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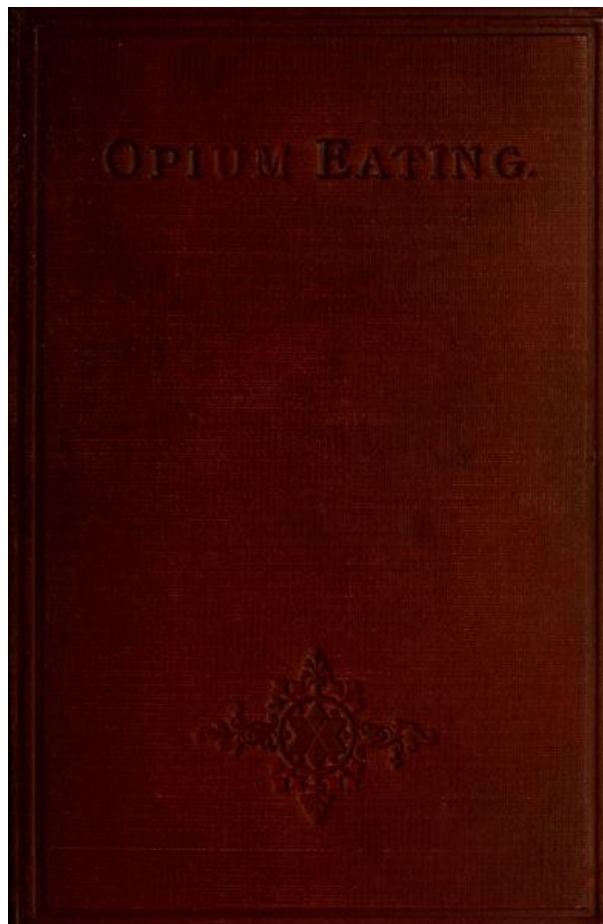
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# OPIUM EATING.

OPIUM EATING.  
AN  
*Autobiographical Sketch.*

BY  
AN HABITUATE.



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## PREFACE.

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THE following narration of the personal experiences of the writer is submitted to the reader at the request of numerous friends, who are of opinion that it will be interesting as well as beneficial to the public.

The reader is forewarned that in the perusal of the succeeding pages, he will not find the incomparable music of De Quincey's prose, or the easy-flowing and harmonious graces of his inimitable style, as presented in the "Confessions of an English Opium Eater;" but a dull and trudging narrative of solid facts, disarrayed of all flowers of speech, and delivered by a mind, the faculties of which are bound up and baked hard by the searing properties of opium—a mind without elasticity or fertility—a mind prostrate. The only excuse for writing the book in this mental condition was, and is, that the prospect of ever being able to write under more favorable circumstances appeared too doubtful to rely upon; I felt that I had better now do the best I could, lest my mouth be sealed forever with my message undelivered. The

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result is before the reader in the following chapters; his charitable judgment of which I have entreated in the body of the work. The introductory part of the book, that relating to my imprisonment, is inserted for my own justification.

THE AUTHOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

I ENTER THE ARMY.—TAKEN PRISONER.—SUFFERINGS ON THE ROAD TO AND AT RICHMOND.—LEAVE RICHMOND FOR DANVILLE.—OUR SOJOURN AT THE LATTER PLACE.—THE SMALL-POX.—REMOVAL TO ANDERSONVILLE.

**I**N the year 1861, a well and hearty boy of sixteen, I enlisted in the army as a drummer. This was my only possibility of entering the service, as I was too young to be accepted as a private soldier. Though but a drummer, I fought with a gun in all the battles in which our regiment was engaged. It generally so happened that I had no drum about the time of a battle, and being too small to carry off the wounded, and feeling that I was not fulfilling my duty to my country unless I did "the State some service," I participated in the battle of Stone River, and doing tolerably well there, when the battle of Chickamauga drew nigh, the colonel of our regiment told me, casually, that he would like to see me along; and I did not fail him. He did not command me; he had no authority to do that; it was not necessary; I would have been on hand without his referring to the matter at all, as such was my intention. As it was, I took a sick man's gun and accoutrements and marched with my company. On the first day of the battle—the 19th of September, 1863—I was captured. Not being wounded, I was taken with about five thousand other prisoners to Richmond, Va., and confined there in the tobacco-factory prisons. On the way to Richmond we had but little to eat, and suffered considerably. At Richmond, our allowance of food was so small, that during the two and one-half months we were there we became miserably weak, and suffered terribly. It is no doubt a fact, that although hard enough to bear at any time, gradual starvation sets harder upon a man at first than when he has become somewhat accustomed to it. Perhaps this is reasonable enough; the stomach and body being stronger at first, the pangs are more fierce and exhausting.

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After being at Richmond three weeks, we could not rise to our feet without crawling up gradually by holding to the wall. Any sudden attempt to rise usually resulted in what is called "blind staggers,"—a fearful, floating, blinding sensation in the head.

Hunger is the most exasperating and maddening of all human suffering, as I do know from most wretched experience. It lengthens out time beyond all calculation, and reduces a man to nothing above a mere savage animal. It makes him a glaring, raging, ferocious brute, and were it not for the accompanying weakness and debility, it would rob him of every instinct of humanity, for the time being. One at length arrives at the conclusion, that all a reasonable being requires in this life, to make him completely happy, is enough to eat. No one that has not experienced it can understand the cruel tedium of hunger, and the eternal war that rages among one's ferocious inwards, as they struggle to devour and consume themselves; the everlasting gnaw, gnaw, as though one's stomach were populated with famished rats. It seems that hunger, long continued, sucks all the substance out of the very material of a man's stomach, and leaves it dry, hard, and serviceless; and also so contracted in size as not to answer the ends of a stomach at all. In short, constant hunger, continued for an unreasonable length of time, will utterly ruin the stomach.

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Although the month was November, I sold my shoes for bread, despite the weather being so cold that I was forced to rise long before daylight in the morning, and find, if possible, some warmer place in the house. We had no stoves; no heat of any kind to keep us warm was supplied by the Confederates, and up to this time no clothing or blankets had been furnished by any one. Soon after this, however,—Providence and the good women of the North be thanked,—the Sanitary Commission of the United States sent us each a suit of clothes and a blanket. Directly after the receipt of the clothing, we were removed to Danville, Va. Here we remained until the following spring.

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During the time we were at Danville, we suffered considerably from cold and close confinement. The small-pox also broke out among us, and attacked a great many, but in most cases in a mild form. Those afflicted had it as violently as could be expected under the circumstances, their systems being in such a depleted condition that the disease had nothing to feed on. In fear of it, and to prevent it, many were vaccinated. I was not,—and I thank Providence that I was not, as I knew some to suffer worse from vaccination than they could have done from the small-pox, even though it terminated fatally; for it did terminate fatally in the cases of vaccination, and after more suffering than could possibly have ensued from the dreaded disease itself. The vaccine virus proved to be poisonous in some cases. I knew a man whose left arm was eaten to the bone by it, the bone being visible, and the cavity, which was circular in shape, was as large in circumference as an ordinary orange. After months of excruciating pain, the man died. But sometimes vaccination did not even prevent the small-pox. A man with whom the writer bunked was vaccinated, and it "took," what would be considered immensely well, a very large scab developing upon each arm. Yet this man took the small-pox, and badly, while the writer,—to take another view of the case,—although he

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had not been vaccinated for about thirteen years, and yet had been exposed to the disease in almost every way, and had slept with this man while he was taking it, and after he returned from the small-pox hospital with his sores but partially healed up, remained perfectly free of it.

I thought if I must have it, I must, and there was an end of the matter; there being no way of avoiding it that I could see; and I do not know but the late vaccination, while the disease was already thickly scattered about the house, increased the danger of contagion by throwing the blood into a fever of the same kind; while by leaving the blood undisturbed, if the disease was not intercepted, the chances of taking it were at least not augmented.

We left Danville in April, 1864, having been confined there about five months. Although confined very closely, and our liberties few, upon the whole, Danville was the best-provided prison I was in; the rations of food being larger and more wholesome than at any other prison. It is true that the buckets of pea-soup swam with bugs, but that was a peculiarity of that savory dish at all the prisons of the South. We became accustomed to drinking the soup, bugs and all, without any compunctions of delicacy about it, and our only and sincere wish was for more of the same kind. Many a time did I pick these bugs from between my teeth without any commotion in my stomach whatever,—save of hunger. A man becomes accustomed to this way of living, and loses all sense of delicacy regarding his food. Quantity is the only question to be considered, quality being an object so unimportant as to be entirely lost sight of.

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We arrived at Andersonville, Ga., five days after leaving Danville. We had a very uncomfortable journey, being penned up in freight cars, seventy-five in a car, and not allowed to get out but once during the whole journey. We changed cars once on the route, and this was the only opportunity we had of stretching our limbs during the entire trip.

I now ask the reader to allow me to pause a few moments to take breath and gather strength and courage for the task before me.

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## CHAPTER II.

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ENTRANCE INTO ANDERSONVILLE PRISON.—HORRIBLE SIGHTS.—  
THE BELLE ISLANDERS.—THE KIND OF TREATMENT FOR FIRST  
FEW MONTHS.—CONDITION OF THINGS GENERALLY DURING  
THAT TIME.—NEW PRISONERS.—INAUGURATION OF CRUEL  
TREATMENT.—GOING OUT FOR FUEL AND SHELTER  
PROHIBITED.—RATIONS DIMINISHED.—THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
SOUTHERN PRISON DISCIPLINE.—SEVERITIES OF CLIMATE AND  
DREADFUL SUFFERING.

**A**NDERSONVILLE! Dread word! Dread name for cruelty, and patriots' graves, I stand paralyzed before thy horrid gates! Thou grim Leviathan of Death! I feel heart-sick as I approach thee! I feel how powerless I am to tell thy horrible story, thou monster monument of Inhumanity in the nation's history! I feel thy fangs while yet I descry thy hideous form through the mazy scope of years! I carry thy stings, and the grave alone shall hide the scars upon the marred and shattered body thou hast sacrificed, as a tree stripped of its fruit and foliage!

After being counted into detachments and nineties by the commandant, the notorious Captain Wirz, we were marched into the prison. Heavens! what a sight met our gaze as we marched into that enclosure of destruction! Lying between the stockade and the dead-line, was a long line of corpses, which was necessarily one of the first objects our eyes rested upon as we entered the prison gates.

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There they lay, nearly naked in their rags, but the frames—but the bones and skin of men—with their upturned, wildly-ghastly, staring faces, and wide-open eyes.

This was a terrible greeting indeed; and it sent a feeling of dismay to our very souls, and after that a deep sense of despair seemed to settle upon us. We had at last met death face to face. On looking around, we saw the men whose comrades these dead men had been. They all looked alike, and we could not fail to observe the resemblance between the dead and the living. These men were from Belle Island, a rebel prison, which stands unrivalled in the history of the world for cruelty to human beings. I fervently thank God that it pleased Him that I should not be confined there. These poor, wretched men, who had been there, and who preceded us at Andersonville, were the most ghastly-looking living human beings that the eye of man ever beheld. They were nothing but skin and bone. Living skeletons. In color perfectly black. They had no shelter, and smoked themselves black over their pitch-pine fires. The limited time they survived our arrival they spent in cooking, and sitting haunched

up over their little fires. They died so rapidly that, before we were aware of it, not one could be seen in the camp. They became ripe for the stroke of the sickle, all of them about the same time, and their Father gathered them to His abundant harvest.

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From the misfortunes of these men we took some consolation, strange as it may appear. When witnessing the terrible mortality among them, we said, "Oh, it is only the Belle Islanders that are dying."

As soon as we had to some extent shaken off the depressing influence exerted upon us by the knowledge of the horrible condition of the Belle Islanders, we began to encourage ourselves with the idea that our fate would not be like theirs; that we had not been on Belle Island, nor experienced the terrible sufferings from exposure and starvation which they had been subjected to, and that, therefore, the mortality could not be so great among us as it had been among them. But we reckoned without having the least conception of what possibilities there were in the future. True, we had fared much better than the Belle Island men. We had not been so exposed to the weather, and had not suffered as much from insufficient quantity of food; we had been able to keep ourselves in better sanitary condition. We were much cleaner and better off in every way, to all appearances. But, as I remarked before, we had not the least comprehension of the possibilities of the future. We had no intimation whatever of the monster of destruction that lay sleeping in our systems, and floating torpidly about in our veins. But the awful knowledge was to dawn upon us soon, and unmistakably. Scurvy—a disease so awful and so dread, that its name to a man in such a place was but another name for death—was destined to break out among us. This disease made its appearance three months after our arrival at Andersonville. Up to that time, knowing nothing of this, suspecting nothing of the kind, we enjoyed our lives better than we had any time since our capture.

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During the first few months of our sojourn at Andersonville, the Confederates allowed us a sufficient quantity of food to support life. We were also comparatively free and unconfined, were out of doors, had room to walk about, and could see the shady forest. This was a great relaxation from, and improvement upon, hard walls. The rebels also—as they issued us raw rations—allowed us to get wood to cook with, and for the purpose of making shelter. For a short time, then,—and it was a short time, indeed, compared to the long term of our imprisonment,—we were happier than we had been during all of our previous captivity. But no man was ever happy long in rebel prisons, and the period of our bliss was of but short duration. Not only did men die of the scurvy as fast as the snow melts in spring, but other misfortunes befell us. Or rather, these last came in the shape of Southern barbarities; but although they were barbarities in those who inflicted them, they were serious misfortunes to the Yankee prisoners. It seemed, no sooner had the spring campaigns opened, and men came pouring into the prison as though the Northern army had been captured in full, than the rebel authorities prohibited going out for wood, so that those who came in after that date could not get out for material to make shelter with. Hence, it seemed thereafter a race between the old prisoners and the new to see who would die the soonest; the new prisoners, having no shelter, dying from exposure and other severities, and the old prisoners, having shelter, dying from the scurvy.

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Another misfortune to us, and barbarity in the rebels, was a decrease in the quantity of food as our numbers increased. The result of this act of cruelty was, of course, to make all weaker, old and new prisoners irrespectively. But to the new prisoners I have no doubt it came the hardest. Their stomachs were not shrunken, dried, and hardened to starvation as were those of the old prisoners. Their stomachs and systems generally being in better condition, they felt the demand for food more keenly than did the half-sick-at-the-stomach and scurvy-infected veterans of the prison-pen. Being without shelter also made in them a greater demand for food. The ravages of exposure had to be repaired. Scurvy in the systems of the old prisoners had begun to make their stomachs qualmish and less desirous of food. Besides this,—and it adds yet another barbarity to the endless list,—although we were prohibited going out for wood to cook with, raw rations were in part still issued. The prison authorities undertook to issue cooked rations, and did for the most part, but part raw rations were always issued with those that were cooked. For instance, the rebels baked our bread and cooked our meat, but always issued peas raw. As a man needed every particle of food allowed him by the rebels, this went hard enough. But it went hardest with the new prisoners. We old ones, who had arrived there prior to the stoppage of going out for wood, had in some cases laid in a supply, or in others built our shelter near a stump, which, when the wood famine came on, had to pay tribute with its roots. As the wood was generally rich with pitch, being pine, and frequently pitch-pine, a little went a great way.

