



ACÉPHALE

ET IN ARCADIA EGO

ARTIFICIAL PARADISES

THE
CHINESE
OPIUM-
SMOKER



V I E N N E

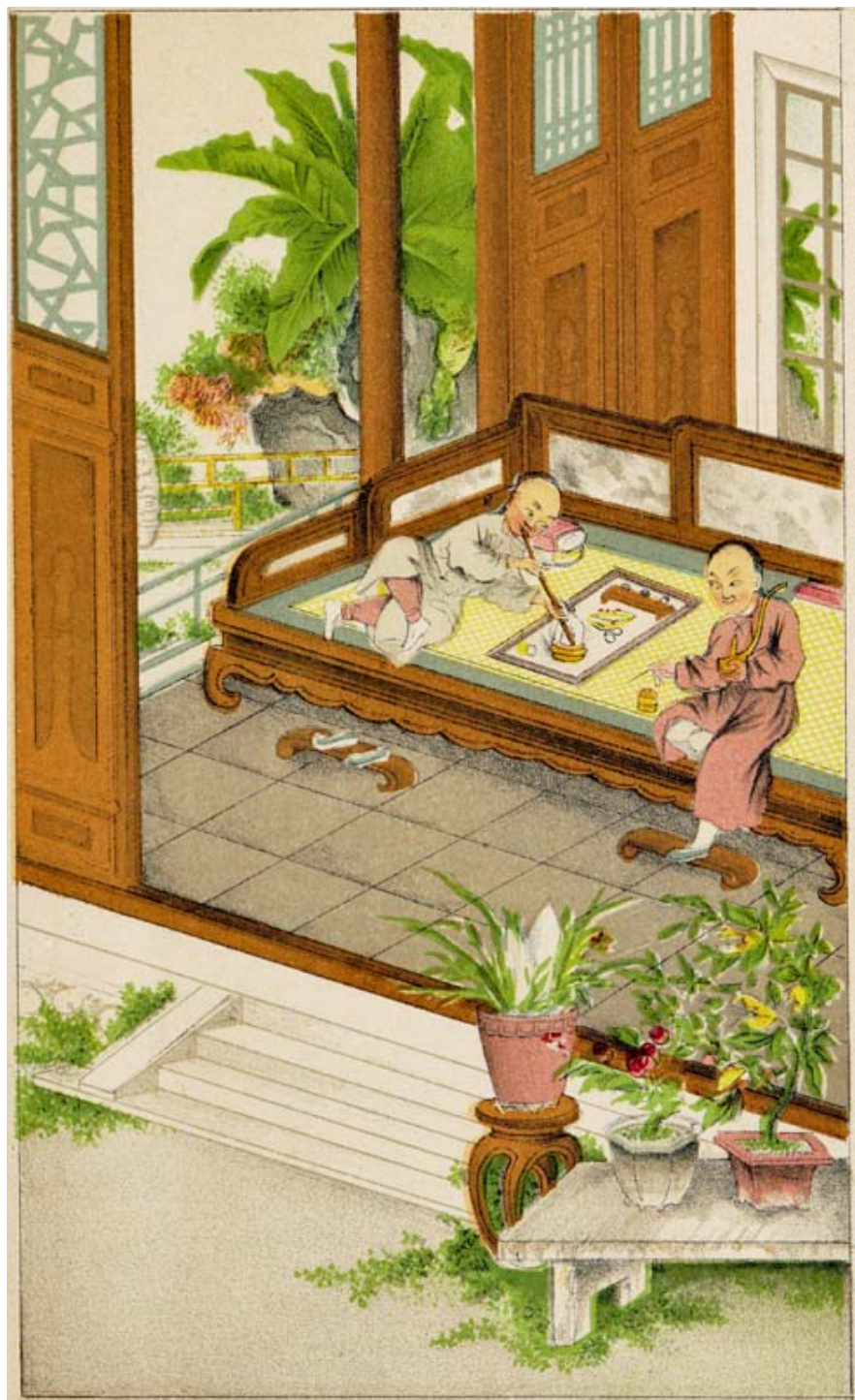
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AUS DEM ENGLISCHEN VON A. VADIM

