by throwing large numbers of people out of employ, depriving them of an hereditary occupation and rendering them destitute; and by materially reducing the revenue of some of the most important Native Chiefs, as Scindiah and Holkar. To China (as the Chinese will have opium) by obliging the people to use the native-grown drug, which is more deleterious than Indian opium; by extending the growth of opium in China; and especially by the opening up of the country to Europeans, which is the price or *quid pro quo* the anti-opiumists demand from China, in exchange for the abolition of the Indian opium trade. When Asiatics and Europeans thus come into contact, history shows that situations must arise which do not always result favorably to the former.

I do not advocate the use of opium. Were it possible I should rejoice to see a law against the immoderate use of opium in force throughout the world. But of the two I would prefer to see the immoderate use of spirits abolished, as the greatest of two evils,

The moderate use of opium, and the moderate use of spirits (as sanctioned by all law—human and divine—except Mahomedan law) I hold to be legitimate—also under innumerable circumstances beneficial to mankind, both in health and in sickness.