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Furthermore, necessity ruling the times, we cooked in our little quart cups, laying under a little sliver at a time. We also built a wall of clay around our little fire, to save and concentrate the heat as much as possible. But, as the new prisoners had no wood and could get none, they were forced either to trade, if possible, their raw for cooked rations or eat them as they got them—raw,—as they did frequently enough. The reason given for prohibiting going out for wood was, that some prisoners had attempted making their escape while outside. This was a correct specimen of Southern philosophy regarding the government of Yankee prisoners. To punish all for the offence of a few, where they could conveniently, was the invariable rule. Offence! as if nature as well as reason did not teach a man to make his escape from such a place, if possible. It is his right; and it is expected that

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he will attempt to do so at the first opportunity, in less barbarous countries. To prevent this, guards are detailed, and they have a right to shoot a man down in the attempt if they observe him, and on command he will not surrender himself; but men, like birds, are born free, and if, being imprisoned under such circumstances, an opportunity to escape presents itself, it is not only natural for a man to avail himself of it, but it is also his duty to do so. Such was the usual custom of the rebels—to punish all for the offence of a part. Having stripped the prisoners upon the battle-field, to their very shirt and pants in many cases, they sent them into their “cattle-pen,” as they termed it, to perish from exposure and starvation; their hands and feet and all exposed parts blistering in the hot sun, as though roasted in fire; scorching by day in the unbearable heat, and by night chilled to the very bone with cold.

Those who have not dwelt or sojourned in the South, have no idea of the peculiarities of the climate there. In the North, during the summer, we have steady warm weather both day and night, but it is not so down South. There the days are excessively hot and the nights exceedingly chilly. I admit that this is delightful, if one has a roof over his head and bed-covering, but to a man lying upon the bare ground, without either shelter or covering of any kind, and with but scanty wearing apparel, it is a great hardship. In addition to this, it rained twenty-one days in succession during our stay at Andersonville; and the new prisoners, having no shelter, had to bear it the best they could.

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Now, if the reader can realize the scene I have attempted to describe, I shall be satisfied. If he can, in his mind’s eye, see hundreds of emaciated, haggard, and half-naked men lying about on the bare ground of an inclosed field (which is divided into two sections by a swamp, in the middle of which runs a little ditch of water), the largest number lying around the swamp and at the edge of the rising ground; if he can see these poor fellows in the morning, after a rainy night, almost buried beneath the sand and dirt which the rain has washed down from the hillside upon them, too exhausted and weak to arise,—many that never will arise again in this life, and are now breathing their last; not a soul near to give them a drink or speak to them—I say, if the reader realizes this scene in his own mind, he will catch a faint glimpse of the actual fact as it existed. Those that are still able to get up, and remain upon their feet long enough to be counted for rations, do so when the time comes, and then lie down again in the burning sun, or, if able, pass the day in wandering wearily about the camp; the only interruption being the drawing of rations. These, when drawn, are devoured with the voraciousness of a tiger. The constant exposure to the fierce rays of a Southern sun has burned their hands and feet in great scars and blisters. Covered with sand and dirt from head to foot, their poor, shrunken bodies and cadaverous, horror-striking faces are enough to soften the heart of a Caligula or a Nero; but no pity or relief comes. Day after day they must scorch in the sun; night after night must their starved bodies shiver with cold, while the pitiless rain must chill and drench with its unceasing torrents the last spark of vitality out of them. The only relief that comes is in a speedy and inevitable death. No one can last long under these conditions, and the time required to kill a man was well ascertained and wonderfully short. To endure three such terrible hardships as gradual starvation, intolerable heat, and shivering cold, day after day and night after night in unremitting succession, man was never made. How I wish every man and woman in the North could understand, and realize in their minds and hearts, the awful condition of our men at Andersonville, as in the case of the shelterless, new, and scurvy-infected old prisoners.

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“It *might* frae monie a blunder free ‘em,  
And foolish notion.”

It might soften their hearts to the suffering they now see around them.

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## CHAPTER III.

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THE CHICKAMAUGA MEN.—PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND SUFFERINGS.—TRADE.—MERCHANDISING AT ANDERSONVILLE.—THE PLYMOUTH MEN.—A GODSEND TO THE “OLD RESIDENTS.”—“POPULAR PRICES.”

THE condition of the old prisoners at this time (say during the month of August, 1864, and about or near four months after our arrival), as far as mortality was concerned, was fully as appalling as that of the new. While the new prisoners seemed fairly dissolving before the resistless sweep of outward influences, as fatal inward difficulties carried the old ones off just as rapidly.

All in the prison drew the same rations; so none had enough to eat that depended upon their rations for their entire subsistence. So we all suffered, and suffered all we could bear, and bore suffering which, unless relieved, must end in certain death—and soon enough. We were



all wasting away day by day. Though all suffered, the condition of some was worse than that of others; still, as the Confederates did not issue enough food for a man to subsist on, death in a limited time was certain to overtake all of us who depended entirely upon our rations.

God knows how badly we all felt, with the insufficiency of our food, the eternal tediousness of time, and the discouraging prospect of release.

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But I must return to that class of prisoners of which I was a representative, the "Chickamauga men;" and before I give an account of the scurvy which broke out among us, I desire to relate briefly something of my own feelings and experiences.

All I wish to say in this connection is, how hunger—this gradual starvation—affected me. The scurvy broke out, I presume, in July, among our men. At this time, and for a long time past, and during the remainder of my imprisonment, I was thin, and although not very strong, stronger than most of my comrades,—for be it remembered, I was one of the *lucky* few that lived, and not among the great majority, for they are in the South now in their graves,—I seemed to stand it better than most men, and was pointed at and remarked about accordingly; and once, when the scurvy was at its height, I got sick and was down for a day or so, my comrades exclaimed, "Ah, ha! — is coming down with the rest of us!" Yet my sufferings at this time were so severe, that, had we not departed from Andersonville within a few days, as we did, I would have remained there forever. Although I had, by an ever-watchful activity, both as to bodily exercise and the obtaining of one or two small Irish potatoes, kept the scurvy in abeyance, I was so permeated with it, that I could not touch a toe of my bare foot against the merest twig, without sending, as it were, an electric shock of the most excruciating pain through every bone in my body.

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Ten months of prison life, during nearly all of which was continued a system of slow starvation, had so absorbed and dried up my stomach, that, although I still starved daily, the coarse corn bread, half-baked as it was, ever seemed to stick in the centre of my stomach, and cause me an incessant dull pain. This pain continued until I was finally released, and afterwards. After having survived all, and gotten home, I found my stomach so contracted, that, although I was always hungry after as well as before a meal, I could eat but very little, and that distressed me greatly. In fact, it seemed that I had saved my life at the expense of my stomach.

To return to the prison. I suffered continuously, and was so weak that I spent a considerable portion of each day in a kind of trance-like condition—dreaming—my thoughts floating at will, within the limits of my mental horizon, with too little sail to be in danger of drifting very far out at sea; but I must say that in this state I passed the happiest hours of my prison life, my imagination being my greatest friend, and enabling my fancy more than once to set the prisoner free. After eating in the morning, before the heat became too intense, I would start on my trip for exercise, or to make some kind of a trade for a potato, if possible. Again in the evening, after eating, I would do the same. Naked creature that I was! All that summer my clothing consisted of a shirt and a pair of drawers! I must have had some kind of a hat.

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I speak of trading; to allow the reader to understand what is meant, I will explain. Although all prisoners were searched, some were fortunate enough to pass the ordeal of examination, retaining their valuables successfully concealed about them; these being traded to a guard for provisions, to wit: onions, potatoes, etc., brought the produce to the inside of the prison, and being inside was exposed for sale at a heavy profit by the lucky and enterprising Yankee.

In this way several stands were started. Paroled men, going out to work during the day, on coming in at night, sometimes smuggled produce into camp, which was disposed of in the same way. But trade was never very extensive until the capture of the "Plymouth men;" then it reached its greatest proportions. The Plymouth men were so called because captured at Plymouth, N. C. They composed a brigade, and had just been paid their back-pay and veteran bounty, and were on the eve of going home on their veteran furlough, when, alas! they were unfortunately captured. These men had the easiest terms of capitulation of any prisoners taken in the late war.

They were allowed to retain all of their clothing and money, and consequently marched into prison under much more favorable circumstances than prisoners generally. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good," and the appearance of the Plymouth men in the pen at Andersonville was a providential thing for many an old prisoner. The old ones knew the tricks of trade, and soon had a great part of the Plymouth men's money. The arrival of the Plymouth men was a great blessing to many who were there before them, and in fact improved the spirits of the whole camp. As I said before, trade then went up to its highest round. Stands could be seen everywhere, and the continual crowds, surging up and down the two main thoroughfares, presented an interesting and exciting scene. Another feature in the trading line was one which always manifested itself more particularly after the drawing of rations, to wit: persons having no money would trade corn-meal for bread, or peas for bread, or bread for meat, etc., to suit their varying tastes or necessities. This noise, added to that of the stand-keepers crying their wares, raised a din above which nothing else could be heard, and gave the camp the appearance of being quite a business place. Produce was very high, however; ordinary biscuits selling for twenty-five cents (green-back) apiece, and onions seventy-five cents to a dollar. Irish potatoes, the size of a pigeon's egg, were sold for

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twenty-five cents each, and larger ones for more in proportion. This extensive trading was bound to decline, and then finally collapse. As the produce all came from the outside, that was where the money had to go, and as soon as the supply of money was exhausted, trade of necessity had to sink. Then only remained the trading of one kind of ration for another.

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This extensive trading, growing out of the Plymouth money, was a very good thing for us while it lasted. Although the great majority of the prisoners reaped no advantage from it in receiving any addition to the quantity of their food, still it enlivened the camp for all, and was a *material* blessing to hundreds,—nay, I would perhaps be nearer the truth in saying thousands. Many an old, sun-dried veteran of a long incarceration, who would have otherwise certainly died of the scurvy, by shrewdness and dickerings in some way, possessed himself of a few dollars, which, judiciously invested in raw Irish potatoes, and administered to himself, arrested the further progress of the fell destroyer, and saved his life for his friends and family. Money was a very good thing to have at Andersonville. It would have purchased life in thousands of cases.

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## CHAPTER IV.

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RAVAGES OF THE SCURVY AMONG THE CHICKAMAUGA PRISONERS.—  
TOO LONG WITHOUT FRUIT OR VEGETABLES.—THE HORRORS  
OF THE SCURVY.—CERTAIN DEATH.—FRIGHTFUL MORTALITY.  
—FORTUNATE REMOVAL FROM ANDERSONVILLE.—ARRIVAL AT  
CHARLESTON, S. C.—TRANSFERRED TO FLORENCE, S. C.—  
DESCRIPTION OF THE LATTER PRISON.—SHORTEST RATIONS  
EVER ISSUED.—CERTAIN STARVATION ON THE RATIONS.—  
EFFORTS FOR MORE FOOD; PROVIDENTIAL SUCCESS.—THREE  
DAYS WITHOUT RATIONS.—PRISON-KEEPERS CRUEL AND  
INHUMAN.—TERRIBLE SUFFERINGS DURING THE WINTER.—  
UNPARALLELED MORTALITY.—RAW RATIONS AND  
INSUFFICIENT FUEL.—LIFE UNDER GROUND.—SWAMP FEVER.  
—TAKEN WITH THE FEVER.—FLIGHT FROM FLORENCE.—  
WILMINGTON.—GOLDSBORO'.—HARD TIMES OF A SICK MAN.  
—PRISON EXCHANGE FOOLERY.—BACK TO WILMINGTON.

I SHALL now attempt a description of the ravages of the scurvy among the Chickamauga prisoners.

It must have been during the month of July, 1864, that this dreadful disease made its appearance,—I mean among the men with whom I was identified (the Chickamauga men); how much sooner or later it afflicted other classes of prisoners, I am unable to state. Our men seemed to be doing well at this time, having shelter, and the rations still being tolerably fair. But it was all outward show, the inside being rotten. We had lived too long without green vegetables, or acids, or fruit of any kind. The first symptoms of the scurvy appeared in the mouth, the gums becoming black, swollen, and mortified. Then in quick succession the lower limbs were involved,—large, dark spots appearing near the knee or on the calves of the legs. These spots gradually became larger and more sore and disabling; at the same time, the cords under the knees becoming so contracted as to draw the calves back against the thighs, or nearly so. The spots varied a trifle in color,—that is, as to shades,—but generally bore the same heavy, dull, dead, blackish appearance, as though the blood had congealed in one place underneath the skin, and then putrefied. It usually took the disease several months to run its course, the spots growing larger, and the whole system becoming greatly shaken; the victim, long since deprived of the power of locomotion, lies helplessly on his back, calmly awaiting his Lord's release from his terrible suffering; until, at length, the disease reaches his bowels and vital parts, when his chain is broken, his fetters fall loosely from him, and his spirit speeds its winged flight, glorious with its sudden joy, to that prisonless realm of everlasting peace. Hundreds upon hundreds lay upon their backs in this condition, the number decreasing day by day as the quota of dead was carried off. No hope for them on this side of the valley,—and well they knew it, and died like heroes. Twenty good-sized Irish potatoes would have cured any case of scurvy before it reached the vitals; but if two would have done it, they could not have been obtained, as the rebels did not issue them, and the prisoner had no money,—so he sleeps the long last sleep. So many old prisoners died of the scurvy, that scarcely any were left to tell their story. Hovel after hovel was emptied entirely, every man swept away by the relentless scourge. Oh, what a heavy charge rests against those who could have prevented, or at least mitigated, this! But the Confederates could have prevented the scurvy entirely. Their own men did not have it. However, it is not my object to criminate or stir up old animosities. I merely wish to relate some of my prison experiences, and describe their results. There are twelve thousand "Yankee" prisoners buried at Andersonville. During the month of August, 1864, when there

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were thirty-five thousand men incarcerated there, the number of deaths averaged one hundred per day. All the day long the dead were being carried out, and every morning a long line of corpses, which had accumulated during the night, could be seen lying at the southern gate.