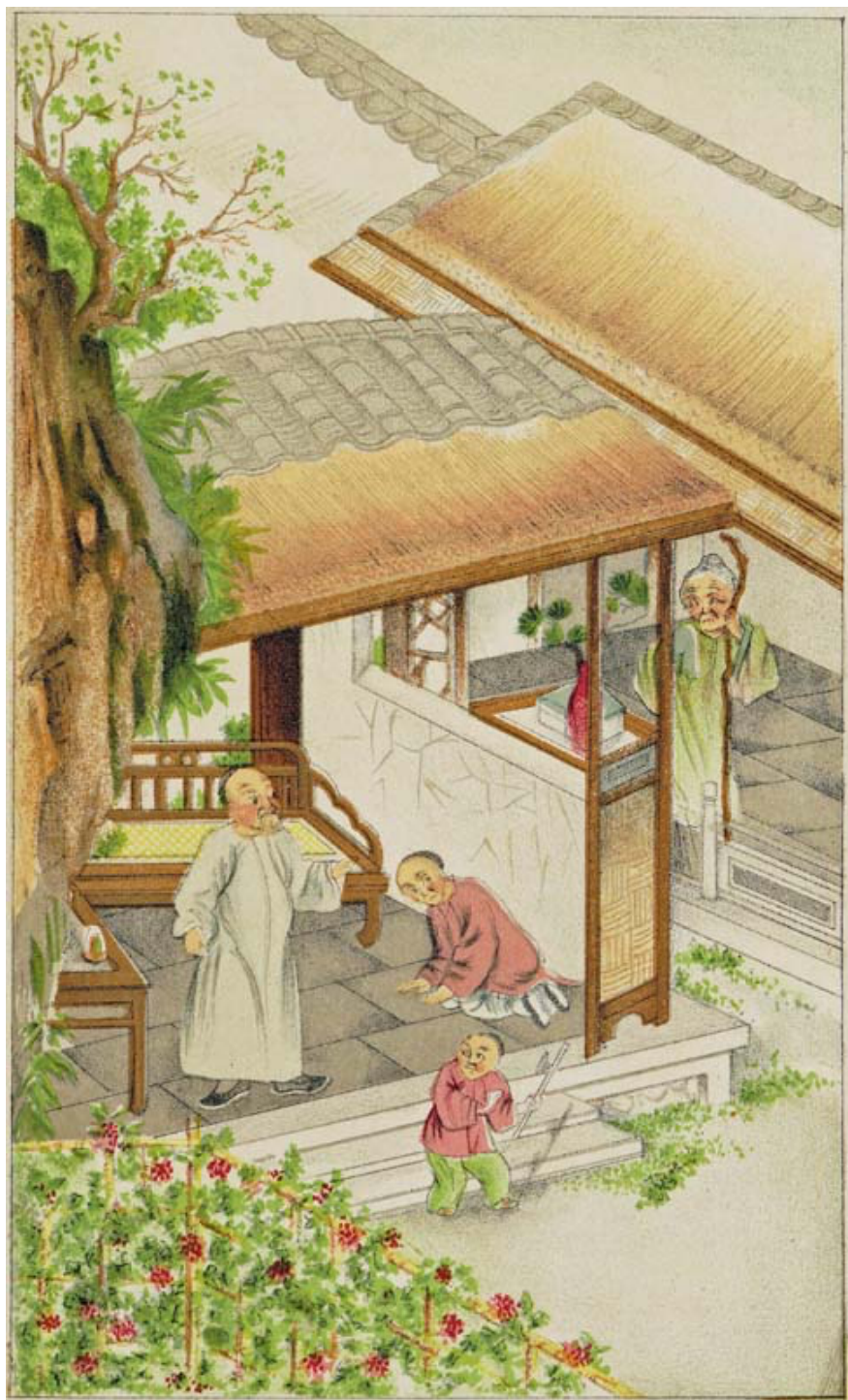
No. 1.

THE incipient opium-smoker is reclining (as is usual) on a couch in his mansion, while his companion is indulging in tobacco through the water-pipe common in China.



No. 2

THE opium-smoker, still portly and well-dressed, is entreated by his poor wife on bended knees to desist from the disastrous habit. His child is running off with the dreaded pipe; while the aged grandmother is seen coming, leaning on her staff, to add her tears and entreaties—now for the first time proved to be powerless. The hold of the pipe is already established; interest, duty, affection, reputation—all prove too feeble to arrest the downward career of the smoker. Sad indeed is the prospect; the husband is already doomed to poverty, shame, and an early grave; his wife to ruin, his child to beggary. His mother will die of a broken heart.



No. 3

REPRESENTING the progress in dissipation of the once sober gentleman, who has now, alas! become the victim of this vice. To him day has now become night, and night day. He can no longer sleep at night; and to banish the tedium of its long quiet hours, and to drown thought of the sure ruin awaiting him, becomes an absolute necessity. Regardless, therefore, alike of entreaty and censure, he now openly introduces into his house singing men and women, and gives himself up to their society. His books, formerly the companions of his choice, now lie unheeded on his table, and will not long retain even their place there. As for his poor family, powerless to prevent, or even retard, the downward progress of events, they can only consult their own safety by keeping altogether out of sight

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II.

OPIUM-SMOKING IN CHINA COMPARED WITH THE DRINK- ING HABITS OF ENGLAND.

On this point the evidence of Mr. (now Sir Thomas) Wade, K.C.B., Her Majesty's minister at the Court of Peking, given in Government Blue Book, No. 5 (1871), p. 432, is so decisive, that it precludes the necessity of further testimony. He says: —

“It is to me vain to think otherwise of the use of the drug in China than as of a habit many times more pernicious, nationally speaking, than the gin and whisky drinking which we deplore at home. It takes possession more insidiously and keeps its hold to the full as tenaciously. I know no case of radical cure. It has insured in every case within my knowledge the steady descent, moral and physical, of the smoker, and it is so far a greater mischief than drink, that it does not, by external evidence of its effect, expose its victim to the loss of repute which is the penalty of habitual drunkenness.”

III.

THE EXTENT OF OPIUM-SMOKING IN CHINA.

In the absence of an official census, we can only select the most reliable evidence to be had on the subject.

J. Dudgeon, Esq., M.D., C.M., of the Peking Mission Hospital, estimates that of the male population in China generally, probably 30 to 40 per cent. smoke opium; of the general city population, 40 to 60 per cent.

The former of these statements is perhaps rather excessive, seeing that the same authority gives the number of agriculturists and field labourers as averaging only 4 to 6 per cent.

Of the city population we have from various quarters more minute estimates to guide us.

Taking three important cities from various parts of the country, we find that the number of opium-smokers does in each case exceed the estimate given by Dr. Dudgeon.

1.—Suchow, the capital of the province of Kiang Su. The Rev. C. H. Du Bose, a resident missionary, writes: — “As a minimum estimate, seven-tenths of the adult

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