It seemed as though an odor of death pervaded the atmosphere of the camp. The entire prison-ground was strewn with dying men,—dying without a groan and without a mourner. It was indeed fortunate for me that Sherman's army threatened that place during the month of September, 1864, when, so nearly gone that I could scarcely walk to the depot, I was shipped, among thousands of others, to another part of the Confederacy. We went from Andersonville to Charleston. We stayed at Charleston about one month, during which time I mended a little through having a slight change of diet. From Charleston we were removed to Florence, in the same State of South Carolina.

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At Florence a prison was erected something similar to the stockade at Andersonville, but smaller in dimensions. It was situated in a perfect wilderness, with swampy woodland all around it. The inclosure was not by any means cleared of fallen trees and brush when we were marched into it. This was much to our advantage, as winter was coming on. We arrived there about the latter part of October. The shelter we put up,—and all were enabled to have shelter here,—though in general more substantial than at Andersonville, in many instances I could not deem very healthy. To be explicit, I refer especially to dwelling wholly under ground. Camp reports of death statistics tended to confirm this opinion. As for myself, I had good shelter all of the time, and, during the latter part of our sojourn at Florence prison, I was an occupant of one of the best houses (shanties) in it. The rations drawn at this prison were among the shortest ever issued by the rebels to Yankee prisoners. It was certain starvation to any that depended entirely upon their rations. I did not, and for that reason I am alive to relate this history. It would be too tedious now for me to undertake to relate how I succeeded in doing otherwise; let it suffice, that every faculty of my mind was concentrated upon the subject of getting more to eat than was issued to me, and that I got it by the exercise of my faculties to the utmost,—and my muscles, too.

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On first arriving at Florence, I got some sweet potatoes, and these eradicated the scurvy from my body, and gave me a new lease on life; and after that my sole business was to get enough to eat, for I knew the preservation of my life depended upon it. At Andersonville, by activity and the virtue of one or two potatoes, and a taste or so of something else, perhaps, I had managed to keep the scurvy down sufficiently—and that is all—for me to get away from that place with my life; and then it seemed God's providence, more than anything else, for I had so very little to assist me. But, having gotten away from there and reached Charleston, and improved a little there, and arriving at Florence, I was placed under such influences that I regained sounder footing once more. I then went to work with a determination of trying to live as long as the rebels held me in their bonds. I knew I must get more to eat than they gave me, or die. I was an old prisoner, and very thin, and much shattered and broken, and needed all the food I could get there. A pint of meal was not enough for a man to subsist upon, as was plainly demonstrated by our men dying off with prodigious rapidity. Winter was coming on, and more food was needed instead of less. The prison authorities were cruel and persecuting. Once for three days not a mouthful of rations was issued. At the end of that period a heavy increase in the per centum of dead was carried out;—though I heard poor fellows who had stood it out saying, afterwards, that they were not so hungry on the third day as on the first. Poor fellows, the reason was plain,—their stomachs on the third day had become too weak to manifest the ordinary symptoms of hunger.

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Hence my effort to live was not out of place; on the contrary, if I had still a lingering hope of surviving, the greatest efforts I could put forth seemed there almost mockery, and sadly inadequate to the end.

In fact, though I could not bring myself to the thought of yielding and dying, I nevertheless felt that my ever getting North again alive was most "too good a thing to happen." As far as possible, I kept the subject from my mind.

Winter came on at last. The weather was cold, and, after a particularly cold night, one could go into the "poor-houses" of every "thousand," and there find men stark dead in the attitude in which they had fallen backward from their scanty fires. Each "thousand" afforded a "poor-house." These were occupied by poor wretches who, in the vain hope of saving their lives by obtaining more food or making their escape, or both, had taken the oath of allegiance to the Southern Confederacy, and joined the rebel army.

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The Confederates found this expedient and experiment in recruiting their depleted army a failure, and turned the "galvanized Yankees" (as they were called) back into the stockade again. Having lost their local habitation, and become isolated and alienated from their former friends, who condemned their action and remained behind, being cast off and forsaken of everybody, they congregated together in these "poor-houses," which were erected for the benefit of such as they. At Charleston and at Florence we were divided, for convenience, into sections of one thousand men each.

Although located in the midst of a forest, we did not draw enough wood to cook our rations, let alone to keep us warm. A day's ration of wood was about the size of an ordinary stick of oven-wood. We were also situated in a very unhealthy place, being surrounded by an

immense swamp. The swamp furnished the water we drank and consumed otherwise.

A disease, commonly designated the "swamp fever," broke out, seizing a majority of us, and proving fatal in many cases. The per cent. of mortality here was far higher than at Andersonville. We were under worse conditions, and suffered and died proportionately. Though in respect to shelter our condition seemed improved, this consideration was enormously outweighed and overbalanced by our much worse condition in many other regards. The longer a man was detained in rebel prisons, the weaker he became, and we seemed to have reached the culminating point and extreme end of human endurance at this time at Florence, viz., the winter of 1864 and '65.

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The elements of the swamp fever were in every Florence prisoner (and bound to come out some time), and were the outgrowth and effect of the water we drank, and the other conditions in which we participated in common; and I believe that, almost without an exception, every man had it,—though some not until they were safely within our lines. With regard to myself, I was attacked by it on the evening of the night we left Florence prison forever. We took our sudden departure in the month of February, 1865. We were hurried out at a terrible rate, the rebels being greatly frightened by the report that Sherman was near. Although feeling wretchedly, and burning with fever, I went along. We were marched to the railroad, and shipped aboard freight cars, the rebels cramming as many of us as they could in each car. We were so crowded we could scarcely sit or stand; yet I was so sick that I could do neither, and had to lie down upon the floor, and risk being trampled upon.

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Of the journey to Wilmington, N. C., I scarcely remember anything except our starting. At Wilmington, after lying upon the sand some hours, I was assisted into the cars, and we started for Goldsboro'. At the latter place we got off the cars, and were marched some distance out of town to camp.

That night there was a heavy storm, and the rain poured down in torrents. We lay upon the ground with nothing but a blanket over us; and, though I was suffering from fever, I got soaking wet to the skin. Oh, dear, it is almost heart-breaking to think over those times. Almost dead, as I was, from long privations, sickness, and exhaustion, produced by trying, in my sick and weakened state, to keep along with my companions, one would think this in addition would have utterly annihilated and finished me. The next day we marched back to Goldsboro'. It being evening, and no train ready to take us on to Salisbury, whither they said we were bound, we laid ourselves down to rest and sleep.

"Care-charmer, Sleep, son of the sable Night,  
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,  
Relieve my anguish, and restore the light;  
With dark forgetting of my care, return,  
And let the day be time enough to mourn  
The shipwreck of my ill-advised youth;  
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,  
Without the torments of the night's untruth.  
Cease, dreams, the images of day desires,  
To model forth the passions of to-morrow;  
Never let the rising sun prove you liars,  
To add more grief, to aggravate my sorrow;  
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,  
And never wake to feel the day's disdain."

DANIEL.

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During the night we were awakened by a loud noise and hubbub, arising from the announcement that an exchange of prisoners had been effected, and that we were going straight back to Wilmington to be turned over to our men. This we hardly dared believe. We had been deceived so often, that we could scarcely credit the report. But trains being got ready, we were put aboard and started for Wilmington, sure enough. Arrived at the city of happy deliverance, and debarked from the cars, we lay in the wind and sun all day upon the sand. Toward evening we observed a great flurry among the Confederates, and we were suddenly got together, put upon the cars, and started for Goldsboro' again; and thus ended this exchange *fiasco*.

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## CHAPTER V.

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RETURN TO GOLDSBORO'.—DRUNK WITH FEVER.—TOO SICK TO  
WALK.—LEFT BEHIND.—GOD BLESS THE LADIES OF  
GOLDSBORO'.—PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.—NEGOTIATIONS FOR  
A FRIEND.—AN IMPROVISED HOSPITAL.—SICK UNTO DEATH.  
—SEMI-CONSCIOUSNESS.—MORE KINDNESS FROM THE

LADIES OF GOLDSBORO'.—PAROLED.—PASSED INTO OUR LINES NEAR WILMINGTON.—AT WILMINGTON IN THE HANDS OF THE BLUE COATS.—FRIEND LOST.—STILL VERY SICK WITH FEVER.—DETERMINED TO GO NORTH.—EFFORTS TO GET NORTH.—ON BOARD SHIP.—HO FOR ANNAPOLIS!—INCIDENTS OF THE VOYAGE.—ANNAPOLIS.—GETTING BETTER.—STOMACH TROUBLE.—SENT TO BALTIMORE.—FURLOUGHED HOME.

ON reaching Goldsboro', after alighting from the cars, we marched out to camp again. This last time it was all I could do to walk to the camp. I was fairly blind with fever, and staggered from side to side, almost dumb and insensible from prolonged suffering and exertion in sickness. While at Wilmington the last time, and from that time on, I was far too sick to look after myself much.

I reached the camp, however, and there remained until removed by other force than my own. The next morning, after coming to this camp, the lot of prisoners to which I belonged was removed to another camping-ground, some distance away. I essayed to go along, but accomplished nothing but wild staggering to and fro, and the little distance I gained I had to be carried back over.

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Excepting some care received by our sick from the Sisters of Charity while we were at Charleston, Goldsboro' was the first place in the South where Southern women manifested any sympathy for our deplorable condition. Here, the last time we came, the ladies of Goldsboro', though the guards strove to keep them back, burst through the lines, and came into our camp loaded with baskets of provisions, which they distributed among the sick and most needy.

On being carried back to the camp, after my futile attempt to follow my comrades, I, among other sick, was loaded on a wagon and hauled to a large brick building near Goldsboro'. Here we were taken out and carried in. I had selected as a companion, on my way thither, a boy of about my own age by the name of Orlando. I promised to share my blankets with him, if he would stay with and take care of me. As he had no blanket, and I had two, one having been left with me by a man that made his escape at Macon, Ga., Orlando gladly accepted my offer, and we bunked together accordingly. Here I laid—I don't know how many days exactly, but several—sick unto death, and expecting to die momentarily. I was very low and weak. My comrade was stronger. I noticed he prayed, and as I found difficulty in praying to my satisfaction, though I did pray, *in desire to pray*, continually, I asked Orlando if he would not pray for me. He did so, and I did everything I could for him that he would do this; gave him the most of what the ladies gave me (we depended solely on the ladies of Goldsboro' for provisions), as I was so sick that I did not want food. One day, I noticed more commotion than usual in the house. Soon after, among the rest, I was carried to the cars and taken by railroad to a steamboat-landing, not many miles distant from Wilmington; here we were put on board of a boat, and placed in the hands of men bearing the uniform of the United States; and the moment which I had during all my captivity looked forward to as the happiest of my life, was one of the darkest I have ever known!

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At Wilmington we were put in ambulances and hauled to improvised hospitals. The city had just been taken by our army, and our authorities were not prepared for us. But thank God that we came, anyhow, though they were unprepared. I lay in a brick building several days, without knowing any one about me. In my blind and crazy fever, I had strayed away from Orlando, I think. I sometimes staggered out to houses and asked for milk, thinking that would do me great good. I saw I was not getting along very well, and did not know how soon I might die.

One day, a man thrust his head in the door and cried out: "All those wishing to go North had better get ready and go down to the wharf, as a boat is going to leave to-day." This news went through me like electricity. I remarked to the head nurse that I was going. "Yes," said he, "you are a sweet-looking thing to start North." I was then one of the sickest patients in that ward. I replied, determined to make the attempt, cost what it would, "that I might as well die on the way North as die here," and started. I staggered down the streets without knowing the direction to the point I desired to reach. Weak, sick, and reduced almost to a skeleton, I was a ghastly-looking spectacle. On I stumbled, asking almost every person I met to inform me the way, and sometimes forgetting their advice a moment afterwards. I finally reached the wharf, and there sank down to rest under the blasting disappointment of being told that no boat would leave that day. I saw soon after standing near me a member of a Kentucky regiment, whom I knew. He told me where he was staying, and that it was not far from where we then were. I immediately got up, and started for the place. I was not at all particular where I stayed; one place suited me as well as another.

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I reached my friend's stopping-place, and was taken up on the second floor. I remained here for a couple of hours, and was then given permanent quarters higher up. Reaching the room assigned me, after resting some time, I felt the vermin attack me as I had not done for many days. I hailed it as a good omen; a sign of returning sensibility. I felt that I was getting a little better. I fell to exterminating the peculiar pests with all the strength I could command. I had not been engaged in this occupation long before a physician protruded his head into my room, and stated that there was a boat going North, and that all who were able could go.

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I at once spruced up my best, and told the doctor that I was ready to start. He smiled as he looked at me, but, perceiving my great anxiety to go, allowed me to undertake the voyage.

When I reached the wharf, I saw so many there expecting to go, that I knew some must be left behind; that the boat could not take all of us. I knew the habit of prisoners, and that there would be a general rush when the hatchways of the boat were thrown open. So I placed myself as near one of the hatchways as possible, and when it was opened, and the rush made, the crowd of its own force lifted me from my feet and bore me into the boat.

After several days of foggy weather—the month was March—we arrived at Annapolis, Md. During our voyage I could see that many of my companions were eating too much, and feared the result. As for myself, I was still too sick to eat anything. Perhaps this was fortunate for me. To have been turned into our lines with the starvation appetite, I might have killed myself by over-eating, as many others undoubtedly did. At Annapolis I was carried on a stretcher from the boat to a hospital in one of the Naval School buildings. Here I remained for a couple of weeks, and was then sent with some others to Baltimore, having recovered sufficiently to be allowed to undertake the journey.

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On commencing to get better at Annapolis, I found my greatest trouble was with my stomach. It seemed contracted into a space no larger than my fist, and everything I ate seemed to irritate it; and I could apparently feel the exact size of any meal I had eaten, as it lay deposited in my stomach. Everything I took into my stomach seemed to weigh like lead, and constantly bear down so hard, that it made me continually miserable and unwell.

We stayed at Baltimore a few days, when our furloughs, which had been made out at Annapolis, were handed to us, and we started for home—two months' pay and our ration commutation money having been paid to us before we left Annapolis.

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## CHAPTER VI.

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AT HOME.—NOTHING BUT A SKELETON.—A GOOD IMITATION OF LAZARUS.—A DIGRESSION UPON THE SUBJECT OF SLEEPLESSNESS.—A WELL-INTENDED FRAUD ON A HOSPITAL NURSE.—RETURN OF SLEEP.—IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTH.—STOMACH THE ONLY DIFFICULTY.—A YEAR PASSES.—STOMACH WORSE.—CONSTANT HEADACHE.—MUCH DEBILITATED.—AWFUL SUFFERING.—BODILY AGONY DEBILITATES THE MIND.—SUFFERINGS INTOLERABLE.—PHYSICIANS AND REMEDIES TRIED WITHOUT AVAIL.—FORLORN HOPE AND LAST RESORT.—BETTER.—DOUBTS AS TO TREATMENT.—SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED.—UNCOMPLIMENTARY REMARKS CONCERNING AN M. D.—UNCOMFORTABLE DISCOVERIES AND REFLECTIONS.

ON getting home and taking an inventory of myself, I found that I was but a skeleton. Sores and scars soon covered me from head to foot. Decent living was driving the corruption engendered by prison life out of my system. So much of this stuff appeared on my skin, that I cannot but think it was a very fortunate thing for me that it did come out in this way; for had it lingered in me, and waited some slower process, it seems to me I surely must have died. I began to have natural sleep at night, also. This is a feature in my experience to which I should have referred before. I cannot remember that I had any sleep at Wilmington, unless when we first arrived. I could sleep none on the trip North, and when we got to Annapolis, I told the attending physician that I had not slept for a month,—for so it seemed to me,—and that I wanted him to give me some medicine that would induce sleep. To this he objected, averring, that being tired and having a clean body and clean clothing, I would now sleep soundly. But I did not sleep at all, and the day following I was almost distracted from the loss of much-needed sleep and rest. I so informed the doctor, and he had a draught prepared for me; this sent me into a very sweet sleep the succeeding night, and I awoke the next morning much refreshed indeed. The ensuing night was sleepless again, the physician refusing to prescribe anything for me. On the following night he did, however, and I enjoyed another night's invigorating slumber and recuperative rest.

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With what felicity of expression and justice of observation the universal Bard bodies forth the heavenly virtues of this ever-renewing well-spring of life and health:

“Innocent sleep;  
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,  
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,

Since I suffered my great experience, I have had an inexpressible relish of appreciation for the peculiar sweetness, simple truth, and inspiring beauty of this rare gem of genuine poetry.

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I could see that the doctor thought the medicine would be hurtful to me if taken every night, and for that reason allowed me to have it only every alternate night.

I felt that the sleep would, even with taking it, much more than counterbalance all evil effects that would likely arise from the medicine, and I determined to procure it if possible.

It was the custom of the doctor to prescribe his medicines, and leave the prescriptions with the head nurse of each ward, who would go at a certain time to the dispensary and get them filled. In cases where the same medicines were prescribed each day, the same phials were used.

The phial which had been used for me I noticed still remained after the physician had prescribed for our ward, one morning, without giving me anything, and had gone; so when the hour for going after medicine came around, I informed the head nurse that the doctor had prescribed my draught for me as a general thing; that I was to have it every night, and that he must not fail to get it for me. I startled the fellow; he looked astonished.

"Why," said he, "I didn't hear him say anything about it. I guess not," etc.

"Yes, he did, though; I heard him," I replied; "and I want you to get it without fail."

The stratagem was successful, and the duped nurse brought the medicine regularly every day, and the result was that I slept every night, owing to the kindness of the medicine, and my health began to improve from that time; and I may say I noticed no injurious consequences or effects of the medicine.

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On arriving home, I told my mother of my inability to sleep. The first night on my arrival home I did not, because, arriving in the night, I could get no medicine; but the next day I spoke to my mother about the matter, as I have stated, and she procured me some medicine. This I took for a short time, when I discontinued it without any difficulty. I found that I needed it no longer.

After this, for some time, my main and only trouble was with my stomach. Although I had a good appetite, and was so hungry in *my mind* that I could not see victuals removed from the table, or scarcely a bone thrown away, without feeling pained at the loss; I could not eat very much, as my stomach seemed so diminutive that it would contain but a small quantity, and what I did take into it seemed to turn to lead within me, or rather into a pound of tenpenny nails, determined to cut and grind its way to the outside. That is, it did not sour; my food digested (slowly and painfully), but from some cause it hurt me continually. I gradually became able to eat more; grew somewhat fleshy, and looked well; but my stomach hurt me, nevertheless, *all the time*.

I did not apply for a pension within a reasonable time after coming home, because my mother thought I was young, and would soon recover my health.

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Alas! never was prophecy so contradicted or hope so defeated. For a year I suffered from my stomach, keeping wonderfully well up in strength. At the end of a year or more, I became afflicted with constant headache, viz., about 9 o'clock A. M., the headache would come on and continue during the day. From the time I was liberated from Southern prisons (and in fact long before I was released), up to the setting in of the daily headache, I had been occasionally afflicted with it. Now, headache became one of the most direful curses. From this time forward, for a year or more, I was on the down-hill road. My stomach was much worse than ever, and my headache became worse in proportion with my stomach. My body was very much debilitated; I suffered fearfully, wretchedly. From the ravages made on my entire physical system by constant headaches, and the terrible agonies and torments of my stomach, my mind became debilitated. In my extremity, I cried to God, and asked him why He so afflicted me! My sufferings were so intolerable and continuous, that my face became the reflected image of agony. My mother, God bless her! who could not conceive the uncommon suffering I was enduring, and imagining that I might have some trouble on my mind, begged me, in alarm, not to look so pain-stricken; that persons were noticing the appalling expression of my countenance.

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The reader will please remember that I was making my own living, during all this time, as a clerk. I tried different physicians and remedies without avail. Nothing seemed to benefit me, and I quit trying. At last a physician in the town where I resided, in whom I had but little confidence, and who for six months past had been endeavoring to get my consent to allow him to treat my case, induced me to place myself under his professional care. None of the rest had benefited me, and he could but fail, and might do me some good. I would die if there were not a change soon, and I could but do this at the worst under his treatment. Besides, I wanted present relief from the most distracting pain. I was suffering daily torment and torture, with a body weak and wasted, and a constitution whose resisting power, before persistent and repeated assaults, had at last given way; my mind was become greatly impaired, and my spirits had sunk into a black midnight of despair.

"'Tis no time now to stickle over means and remedies; let him cure me who can, or let me die if I must," I thought. Nevertheless, in going into this physician's office, I emphatically charged him not to administer to me any opium or morphia, as I had a horror of such things.

I perceived that he was going to use, in my case, what was a new instrument in the practice there at that time, viz., the hypodermic syringe. "Oh, have no fear," he replied, holding up at the same time a phial of clear and colorless fluid; "this is no opium or morphia; it is one of the simplest and most harmless things in the world; but it is a secret, and no one in the town knows anything about it except myself." On this assurance, I allowed him to inject a dose into my arm. This first dose was too large, and nearly killed me or scared me to death, and I determined not to go back to him again. And I would have adhered to my determination, had he not accosted me at a hotel, about two weeks thereafter, and asked me why I had remained away; and on my telling him the reason, he entreated me to come back, saying, that as soon as he had ascertained the right dose for me, he would certainly cure me. God in heaven knows I wanted to be cured, and reasonably. I recommenced taking the injections then, and allowed him full liberty to do what he could for me.

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Contemporaneously with the injections, though not by prescription from this physician, but with his approval, I commenced taking carbonate of iron.

This preparation of iron had been prescribed by another physician for one of my sisters, who was suffering from neuralgia, and with good results; so I thought it might probably have a beneficial effect in the case of my headache and the generally debilitated condition of my system. I took about one or two injections a week; sometimes, perhaps, I may have taken one or two more. The number was varied by the frequency or infrequency of the severer headaches. I did not go every day. I had headache every day, but only submitted to the injection when it manifested itself more severely than usual. The iron I took three times a day after meals. I thus particularly notice the iron, because it had considerable to do in forming an estimation of the results of this doctor's treatment, which I made at a certain time. I continued the hypodermical treatment, taking about the same number of injections for a couple of months, when I found myself getting better, and in a much more substantial condition of health than I had been for many a long day, or even year.

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I felt, indeed, better; but I observed one peculiarity in my case that was not comforting. It raised my suspicions, not having unlimited confidence in my physician. But should my suspicions turn out well founded, I argued, the great improvement in my health has justified my treatment, and I cannot see yet that I am in any danger. Let me go on a little while longer, until my health becomes permanently established, and then I will drop this doctor and his treatment. I found that the taking of my medicine had settled down into something like regularity, and when the time came around that I was restless, lacking spirit, and unable to do anything to any purpose till I had an injection.

Had such not been the case, everything would have been revealed at first, and the terrible consequences averted; but, as it was, any suspicion of the effect of the medicine—that is, immediate effect or *influence*—had been forestalled in my mind by my having read, previous to this treatment, that there were other drugs of similar effect; but when I noticed the unmistakable evidences of the habit forming, I was troubled about it.

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My fears were confirmed some time after by my coming in upon the doctor whilst he was preparing the solution, and thus detecting him. I exclaimed: "Ah ha, doctor, you have been giving me morphia." "Yes," he replied, "a little; but the main part was *cannabis indicus*" (Indian hemp). I don't know that he ever gave me a particle of *cannabis indicus*, for I know that some time after, and from *that* period on, he did not disguise the fact that he was giving me the unadulterated sulphate of morphia. The doctor soon found he had an elephant on his hands,—saw that I was in the habit; became tired of my regular calls for hypodermical injections, and endeavored to shake me off. After giving him fully to understand his culpability in the matter, we parted.

Knowing, then, that I was simply an opium eater, I purchased my own morphia at the drug-stores, and took it per mouth instead of by a hypodermic syringe. Thus was I, as the notorious fly, invited into the parlor of the deceitful spider, and met with something like the same sad fate. Tripped up by an ignoramus who had hung about me for six months to allow him to treat my case; who had brought me medicine which I threw behind my desk, and never tasted; who had told me he had "taken a fancy to me;" who used every persuasive art within his command to get me to his office, and under his professional care, only for the purpose of giving me bare morphia by way of a syringe!—while I, well duped and deceived, gave his treatment all the credit which the iron I was taking should have received for building up my broken-down health.

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His treatment in *conjunction* with the iron did me good; the morphia killed the pain, and the iron built me up; one might not have done without the other. I might have died but for the opium; but this fact does not exonerate this blundering and perjured empiricist from the charge of malpractice. He did my case, as he had done others before, and no doubt has done many since, and will go on doing until Divine Justice calls him to account, and sinks his abhorred countenance out of the sight of man. I soon realized that I had experienced all the good results to be obtained from the treatment, and that to go on longer would be injurious. So I endeavored to discontinue the morphia, but found myself in the fangs of a monster more terrible than the Hydra of Lake Lerna, and whose protean powers it is not man's to



know till it is too late to escape.

I discovered that the power to fight and overcome great obstacles in this life, and which had always served me in my struggles theretofore, and which I relied upon then, was the very first thing destroyed by the enemy, namely, the will. Here I was, then, an opium eater. The outward effects and injurious properties of the drug soon made themselves manifest: what was I to do? Quit it, some may say; but no one well posted upon the opium habit would use those words, so hard and feelingless. A reply like this, I think, would betray more wisdom and humanity: "Your case is wellnigh hopeless; I can give you no encouragement whatever; do your utmost to release yourself from the unhappy predicament in which you have been placed; and may God help you, for I fear you will need other help beside your own."

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"What then? What rests?  
Try what repentance can: what can it not?  
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?  
Oh, wretched state!"

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## CHAPTER VII.

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THE WAR BEGINS.—STRUGGLES TO RENOUNCE OPIUM.—PHYSICAL  
PHENOMENA OBSERVED IN ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE OFF THE  
DRUG.—DIFFICULTY IN ABJURING THE FIEND.—I FAIL  
ABSOLUTELY.—SOME DIFFERENCE WITH DE QUINCEY  
REGARDING THE EFFECTS OF OPIUM.—A PRELIMINARY  
FORESIGHT INTO THE HORRORS OF OPIUM.

**W**HETHER to annoy the reader with the history of my repeated attempts and failures, that is the question: for that I did attempt to throw off my shackles, honestly and earnestly, I would have the reader fairly believe.

Yet why traverse again step by step this sad pilgrimage; the reader has read similar experiences; then why trouble him with mine? Simply because in the lives of all persons there is some variation, one from another; and besides this, though I have taken some pains to read fully our opium literature, as I may properly term it, I must say that I have found it in a very demoralizing condition. That is, it does the reader, with reference to opium, more harm than good—and much more. I know this from experience, and it is one of the moving reasons why this personal history is written.

I might tire the reader's patience over and again, by recounting my frequent attempts to throw off the accursed incubus, but shall content myself with briefly referring to such as may benefit the public, and especially those who are in danger from opium, but who as yet have not passed beyond recovery. The first attempt of any real interest I made about one year after the commencement of my unfortunate medical treatment, which resulted in fastening the habit upon me.

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In order that I might be as well advised in the undertaking as convenient, I called upon a veteran physician, as well as opium eater, of the place for information and counsel. One of the consequences attending previous attempts had been diarrhœa, and a general upsetting of all the gastric functions. I did not know why this was, or that it attended all cases necessarily.

The physician gave me a great deal of information, which, taking it simply as a much better knowledge of my condition, rallied and cheered my spirits considerably. In referring to the diarrhœa, he said that it invariably followed; that leaving off the opium unlocked all the secretions, and the diarrhœa was a natural consequence. I was not using much morphia at this time. The quantity was indeed so small that the physician almost ridiculed the idea of my being in the habit at all. I knew better than that, however. He said it was hardly necessary to give anything to check the diarrhœa, in fact, that it was almost useless, and unless it actually became too severe, it was better to let it take its own course; that when it stopped of its own accord I would perceive that I was better. He gave me a few powders to take along, nevertheless, which I did not find it necessary to use.

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I stopped square off. The first day I felt meanly and sleepy, and had such an influx of remorseful and melancholy thoughts, and such a complete loss of command over myself, that I could have wept the livelong day,—I felt so crushed and broken-hearted. The second day was similar to the first, except the diarrhœa now set in. On the third day I began to feel more comfortable in some respects, the sleepy, drowsy feeling having passed away; I also had gained a little more command over my feelings, though I was still morbidly sensitive, sad, and broken in spirit, and at a word would have burst into tears. The diarrhœa was rushing off at a fearful rate; but that I did not mind much,—it was carrying away my trouble,

and this was what I desired. My stomach and bowels were in an unsettled, surging, and wishy-washy condition, the gastric processes so completely disturbed that my stomach was no stomach, and felt simply like a bottomless pipe that ran straight through me. I describe these phenomena now thus particularly, not because I had not observed them in previous attempts, but because I have not described any other attempts to the reader. I intend, as I proceed with this narrative to describe the effect of morphia at the beginning, and at and up to the time of which I am now writing, and its effect years after, and the phenomena observed and suffering undergone in attempting to abandon its use in the latter years.

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The experienced reader will observe, from the attending phenomena which I have so far described, that I was not very deep into it at the period now referred to.

Generally, during the day (to recur to the subject in hand), did my stomach feel like a straight and bottomless pipe, but when I attempted to eat or drink I felt as though it incorporated a volcano; and every time I thought of food its whirling, surging contents threatened an eruption and overflow. Everything eaten seemed perfectly insipid and tasteless, and to fall flat upon the very bottom of my bowels. The region "round about" my epigastrium was in a state of communistic insurrection and rebellion. Nothing digested during this time, or if anything, digestion was very imperfect. Nothing remained in me long enough to pass through a complete process of digestion. I did not become hungry. To eat a meal of victuals was precisely like taking a dose of physic, only much more quick in operation. I experienced constant flushes of heat and cold (hot flushes predominating), and was in a continual perspiration, all the secretions being thrown wide open. My flesh seemed stretched tightly after the third day, and at night my limbs pained me,—principally my legs below the knees. I could do, and did, nothing but stand and gaze vacantly; too nerveless and shattered to attempt any mental labor.

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My voice was hollow and weak, and sometimes almost inarticulate. After the fifth day my remorseful and melancholy thoughts and feelings gave way, to some extent, to more cheerful ones. I continued ten days without touching morphia, or anything of the kind. By that time my diarrhoea had ceased, and my stomach about the region of the epigastrium seemed drawn together as tightly as if tied in a knot. I had some appetite for food, though not much, and poor digestion. Everything was still quite tasteless to me. I craved something eternally which seemed absolutely necessary to make up the proper constitution of my stomach:—and of my happiness, also, I should add, for this is the whole truth.

The appetite for morphia, which while I was suffering I was able to control, grew much sharper after I had reached the tenth day, and my pains and physical difficulties had subsided, as it were. This is a point which I have ever observed in my case, namely, that, while undergoing severe pain or suffering, I have had power to resist appetite and carry out my purposes against the habit, but so soon as the pain or strain upon me departed, it left me collapsed in my will and powerless. But, in the instance under consideration, while my stomach was in a disorganized condition, the appetite was not near so strong as when I regained a more natural state, when it returned with an irresistible vigor. I believe the appetite destroys the will as firmly as I do that God exists.

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I took a small dose of morphia, thinking I might thus stay the violent cravings of the appetite, and be thereafter clear of it. The time was in the midst of a political campaign; I was in a public office as a clerk; my employer was rendering his fealty to the party that gave him his place, and I was compelled to remain in the office and work. I was suffering in secret, my employer knowing nothing of my thralldom, and I could not work with the accursed appetite raging within me.

The affinity between the brain and the stomach is most plainly demonstrated by the disease of the opium habit; the appetite feeds as much on the brain as on the stomach. I could not work; I could do nothing but look, and that in a blank and dazed way; and being compelled to work, I took a small dose, thinking that would quiet the enemy and give me peace, and that thereafter I could probably worry it through. Cruel illusion! My unhappy fate willed differently, and the peculiar effects of opium can only be learned by bitter experience. I fell prostrate as before, with this difference, that I was less hopeful.

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Oh, the melancholy years that have intervened between then and now! Hopeless upon a dark and boundless sea, drifting farther and farther from land! Oh, the youthful aspirations that have been wrecked by, and gone down forever in, this all-swallowing deep!—the mortifications, disappointments, and humiliations that stand out upon this black ocean of despair, and like huge and abortive figures of deformity mock me in my dreams, and taunt me in my waking hours! For I sing only the "pains" of opium; its "pleasures" I have yet to see. For that cannot be accounted a pleasure which is attended with sadness, and that stimulation will not be considered a benefit which is followed by reaction and collapse.

De Quincey says that he never experienced the collapse and depression consequent upon indulgence in opium. The first doses I took, though they stimulated me to the skies, sickened me at the same time, and left me in such a collapsed condition that it required twenty-four hours to completely recover. I do admit that, when one's sensibilities have become deadened and hardened by long use of opium, when all the fervor is burnt out of one, and it no longer stimulates, or its stimulation is barely perceptible,—that then, indeed, there is not much reaction. But what eater of opium, after taking much of the drug the day previous, ever arose in the morning without feeling unutterably miserable? What would you call this, unless

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reaction?

“The time has been, my senses would have cool’d  
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair  
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir,  
As life were in’t.”

And I could not even go into an unlighted room after nightfall without the most terrifying feelings of abject fear. There was not a night came during a certain period without bringing with it the most harrowing and dreadful forebodings of death before morning. I must in justice state that I was using some quinine at this time to break up a fever that was continually attacking me, and that I was then again using morphia by means of the hypodermic syringe (having been induced to adopt that mode by another person who was using it in the same way,—which I found to be much more injurious than taking it per mouth); nevertheless, it was still the opium habit, and it was that which induced the fever, and made necessary the quinine.

No tongue or pen will ever describe—mine shrinks from the attempt, and the imagination of another, without suffering it all, could scarcely conceive it possible—the depth of horror in which my life was plunged at this time; the days of humiliation and anguish, nights of terror and agony, through which I dragged my wretched being. But I am anticipating other and future parts of this narration. It is my intention to disclose, as I proceed, the effects of opium from the first dose, and commencement of the habit, till it reaches its ultimate and final effects, and to describe an attempt to renounce its use at the latter stage.

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Still, I have thought it proper, even at this juncture, to give the reader to understand that the opium habit, from first to last, produces nothing but misery,—and that of a kind entirely without hope in this world. This I expect to prove in detail as I proceed.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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DE QUINCEY’S LIFE RATHER THAN HIS WRITINGS THE BEST EVIDENCE OF THE EFFECT OF OPIUM UPON HIM.—DISAPPROVAL OF HIS MANNER OF TREATMENT OF THE SUBJECT IN HIS “CONFESSIONS.”—FROM FIRST TO LAST THE EFFECT OF OPIUM IS TO PRODUCE UNHAPPINESS.—THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EFFECT OF THE DRUG TAKEN HYPODERMICALLY AND OTHERWISE EXPLAINED.—THE VARIOUS EFFECTS OF OPIUM, STIMULATIVE AND NARCOTIC, DESCRIBED.—THE EFFECT OF MY FIRST DOSE AT BEGINNING OF HABIT.—REMARKS OF DE QUINCEY ON HIS FIRST DOSE.—MY OWN REMARKS AS TO FIRST DOSE.—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OPIUM AND LIQUOR.—STIMULATION IS FOLLOWED BY COLLAPSE.—MELANCHOLY FROM BEGINNING.—NERVOUSNESS AND DISTRACTION OF THE INTELLECTUAL POWERS.—SLEEPLESSNESS.—DIFFERENT AND PECULIAR INFLUENCES OF THE DRUG DETAILED.—PRESSURE UPON THE BRAIN FROM EXCESSIVE USE OF OPIUM.—DISTRESS IN THE EPIGASTRIUM.—THE WORKING OF THE BRAIN IMPEDED.

THE life of De Quincey, as gathered from his constant and unguarded, and therefore sincere, expressions of his wretched condition, which he made to others while living, shows the effect opium had upon him much more truthfully than do his writings. His extravagant eulogy of opium, and almost wildly-gay and lively manner of treating such a sardonically solemn subject as the effects of opium, though under the anomalous title, “The Pleasures of Opium,” show the man to have been morally depraved,<sup>[1]</sup> and utterly regardless of the influence of his writings. The result of the opium habit, first, last, and always, is to bring hopeless unhappiness.

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I began taking opium by having it administered through a hypodermic syringe, as the reader is aware. The effect, taking it in this way, differs somewhat from that which follows taking it in the usual way. It is more pleasant, ethereal, and less gross, I may say. It had not previously been possible for me to use morphia in the usual way. I had tried it to relieve myself in a season of severe headaches, and it had given me such a distressing pain in my stomach that I dropped it as a useless remedy, and tried it no more. Taking it per hypodermic injection, it did not seem to come so directly in contact with the sensitive part of my stomach; and there was, therefore, no impediment in the way of my taking it in this manner.

Although the effect of morphia taken hypodermically is more pure, and perhaps more forcible for the time being, its force is expended much more quickly than when taken in the customary way. The effect of a dose of morphia—that is, its immediate and exhilarating effect or influence—may often last but a very short time, and rarely longer than three or four hours, but the ultimate and narcotic effect does not leave the system until twenty-four hours have elapsed. This is an effect in morphia that can be relied on. In stating that the exhilarating effect may last three or four hours, I mean that it may do this in the first stages of the habit. Of course, all I have to say just now refers to the first stages. But to begin with the second dose, the first having been too heavy, and nearly burst me.

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The second dose happened to be the proper quantity, and had the legitimate effect. As I have not the slightest doubt that I was suffering as much, and was just as sensitive, I might (though I will not) expatiate with Mr. De Quincey to the following effect: "Heavens! what a revulsion! what an upheaving, from its lowest depths, of the inner spirit! what an apocalypse of the world within me! That my pains had vanished, was now a trifle in my eyes; this negative effect was swallowed up in the immensity of those positive effects which had opened before me—in the abyss of divine enjoyment thus suddenly revealed. Here was a panacea for all human woes; here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered; happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waistcoat pocket; portable ecstasies might be had corked up in a pint bottle; and peace of mind sent down in gallons by the mail-coach. But, if I talk in this way, the reader will think I am laughing; and I can assure him that no one will laugh long who deals much with opium; its pleasures even are of a grave and solemn complexion; and in his happiest state, the opium eater cannot present himself in the character of *L'Allegro*; even then he speaks and thinks as becomes *Il Penseroso*. Nevertheless, I have a very reprehensible way of jesting at times in the midst of my own misery; and, unless when I am checked by some more powerful feelings, I am afraid I shall be guilty of this indecent practice, even in these annals of suffering or enjoyment. The reader must allow a little to my infirm nature in this respect; and with a few indulgences of that sort, I shall endeavor to be as grave, if not drowsy, as fits a theme like opium, so anti-mercurial as it really is, and so drowsy as it is falsely reputed." I will say, and admit, however, that this second dose of mine highly stimulated me; that I retired from the doctor's presence in an extremely sentimental condition of complacency and self-assurance, with a partly-defined feeling that the world had injured me; but that I did not care particularly; that the remainder of my life I could live alone and without it very comfortably. Opium does not intoxicate, as liquor, even at the beginning of its use; it does not deprive one of reason or judgment, but, while under its influence, it makes one more sanguine and hopeful.

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The next day after taking this first dose, as I may call it (though second in reality), I was physically wilted and mentally collapsed, and felt a kind of nervous headache whenever I stirred the least from perfect quietness. I was unfit to do any work, a thumping, distressing headache and mental distraction, with nothing but a shaken and nervously exhausted system to withstand it, followed quickly and overpoweringly upon the least exertion. I found myself in wretched plight, and could have exclaimed in the language of our ever-beloved poet:

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"I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,  
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone."

It was my experience straight along that for every stimulation I had a corresponding depression. I confess that the drug did stimulate me, and highly enough, but there was always an attending sickishness, and the general tenor of the stimulation was to produce melancholy rather than a healthy cheerfulness of spirit. This melancholy seemed a *relaxation*, which the mind and feelings could lay back and enjoy sometimes, but the appearance of a mortal and intruder on the scene would throw a person into a deplorable state of irritability and confusion.<sup>[2]</sup> The stimulation bred nervousness very fast, and the distraction of the intellectual forces was one of the first and worst consequences and devastations experienced.

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After I had come to take the drug daily, I often passed sleepless nights, the brain in uncontrollable action during the whole night. Having started it, I could not stop it at pleasure, and I was then but a novice in the art of opium taking. Yet I do not know, either, but that, had I taken it at any time during the day then, the result would have been the same, as I was still very susceptible to its influence, which, in its shattering effects on the nervous system, extended over the period of twenty-four hours.

After a time, when my body became more benumbed and deadened by opium, and consequently less susceptible to its stimulating influence, I could, and did, so regulate my taking of the drug as to insure sleep at night, and the best digestion possible under the circumstances at meals. But as to sleep, I could not do this in the first stages; the effect was too powerful, and extended over too long a time.

The effect of opium, the reader must bear in mind, always lasts twenty-four hours; but its higher, more refined and stimulating influence exists but a few hours, when it sinks into the soporific effect, which extends over the remainder of the time. In the advanced stages of the opium habit, the stimulating influence, if there be any at all, lasts but a few minutes. I mean, that is, the pleasurable sensation and revival of the spirits; there may be at times or always an almost imperceptible stimulation which obtains a short time after taking a dose of opium,

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but this is an effect entirely different from the pleasurable sensation, though it may exist with or follow it for a short time. This I may term stimulation without sensation. A person's body may be so deadened by opium that it can no longer produce sensation, but may produce slight stimulation for a short time. One may become conscious of this by an increase of power in the faculties of the brain, and in the temporary removal of the obstructions that weigh upon the brain, and which the poor opium eater so often suffers from. "Suffers from?" Days upon days my head has felt as though it were encircled by an iron helmet, which was gradually becoming more and more contracted, until it would literally crush my skull. Add to this the distress so often experienced in the region of the epigastrium (pit of the stomach), which, perhaps, more at one time than another, but which does always, impair the working of the brain for the time being, and often cuts off almost totally the use of the mind, and what is left of a man mentally is very little indeed. Yet all these miseries he must endure, and more; but of these in the proper place, for we must now return to the subject properly in hand,—the first stages of opium eating,—from which I beg the reader's pardon for having digressed too far.

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## CHAPTER IX.

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DE QUINCEY VERSUS COLERIDGE.—STIMULATION AND COLLAPSE  
CONSIDERED.—THE USE OF OPIUM ALWAYS TO BE  
CONDEMNED.—COLERIDGE DEFENDED.—WRETCHED STATE OF  
THE OPIUM EATER.—AN EXPLANATORY REMARK.

DE QUINCEY charges Coleridge with having written many of his best things under the stimulus of opium. This may be so; he could not well write at all without being in some way affected by opium, seeing that he took it every day; but if this applied to the latter stage of opium eating (and I have reason to think it did), the little pleasurable sensation and stimulation he might well take advantage of, as at other times his condition must have been such as to interfere greatly with his writing at all to any purpose. But if this applied to the first stages, and he continued on writing after the stimulation and pleasurable sensation had subsided, his writings must have presented a very zigzag appearance; passing suddenly from the height of pleasure to the depth of misery—falling from the top round of stimulation and enjoyment to the lowest depth of dejection and debility. For it was my invariable experience during the first stages, that for every benefit received in intellectual force from stimulation, I suffered a corresponding injury or offset in the mental debility and prostration which ensued. The reaction that always followed the long strain of stimulation upon the brain, found me completely wilted and mentally exhausted. Up to the heights and down into the depths was the routine. Glorifying in the skies or sweltering in the Styx. Like Sisyphus rolling his stone of punishment up the steep mountain, with which he no sooner reaches the top than away it rebounds to the bottom again, and so on eternally.

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In the latter stages, an opium eater cannot be blamed for taking advantage of the little pleasurable sensation which his nepenthe affords him. The enjoyment he gets lasts but a moment, and would not equal the pleasure derived by a healthy and sound man from the simple act of writing. And, as far as power gained from stimulation is concerned, the reader must remember that opium shatters, tears, and wears out the subject as it goes, and that all the benefit he could derive from stimulation, after having become an habituate, could not place his powers upon a level with what they would have been naturally had he never touched opium.

De Quincey speaks of Coleridge as though the latter had denounced opium, and not given it credit for benefits conferred, when the truth is it confers no benefits. It gives, but it takes away, and the highest point stimulation can reach will not elevate a man's abilities to the plane from which they have fallen, in the latter and confirmed stages of the habit. Therefore, a man can justly and always condemn the use of opium, even while taking advantage of its best manifestations. It is he that is the loser at all times, and not it. The case I wish to make out is just this: When a man is once a confirmed opium eater, all the pleasure he can derive from opium would not equal the enjoyment a well man receives from the animal spirits alone; and all the intellectual force obtainable from stimulation can never approach that which would have been his own freely in a natural condition. Hence, to charge Coleridge with ingratitude to opium—for that is about what it amounts to—is all bosh. It ruined him for poetry, crippled him for everything, and made his life miserable. He did the best he could under the circumstances,—to continue the argument. Had he written at all times without regard to his condition, in the first stages the ravages following stimulation would have so undone his mind, that it would have fallen far short of its natural ability; and had he written from stimulation clear through reaction, his compositions would have been lop-sided things indeed. Or, had he in the advanced stages abnegated the short and only period of intellectual complacency afforded him by opium, and written only during the wretched

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condition which generally subsists, his productions must of necessity have been more gloomy, and less able than they are. He had to make the most of his unfortunate situation, and seize his opportunities as they presented. It was impossible to write at all times and in all conditions, and hence he disappointed the expectations of many. Yes, and who blamed him for lacking energy? Oh, ignorant men! When an opium eater, himself surrounded by the same circumstances and in the same condition as Coleridge, contemplates the results of his labors, they seem almost miraculous. And let me tell you, dear reader, they are almost my only source of hope and consolation in this my proscribed and benighted state. In life, but not living; a man, but incapable of the happiness and pleasures of man. Nothing but darkness and dejection is my lot. Cut off forever, irretrievably cut off, from almost every social enjoyment. If I have a particle of enjoyment, it is very faint and vague; dim as the filmy line that divides me from the world and those in it, and all that enjoy this life. Wretched dejection and despair are mine; my mind a "Stygian cave forlorn," which breeds "horrid shapes and shrieks and sights unholy." But it seems the peculiar province of those so happy as to escape this earthly damnation, to deride and blame for want of energy and force the poor victim—perhaps to the crime of some one else,—and nothing but black looks and condemnation from his fellow-man does he receive; he, from whom even the face of his Maker seems almost turned away, as he winds his weary pilgrimage through a chaos of unutterable woe down to his soon-forgotten grave.

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"Here lies one who prostituted every human gift to the use of opium," is the verdict upon a life of more suffering and more effort, perhaps, than appears in the life of one in ten thousand.

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For, be it known, everything accomplished by an opium eater is done in the sweat of blood, and with the load of Atlas weighing upon the spirit.

But the reader must pardon me. I seem to gravitate naturally towards the results in the latter stages, to which a great part of that I have just written must apply,—especially where I speak of one having a right to denounce opium "always, even while taking advantage of its best manifestations." Before opium has injured a man, and in the very commencement of the habit, should he wilfully use the drug as a means of giving him pleasure, and brilliancy to his mind, when the requirements of the habit do not make the taking of the opium necessary, he is to blame; but let him long continue in this practice, and he will find to his sorrow that all the mental power the stimulation of opium can give him would not equal that of his natural abilities, unincumbered by the habit.

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## CHAPTER X.

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### THE DELUSIONS AND MISERIES OF THE FIRST STAGES OF OPIUM EATING.

**F**ROM the first unlucky indulgence "till he that died to-day," the habitual use of opium is attended with gloom, despondency, and unhappiness.

The victim takes his first dose and feels exalted, serene, confident. His intellectual faculties are so adjusted that he needs but call and they obey; discipline and order reign. His load of care, the tedium of life, his aches and pains, and "the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes," are all lifted from his shoulders, as the sun lifts the mist-clouds from the river, and care-soothing peace in rich effulgence smiles in upon his soul. The beams pour in, the clouds disperse, and all is bright as noonday.

But this calm is only that which precedes the storm. The nerves, that system of exquisite mechanism in man, have been interfered with and abused. There has been an unnatural strain; the harmony of tension has been disturbed and deranged, and now, instead of discipline and equanimity, cruel disorder and distraction rule the hour, and collapse and utter exhaustion follow.

The above is the great axis around which all these following "petty consequences" revolve. They appear and disappear in their proper orbit according to the law of nature and of opium. One is here to-day, another present to-morrow, or each in turn present at different times during a day, or all of them present at once as effect follows cause. It may be impossible to remember all of these "small annexments" and "petty consequences" that participate in, and go to make up, the "boisterous ruin," but among which gloom and melancholy take a position in the front rank:—melancholy when under the influence of opium, and gloomy and dispirited when not. A sickening, death-like sensation about the heart; a self-accusing sense of having committed some wrong,—of being guilty before God; a load of fear and trembling, continually abide with and oppress the victim in the first stages;—but more especially when the influence of the drug is dying away. During the height of stimulation, these feelings are submerged to a great extent by the more generous and exciting influence of the drug that

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causes them; but this period forms but a short space in the total of an opium eater's existence.

Great nervousness attends the subsiding of the effect of opium, and one is much torn and distracted in mind. General shakiness ensues. Unreliability of intellect or capacity, owing to the up-hill and down-dale of stimulation and its antitheton, collapse: a result of the tearing of the brain out by the roots, as it were, and the exhaustion and debility consequent.

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One is often weighed and found wanting, called upon and not at home, mentally. Great shame and mortification attend this consequence, as one in this nerveless, enfeebled state is morbidly sensitive. Opium usurps the function of nerve, and is nerve in the victim. Without it he is a ship without sails, an engine without steam,—loose, unscrewed, unjointed, powerless. As the effect of opium passes off, a deep feeling of gloom settles upon the heart, such as might follow suddenly and unexpectedly hearing the death-knell of a dear friend. In this condition, at times the most painful, remorseful, despairing thoughts stream in like vultures upon a carcass. One exists either in a sickening, unnatural excitement, or in a gloomy suspension and stagnation of every faculty. One state follows the other in solemn succession, as long as the habit is continued, which is generally until the victim has passed the boundaries of this "breathing world," and the gates of death are closed and forever barred behind him; or until he becomes a tough, seasoned, and dried-out opium eater, when the drug no longer has the power to stimulate him.

Could one go into the habit of taking opium fully advised as to its various effects and results, he might avoid a great deal of inconvenience and suffering usually entailed upon the novice.

In my own case, knowing nothing of the peculiar secondary effects of opium upon the physical system, I paid the penalty of my ignorance in continual derangements and distress in my stomach and bowels. Not knowing when or how to take it to the best advantage, constantly threw me into spells of indigestion, loss of appetite, and diarrhoea; also constipation and distress in the epigastrium. I was taking morphia for the headache, and if the intermission "in this kind" were prolonged beyond a certain time, the result was diarrhoea, and a general confounding of the entire stomachic apparatus. I did not then observe myself so closely as I have learned to do since, or I should have noticed the conjunction of circumstances that caused this derangement. Had I taken the morphia at proper intervals, this would not have occurred; but I was not aware of that fact, and did not become acquainted with it until months after, when I consulted a physician, on the eve of making an attempt to renounce the habit. Allowing too long a period of time to elapse between doses, threw me into this disorder; additional distress and inconvenience were incurred by taking the drug at the wrong time in the day, and at an improper distance from meals. As to the dose, I have nothing to say. How much better or worse I may have felt, taking a different quantity as a dose, I cannot imagine. I can only speak of what I finally observed and learned after reploughed, resowed, and rereaped experience. Allowing too long a time to elapse between doses, occasioned loss of appetite, disorganized the stomach, and prevented digestion; and taking the drug at the wrong time in the day, and at an improper distance from a meal, constipated me, and gave me distress in the epigastrium.

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This distress in the epigastrium was terrible on the nervous system, and rendered the mind almost impotent and powerless for the time it lasted. Likewise, taking the medicine at wrong times, would sometimes cause my food to lodge in me whilst passing through my intestines. This was one of the most potent causes of misery with which it was my unfortunate lot to be afflicted. My food would frequently be arrested in the lower bowels, where it would seem determined to abide with me forever, cutting me like a sharp-cornered stone, rendering me almost wild with nervous distress, and almost entirely dethroning my mind for the time being. It was a perfect hell-rack, and sometimes lasted for days. I could do but little during these spells, and that little not well, having no command over my nervous system. They generally left me relaxed and exhausted. A prolonged series of attacks of this kind so impaired my mind, that it required considerable time thereafter to recover. These attacks came the nearest realizing the torments of hell upon earth, complete, unabrogated, or unabridged, of anything I ever suffered.

When stimulated by morphia taken by the hypodermic syringe, unless I would continue reading, with my mind concentrated, I soon got into a state of mental distraction. Loss of sleep at night comes in at about this point. This punishment for outraging the laws of nature by the use of opium began to scourge me after I had quit taking it hypodermically, and had commenced taking it daily and by the mouth.<sup>[3]</sup> Any one who has suffered much from the terrors of sleeplessness—inability to sleep at night—can understand and appreciate my condition during this time.

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Loss of sleep, and getting physically out of order incessantly through my ignorance of the secondary effects of opium, and from the effects thereof which no foreknowledge could have avoided, kept me in a state of mind bordering on that of Phlegyas in ancient mythology, who was punished by having an immense stone suspended over his head, which perpetually threatened to fall and crush him. I dreaded the advent of each new day, not knowing what agony or discomfiture it had in store for me.

I neglected to mention in the proper place that which, perhaps, is too much of a truism to be referred to at all,—that, as far as a person's nerves and spirits are concerned, the farther away he is from a dose of opium, the better he feels in this respect, no matter what

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inconvenience he may undergo in others. I mean, the longer time he allows to elapse between doses, the more cheerful and less shaky he will feel. In the prostration that ensues after the relaxation of stimulation, one is truly and indeed miserable in every respect, and goes down into the very depths of despondency and gloom. The period I refer to now is, when nature has reascended from the dismal realms of "Cerberus and blackest midnight," and has recovered somewhat from the baleful and crucifying effects of opium; in fact, when the effect of the drug has passed out of the system for the time. Nature commences to assert herself, and would fully recover her wonted vigor and spirit, did not the drug-damned victim resume again the hell-invented curse. The diarrhœa and other inconveniences and disorders in the stomach and bowels that now set in, are simply the result of nature's effort to throw off the hideous fiend poisoning and destroying her very life. And just here is shown what a terrible violation of the laws of nature the habitual use of opium constitutes. Its action I can compare to nothing more justly than to that of a powerful man knocking down a delicate one as fast as he arises; or, to the tempest-tossed sea washing a mariner ashore, who no sooner rises to his feet than he is caught back by the cruel waves again, repeating the process until at last, faint and exhausted, his life is quenched in the remorseless flood; or, to the mythological fable of Tityus, who, for having the temerity to insult Diana, was cast into Tartarus: there,

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"Two ravenous vultures, furious for their food,  
Scream o'er the fiend, and riot in his blood;  
Incessant gore the liver in his breast;  
The immortal liver grows, and gives the immortal feast."

Its hatred of the laws of health is undying, and is only equalled by its power and facility of destruction; its cruel, persistent, and merciless warfare on the human system, and its eternal antagonism to, and annihilation of, human happiness.

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## CHAPTER XI.

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LATTER STAGES.—THE OPIUM APPETITE.—CIRCEAN POWER OF OPIUM.—AS A MEDICINE.—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONDITION OF VICTIM IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STAGES.

I AM no physician, and not learned in physiology, therefore I cannot enter into a learned analysis of the opium appetite. Neither have I read any books upon the subject. I know nothing about the matter save from my own observation or experience. But whether I know *why this* is true, or *that is so*, or not, one fact I am entirely conscious of, and that is, that in this appetite abides the enslaving power of opium. The influences of opium in the latter stages would not have such an attraction for the habituate but that he could easily forego them; but the appetite comes in and makes him feel that he *must* have opium if he has existence, and there is an end to all resistance. Here dwell the Circean spells of opium. Should one become accustomed to large doses, or rather a large quantity per diem, it is almost impossible to induce the mind to take less, for fear of falling to pieces, going into naught, etc. It seems in such a state that existence would be insupportable were a reduction made. An intense fear of being plunged into an abyss of darkness and despair besets the mind. Hence the opium eater goes on ever increasing until his final doom.

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Opium as a medicine is a grand and powerful remedy, and without a substitute, though as imperfectly understood in its complex action and far-reaching consequences by the mass of the medical profession as by the people at large. Its abstruser mysteries and remoter effects are yet to be discovered and developed by the science of physic.

When the true nature of opium becomes generally known (and by the word nature I mean all the possibilities for good and evil embraced in the medical properties of the drug), the poor victim of its terrors will be taken by the hand and sympathized with by his fellow-man, instead of being ostracized from society, and treated with contempt and reprehension, as he now is.

The difference between the condition of the victim in the primary, as contrasted with that in the secondary or advanced stages, consists in this: Of course, it is a self-evident proposition, from the description I have given of the effects of opium, that the longer a human being is subjected to the suffering it inflicts, the worse he will look, feel, and actually be. But to take the same man out of the advanced stages, and compare him with himself in the first stages, there will be found difference enough between the two living testimonies to the power of opium to interest the investigator, and repay him for the labor required to make the comparison. In the first stages, opium commits its ravages on the human system by expansion and explosion; in the after stages, it does its work by contraction and compression; the weary victim totters beneath a heavy load.

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In the first stages he has occasional periods of enjoyment; in the latter he has none; he is so benumbed by opium as to be incapable of enjoyment. Temporary manumission from positive pain or distress only brings out into stronger relief his miserable situation. He sees and feels that he is not happy; cannot be at his best; and yet his sensibilities are so impervious to all deep feeling, that it is impossible for him to give way to the luxury of weeping,—the solace of tears. His heart is as “dry” and as dead “as summer dust.” The same numbness and deadness isolate him from the enjoyment of the society of his fellow-man. He has lost all capacity or capability to enjoy. He likewise has lost all interest in the things in which mankind generally take pleasure. He has lost all power to take interest in them. The world to him is a “sterile promontory,” a “foul and pestilent congregation of vapors.” “Man delights not him.”

In addition to the general deadness of the sensibilities, the buried-alive condition of the victim, he suffers daily misery and sometimes agony from the abnormal condition of the stomach and bowels produced by opium. The stomach is dry and hard,—dead as the rest of the physical man. The least variation in the dose deranges everything, and brings on a horrible indigestion. This, whether the variation be on the side of less or more; each holds in store its peculiar retribution for law violated. Too little may have some appetite (and may not), but no digestion. Too much may have a little appetite, but no digestion. In either case there may be no appetite at all. To subtract a certain quantity would be *certain* to upset the stomach, both for appetite and digestion. To add a certain quantity, would be to so benumb the stomach as to prevent all appetite, relish, and digestion. In the one case—too little—it is a lack of strength in the stomach; in the other—too much—the organ is already satiated by opium, and desires no food.

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During the seasons of taking too much (that is, per day, and not per dose), that frequently assail the opium eater, and which, as I have before stated, it is almost impossible to break up, the poor unfortunate passes “a weary time,” silent, passive, dead, in the day; at night deprived of natural sleep; arising in the morning in a suicidal state of mind, he lives “an unloved, solitary thing;” knowing himself to be miserable, yet dreading other evils from taking less; until at last, nature becoming exhausted, sickness, and consequent distaste for, and failure of effect in, opium come to his relief. O God! O God! believe me, reader, ’tis no chimera: I suffer daily untold misery, and some days my wretched condition is almost intolerable.

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The inability to take a reasonable quantity is, of course, one of the greatest misfortunes in the habit of opium eating. Jeremy Taylor says that in the regenerate person it sometimes comes to pass that the “old man” is so used to obey that, like the Gibeonites, he is willing to do inferior offices for the simple privilege of abiding in the land. Not so with the opium fiend; he thinks it better to “reign in hell than to serve in heaven;” his reign is absolute wherever he takes up his residence. “There is a medium in all things” except opium eating; there it is up hill and down dale; the poor victim is tossed about like a mariner at sea. But, speaking of mariners, his condition is more like that of the “Ancient Mariner” than is the condition of any one else like his. To him frequently in dreams, both day and night,

“Slimy things *do* crawl with legs upon the slimy sea.”

There was a period in my experience, now happily passed, thank heaven, when day or night I need only shut my eyes to see groups of enormous sea-monsters and serpents, with frightful heads, coiling and intercoiling about one another. You may, dear reader, whoever you are, rest assured that I indulged this privilege as seldom as possible. During that season, too, I suffered acutely from horrible dreams at night, waking in depths of gloom so appalling, so overpowered and undone, that I could not have borne it to have remained alone. Indeed, I became so afflicted with these nightmares (night horrors being the products of opium), that my wife was charged to turn me clear over and wake me up on the least evidence that I was suffering from one of them. This evidence, she said, came from me in the character of low, painful moans; I, conscious of my predicament when at the worst, always struggled with all my strength, and strained every nerve to cry out at the top of my voice:—I was perfectly powerless. I have always thought it the acme of the ridiculous to attribute to the peculiar formation of De Quincey’s brain a special aptitude for dreaming magnificent dreams. Let any one, bold enough to undertake so costly an experiment, try the virtues of opium in the capacity of producing dreams, and, my word for it, he will either claim a special aptitude for dreaming himself, or, with me, give all the credit to the subtle and mighty powers of opium.

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## CHAPTER XII.

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THE ADDRESS OF THE OPIUM EATER.—HOW HE OCCUPIES HIS  
TIME.—THE REFUGE OF SOLITUDE AND SILENCE.—  
INDIFFERENCE TO SOCIETY OR COMPANY.—DISPOSITION,

THE opium eater has but a poor address. The sources of all feeling and geniality are frozen up; he stands stiff, cold, and out of place: or in place as a piece of statuary, to be looked at, as, for instance, the statue of the god of pain, or as a specimen from the contents of Pandora's box. He is kind and sincere, but cordial he cannot be. His personal appearance is not inviting: shrunken and sallow, and with the air of a man who desires to escape and hide. Business matters and interviews of all kinds are consummated with the greatest possible despatch, and away he goes to some solitary retreat. If he is a business man, he of course must get through with the affairs of the day the best he can; as soon as through with these, he hies with speed to things congenial to his soul.[4] Books and literature are his favorite studies; they constitute his greatest and most constant enjoyment. Sitting in his chair, he alternately reads, writes, and dozes. Solitude and silence are his refuge and fortress, and his chiefest friends: companions of his own choosing. Visitors and company of all kinds are intruders. That this is so is not his fault as a man; it is the result of opium. Opium has unfitted him for the enjoyment of the society of mixed companies, and it is perhaps better that it isolates him also, which secures him from mortification to himself and grief to his friends.

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The disposition of the opium eater is mild and quiet, as a rule. All passion is dead,—unless the wretched irritability which comes from loss of natural sleep and other suffering caused by opium can be called passion. His general conduct is mild, simple, and child-like. All the animal is dormant, quite dead. The beautiful, the good, the free from sham, the genuine and unaffected, meet his approval. Anything that shocks by suddenness, that is obtrusive and noisy, he desires to be out of the reach of. Quiet and solitude, with those he loves within call, are his proper element.

NOTE.—Among the ever-living cares and worriments that beset and afflict the much-tortured mind of the opium eater, the dread of being thrown out of employment, with consequent inability to procure opium, is not the least. And it begets a species of slavery at once abject and galling,—galling to the “better part of man,” which it “cows;” and abject, in the perfect fear and sense of helplessness which it creates.

The opium eater is not an attractive personage. The appearance is even worse than the reality. He looks weak and inefficient; the lack-lustre of his eye, the pallor of his face, and the *offishness* of his general expression, are the reverse of fascinating. This he knows, and feels keenly and continually. He feels absolutely dependent, and that, were he thrown out of employment, it might be utterly impossible to obtain another situation, with his tell-tale disadvantages arrayed like open informers against him. This is a contingent and collateral consequence, dependent upon the position in life occupied by the victim; but where the party is poor, though collateral as it were, as I have above said, it is not the least among the ills that afflict the unfortunate opium eater.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### ON ENERGY AND AMBITION AS AFFECTED BY THE OPIUM HABIT.

I HAVE devoted a separate chapter to the discussion of these two qualities, because they are more directly operated upon by the curse of opium than any other of the principles in human nature. Coleridge, “though usually described as doing nothing,—‘an idler,’ ‘a dreamer,’ and by many such epithets,—sent forth works which, though they had cost him years of thought, never brought him any suitable return.” So says Gillman, in his unfinished life of Coleridge. It was so common to charge Coleridge with being constitutionally idle, that he at length came to believe the crime charged to be true, and endeavored to extenuate his offence and overcome his “inbred sin.” Before he became an opium eater this offence was not charged.

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No one then said he lacked energy or perseverance. His poetical works having been composed in his early manhood, would give the lie to this assertion, were it made. It was not until the fountain of his genius was frozen by the withering frosts of opium, that this charge had any foundation, or supposed foundation, in fact. After that time, after being ensnared in the toils of opium, I think it would be absurd to claim that a mere casual observer might not think there was some foundation for the charge that he was “doing nothing,” etc. His way was obstructed by almost impassable barriers. The fangs of the destroyer left wounds which

rendered it impossible for him to work with reasonable facility and success at certain times. What he did accomplish is better done than it would have been had he attempted to write when unfit. At times literary labor must have been entirely out of the question; he must have been too ill to attempt it.

To write at any time required tremendous exertion of the will, and a calm resignation to bear any suffering in order to accomplish something.

It is not fair to measure the result of Coleridge's labors by that of other men. As De Quincey truthfully says, "what he did in spite of opium," is the question to be considered.

What was true of Coleridge holds good with all subject to the habit, the effect of opium being the same on all.

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Opium strikes at the very root of energy, as though it would extirpate that quality altogether. A deadly languor, the opposite of energy, an averseness to activity, pervades the whole system with paralyzing effect. Of course this state of feeling is inimical to the accomplishment of any great ambition. The ambition remains as a quality of remorse, to "prick and sting" one, but the energy to fulfil is frustrated by the enervating spells of opium. That dread inertia known only to opium eaters prevents the doing of everything save that which must be done, that cannot be avoided.

The "potent poison" was never designed for man's daily use. It is not a thing which the system counteracts by long usage; it is a thing that transforms and deforms the whole physical and mental economy, and the longer its use the more complete the destruction. A man is thrown flat, and instead of a predisposition or a passion to do anything which aids one in the accomplishment of purposes, the whole human nature revolts like a pressed convict; there is no pleasure in the doing or the prospect of doing anything whatever.

No warmth or glow of passion or genial feeling can be aroused. Hence the poetical faculty was annihilated in Coleridge. There is a sort of vitrifying process that chills all sensibility. A man is a stick. To expect that a man could succeed as well under these conditions, even in the little accomplished, is unreasonable.

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There are no genial impulses, no strength of fervor, no warmth of feeling of any kind. The man is under a load of poison; the springs of action are clogged with crushing weight. No hope of pleasure in future prospect can excite action. Whatever is done, is done in pale, cold strength of intellect. A man is placed entirely out of sympathy with his fellows or human kind. He cannot judge from his own heart what they would like or prefer. He is as completely cut off and dissevered from the body of mankind, and the interests and feelings of the same, as if he were a visitant from another sphere, and but faintly manifested here. How can he write in this condition? That exquisite feeling that teaches a writer to know when the best word tips the edges of the sensibility, lies buried under the *débris* of dead tissue. It is a "lost art" to him. Although a man longs to do something worthy the praise of men, and although his ambition may be even higher than it otherwise would be, owing to his being able to take no pleasure in minutiae, and having appreciation only for concrete generalities, he has such a contempt for, and so little pleasure in, the procuring processes, the details of the work, that he is overwhelmed with disgust before making an effort.

No interest in anything of human production, renders him primarily unable and unfit for the details necessary to be gone through with in the achievement of any great purpose. The pangs of disappointment he feels as deeply as any one. He becomes morbidly sorrowful over his lack of success, his inability to do anything. Unlike Coleridge, but like De Quincey, he may have gotten into the power of opium while his mind was yet undeveloped and immature, thus being deprived of the possibility of enjoying that "blessed interval" which was given to Coleridge, and to which he alludes with such thankfulness. As to poetry, in Coleridge's case, the beautiful language of Keats was fulfilled:

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"As though a rose should shut and be a bud again."

In the case of De Quincey, cruel winter came on and nipped the flower in the bud ere yet it had time to bloom, so that when it came to flower forth, in a later season, it was found that the stalk itself had been stunted in its growth, and the beauty of the flower impaired. He may have been afflicted with sickness in his early youth which prevented the development of his mind, the pain of which threw him into opium, as in my own case. He may have in this state felt the "stirrings" of genius, without the power of expression, and when at length his pain was so relieved, and his strength so increased, as to allow him to attempt something, the withering blight of opium had blasted his perceptions, exterminated his feelings, and enfeebled his intellect. Verily, the lines of Byron apply with special significance to the state of the opium eater:

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"We wither from our youth, we gasp away—  
Sick—sick; unfound the boon—unslaked the thirst,  
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,  
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—  
But all too late,—so we are doubly curst."

If anything whatever is done, it must be done through suffering, and by herculean efforts to overcome the distaste and disgust that assail one. It is all against the tide. There is no

current to move with. Everything original seems contemptible, at least of little weight; and although he can judge the works of others correctly, they excite but faint interest. But the sickening weight that overpowers one and holds him back, like the hand of a strong man, is the greatest obstacle. He might ignore his lack of interest. A man in health warms with his subject, and takes great pleasure in it. The opium eater remains passive and the same all the way along, and ends feeling that he has not done justice to his natural ability, and chafes with grief, disappointment, and despair at his confined and weakened powers. As a structure, he is riddled "from turret to foundation-stone." To expect as much from a man in this condition as from one in the healthful enjoyment of all his faculties, shocks the sense of justice,—it is "to reason most absurd." Would you expect grapes from a hyperborean iceberg?—figs from the Sahara?—palms from Siberia? Would you compare the fettered African with the roving Arabian?—the bond to the free? In sober practice, would you say to the blind, "Copy this writing?"—to the palsied, "Run you this errand,"—to the sick in bed, "Arise, and write a book?" Would you do this? You say it is ridiculous. So was it ridiculous, so was it wrong, to expect from Coleridge constant writing, and more than he accomplished. Why, the human face itself tells the story in a word. The *face* remains, but the countenance, the expression and divine resemblance, are erased and stricken off. So the body remains, but like a blasted oak, whose hollow trunk contains no sap, and whose withered branches are barren. Coleridge did well,—he did nobly,—and left a legacy the value of which will yet be learned to man's everlasting gain.

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Numbered with the saints in heaven is the sweet-minded, long-suffering Coleridge. Oh, venerated shade! thy spirit living yet upon the earth has kept mine company in this sad ebb and flow of time. Thy nature, so gentle, so tender, and so true; thy heart so pure; thy whole being so perfect and so high, hath been a lighted torch to me in this my dark estate, travelling up the rugged hill of time, and rolling my stone along; hath been balm to my wounds, wine to my spirit, and hope to my o'er-freighted heart! To know thee as thou wert, my own kindred suffering tearing all prejudice away, is at least one solace ungiven the world at large. Thou hast borne thy part and won thy crown; may the humblest of thy friends join thee at last in the realms of peace!

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## CHAPTER XIV.

OPIMUM VERSUS SLEEP.—MANNER OF TAKING OPIMUM.—DIFFERENT CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO THE HABIT.—A PROPHETIC WARNING.

WHAT three things does opium especially provoke? As to sleep, like drink in a certain respect, it provokes and it unprovokes;—it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance; therefore, much *opium* may be said to be an equivocator with *sleep*; it makes him, and it mars him; it sets him on (though it does not take him off); it persuades him, and disheartens him; it makes him stand to, and not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.—*Shakespeare altered.*

But, of the three things that drink especially provokes, but one, and that sleep, is concurrently provoked by the extract of poppies. Still, the sleep provoked by opium is not

"Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,"

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but "death's half-brother, sleep,"—a state in which, with reference to opium eaters, "their drenched natures lie as in a death;" "*their* breath alone showing that *they* live;" "while death and nature do contend about them, whether they live or die."<sup>[5]</sup>

The three things which opium especially provokes are,—first, sleep; second, loss of sensibility; and third, loss of sublunary happiness.

Opium puts a man under an influence which must pass away before natural sleep, and in consequence rest, can supervene. Of course, if the opium eater takes an exceedingly moderate quantity of the drug, he may get rest that is refreshing,—that is, if he get any sleep at all; taking too little, defeats the whole object. But in general the opium eater arises in the morning in an inconceivably ill state of feeling. It is almost impossible to arise at all. The heart feels much affected,—and no wonder, lying all night in the embrace of poison sufficient to kill half a dozen of the strongest men. It is a most wretched condition, and the most trying. A man gets up in the morning with no sense of rest, feeling that he has been aroused long before he should have been. Before going to bed he does not feel so; it comes on after having slept about seven hours. His sense of want of rest before going to bed is not to be compared with his misery on getting up in the A. M., though he in fact shrinks from going to bed at all, so painful is the anticipation of the misery of the morning. In the case of De Quincey, it may have been that he had all the time he wished to sleep in. He may have

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been master of his own time to such a degree that he could go to bed when he desired, and get up when he felt like it. If this was true, he no doubt escaped the miseries others are compelled to endure, whose duties require them to arise at an early hour,—that is, at the hour at which the business portion of the world generally arise. It is most probable, not being under the regimen of fixed hours, that he was able to sleep off the effects of opium, and then get all the natural rest his system demanded before arising. If this theory of his case in this regard is the true one, he escaped a great deal of the suffering usually entailed upon the victims of the prince of narcotics. If I could lie two or three hours longer (or rather later) in the morning (which would carry me far beyond the beginning of business hours in the A. M.), I would get up feeling a great deal fresher and better. Going to bed early does not contravene or anticipate the difficulty. It is compulsory upon one to go to bed early, as it is. The proposition, boiled down, is simply this: The effect of opium lasts a specific length of time, and that must be slept by, and passed, before full relaxation sets in, and the overload of opium passes out of the system. Were I master of my own time, I think I could regulate my hours so as to avoid *this* misery of opium: at least so modify it that it would be much more tolerable than it now is in my own case. But let us pass on to something else.

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It was in the year A. D. 1867 that I was misled into the habit of using morphia, and I have continued its use ever since in greater or less degree: assuming that the essential principle or foundation of all nostrums invented to cure the baneful habit is opium in one of its various forms.

My practice is now to take a dose of so many grains exact weight at ten o'clock A. M., and another at four and a half o'clock P. M. At the latter dose I need not necessarily be so precise in weight. Regularity is absolutely enforced. There is no getting along otherwise. It is essential to preserve any uniformity of feeling, to secure sleep and tolerable digestion. An habituate periodically becomes bilious under the best regulations; frequently so where large quantities are taken, and the system is kept clogged with the drug. By adhering to strict regularity in weight and time, I still derive some stimulation from the drug, and when the stomach is in good condition, and free from lodgments of food, I sometimes feel a momentary touch of pleasurable sensation from the morning dose. In the afternoon there is usually too much food in my stomach for the medicine to take strong hold; often I can scarcely perceive that I have taken a dose, though usually there is a dull feeling of stimulation. By eight o'clock P. M. I begin to get drowsy, and it is best for me to get a doze at that time. I generally take a couple of dozes during the course of the evening, going to bed at ten o'clock, or about that hour. To get sleep enough is a point of the utmost importance. It is obligatory upon one to watch himself closely in this respect. The opium must to a great extent be slept off, and the system thoroughly relaxed, before refreshing sleep can be obtained. Getting up at the usual hours, compels an opium eater to arise before his sleep appears to be more than half out. He feels awful for a time, gradually becoming less wretched. The matter of sleep is one of so great importance, and so prominent a feature in the life of an opium eater, that I have treated the subject specially and at length in the beginning of this chapter. I hope the reader will pardon me for again adverting to the matter, and for what seems little less than a repetition of the same remarks. But I ask his charity on the whole work, with its repetitions and tautology, which I am too much pressed for time to avoid,—writing, as I do, by snatches and in haste.

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Taking a certain large quantity of opium, so binds up one's nerves that it is difficult to sleep at all. The narcotic effect then seems lost. One must relax this tension, by taking less of the drug, before he can rest easily either day or night. This effect comes from too much opium. Another effect of opium, or more properly *result*, is that after a meal,—I speak only for myself in this, however,—particularly after dinner with me, if one walks about much,—that is, immediately after he has eaten,—what he ate weighs like a chunk of lead in the stomach. I think it used to derange my stomach, and make me miserable till the next day. I avoid it now as much as possible, and very rarely am afflicted with it. Another effect,—but one, however, of which I have spoken heretofore,—I am beginning to feel very gloomy and scary at night again. Oh! I do pray God that I may escape, dodge, or ward this off in some way. There are no other earthly feelings so terrible. It is the valley and shadow of death. One seems to stand upon the verge of the grave, breathing the atmosphere of the dead. There is such a lasting intimacy with, such a constant presence in the mind of, the idea of death. All seems so dark, dreary, and so hopeless; so painfully gloomy and melancholy. A man is completely emasculated. The full development of this condition I must prevent. It shows an alarming state, and that a change in the management of the habit is imperatively required.

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The quantity of opium taken by old practitioners varies greatly. A reasonable quantity, after six or eight years' steady use, would be from twelve to sixteen grains morphia per twenty-four hours, I judge. They might take less, and I have known cases where much more was taken. The quantity, however, depends not so much upon the question of time as upon the temperament and general make-up of the particular victim in every respect. Leaving the question of time out, I have known the quantity to range as high as sixty grains sulphate of morphia per diem. This was awful. One can keep pretty near a certain quantity, by struggling hard and being determined to allow it to make no headway. In doing this, though, more distress and inconvenience are undergone the longer a specified quantity is adhered to. It will not supply a man and sustain him as well, as time wears on, as it did when he first adopted the dose stated. Opium seems to wear away the strength of a person just as the gradual dropping of water wears away a stone. Hence it is usually the case that, as time

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passes on, the dose is gradually increased.

I was just speaking of a little different matter, by the by. What I meant was this,—that, through a certain course of years, the dose would increase to a certain standard, which, from that time on for a number of years, would remain about the same, and appear to be sufficient, and not need any addition. As in my own case, for instance. After a few years I arrived at the quantity of twelve grains per diem, six A. M. and six P. M. This quantity I continued to take for a number of years, with but slight variation.

There is a reason for the writing of this inside history of the opium habit beyond the one people would naturally hit upon. It is this. This is an inquisitive, an experimenting, and a daring age,—an age that has a lively contempt for the constraints and timorous inactivity of ages past. Its quick-thinking and restless humanity are prying into everything. Opium will not pass by untampered with. Even at this time, it is not entirely free from vicious handling. But as yet, in any age, this included, as far as the Caucasian race is concerned, there has been no such a wresting from its legitimate sphere and proper purpose of the drug, as I have great fear there will be in years to come. Will alcohol become unpopular, then be abhorred, and then opium be substituted in its stead? Will it? This is the grave question I am now propounding. In order that I may not be thought to be speculating upon a subject not within the realms of reason or probability, I will just reinforce myself here by stating that a Senatorial committee, of which the late Mr. Charles Sumner was a member, thought it not unworthy their time and the nation's interest to investigate into this identical question. I have good reason to believe that, even at this day, the number of persons addicted to the habitual use of opium is far beyond the imagination of people generally:—even of persons who have looked into the matter somewhat, but who have never used the drug, or made its use a matter of *special* observation for years. I have good reason to believe that even now the use of opium is carried on to such an extent, that a census of the victims would strike the country with terror and alarm. But yet this is trivial in comparison with the opium afflictions of which I prophesy; when liquor will be abandoned and opium resorted to as commonly as liquor now is. Heaven forefend! God, our Father, in mercy avert the day! It will be a time of general effeminacy, sickness, and misery,—*should it come*. "Should it come!" Ah, there is some solace in that. Let us intercept it, if possible. I believe knowledge is stronger than ignorance. To know your danger, and yet avoid it, is better than to pass it by through the mere accident of ignorance,—it is safer. Then know, that opium has charms you could not resist did you once feel their influence; that it is like the beautiful woman in Grecian mythology, ravishing to look upon, but poisonous to touch. Knowing your danger, keep out of its reach; for, no matter what its transitory influences may be, its most certain, permanent, and overshadowing results are pain and misery!

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Having put forth my hand to warn the world of the miseries inherent in opium, when perverted from its proper medical purpose, I now end this chapter, in order to hasten towards a conclusion of my task.

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## CHAPTER XV.

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DIFFICULTIES OF WRITING THIS BOOK.—AN ATTEMPT TO RENOUNCE OPIUM IN THE LATTER STAGES OF THE HABIT DESCRIBED.—COLERIDGE AND DE QUINCEY.—ANIMADVERSIONS UPON DE QUINCEY'S "CONFESSIONS."

I HAVE promised to describe an attempt to renounce opium while the victim is in the latter stages. I will endeavor to fulfil my promise, although sick and weary of the subject, and sick and weary in body and mind.

This book has been composed at irregular intervals, in moments snatched from an otherwise busy life. It must be inconsecutive and loose in composition. I beg the reader's kindest indulgence, and his consideration of the purpose I have had in view,—the benefit of my fellow-man. Oh! if I can deter but one from being drawn into the "maelstrom," as Coleridge has so aptly termed it; if I can save but one from the woe and misery I suffer daily, I shall feel well rewarded for the effort I have made to record my unhappy personal history.

No fondness for detailing my grievances has had anything to do with the writing of this little work; on the contrary, I have an almost unconquerable repugnance to the subject. It is only with the greatest effort that I can compel myself to return to it. I have been wearied, and consumed with pain and misery, during the whole progress of it. Had I been master of my own time, as far as literary merit is concerned, it would have been more acceptable, although my mind is and has been, during the whole course of it, debilitated and oppressed by opium. My condition and preoccupied time precluded that object altogether. If it is found intelligible, my object, as far as literary excellence is concerned, will have been attained.

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But,

“Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin!”

I have not for a number of years made an effort to renounce opium. I know that my unaided efforts would prove fruitless. My constitution would no more stand the test than it would the abstinence from food. Death would follow sooner from want of opium than it would from want of food. Seventy-two hours' abstinence from opium would, I think, prove fatal in my case; and I believe that I would die by the expiration of that time. It may be impossible to conceive, without actual experience, the singular effect opium has upon the system in making itself a necessity. Being no physician, I am unable to give a technical description of that effect, but, with the reader's indulgence, I shall try, however, to describe it in my own language.

When opium is not taken by the *habitué* for twenty-four hours, his whole body commences to sag, droop, and become unjointed. The result is precisely like taking the starch out of a well-done-up shirt. The man is as limp as a dish-rag, and as lifeless. He perspires all over,—feels wet and disagreeable. To take opium now is to brace the man right up; it tightens him up like the closing of a draw-string. Such is the effect in the internal man, and it pervades thence the entire system. His mortal machine is screwed up and put in running order. The opium not taken at the expiration of the twenty-four hours, rheumatic pains in the lower limbs soon set in, gradually extending to the arms and back; these grow worse as time passes, and continue to grow worse until they become unendurable. Contemporaneously with the pain, all the secretions of the system, but more notably those of the stomach and bowels, are unloosed like the opening of a flood-gate, and an acrid and fiery diarrhoea sets in, which nothing but opium can check. All the corruption engendered and choked up there for years comes rushing forth in a foul and distempered mass. The pain and diarrhoea continue until the patient is either cured, if he has sufficient will and constitution to withstand the torture, or is compelled by his sufferings to return to opium.

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During the period of time endured without opium, the body is fiery hot and painfully sensitive to every touch or contact. So exquisite is the sensibility, that to touch a hair of the head or beard, is like the jaggling of needles into the body. The mouth continually dreuls, and in some instances is ulcerated and sore. As to eating, it is hardly to be thought of; a mouthful satisfies. Of the suffering hardest to withstand, is the *apparent* stationary position of time, which arises, I presume, from the rigid, intense condition, and intense sensitiveness, of the whole system, and the hopelessness of the thoughts which march like funeral processions through the mind; this, in connection with the sinking state of the spirits, and the awful aching of the heart, places a man in a predicament which no other earthly suffering can parallel. There is no prospect in life; opium has so transformed the human body, that it no longer has natural feelings; there is no expectancy, no hope, for a different future. The appetite for opium at this time is generally master of the man; it rages like the hunger of a wild beast.

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If a person when in this condition had any human feelings or aspirations, he might resist and go on, if of constitution sufficient; but the difficulty is, it is necessary for the poor wretch to take opium to have natural feelings, or to place any reliance upon the future. It is generally the case, at this stage, that the opium eater would wade through blood for opium. All else in the world is nothing to him without it, and for it he would exchange the world and all there is in it. He yields to the irresistible demand for his destroyer; and with a heart the depth of whose despair the plummet of hope never sounded.

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I fear I may have entirely failed to give the reader any idea of the vitiating power of opium in making itself a “necessary evil,” and in burning out of the human system all natural feelings, hopes, and aspirations. I am unable to explain it better; that it has such power, I know but too well. An opium eater learned in medicine, physiology, and metaphysics, might explain the subject scientifically, giving reasons why this and that is so, etc.; “it is beyond my practice.”

After the foregoing, it may be unnecessary for me to refer to an attempt of my own, made some years ago; however, I will relate it briefly. I was but a couple of years deep in opium; nevertheless the habit was firmly fastened. The manacles were beyond the strength of my slender constitution, even then. I cannot state just how many hours I had gone without opium when the serious pains began. I had taken none that day, but I do not know at what time I had taken the last dose on the day previous. At any rate, it was in the middle of the night, and at least thirty hours after taking any opium, when the most terrible pain set in. During the most of the day I had sat in a dejected state, a prey to the most trying melancholy. Though up to that date my feelings were not so frozen but that I could weep, and I had not yet been forced, as I since have been, to cry with Hamlet, the noble Dane, “Oh! that this too, too solid flesh would melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew;” during this attempt, as during all near that time (I have since made none), weeping would come upon me in floods. It seemed as if I was the victim of a heart-rending grief,—and so I was. The consciousness of my predicament,—an opium eater,—with all the humiliations and failures caused by being so, came upon me with irresistible power.

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Coleridge alludes to this same period in his touching letter to Gillman, written a few days before he took up his abode with the latter. By the way, if there is any one who can read that letter without feeling his heart warm with esteem and reverence for the man that wrote it, I

must acknowledge that his sensibilities are deader than mine, and that is saying a good deal. The passage referred to is as follows: "The stimulus of conversation suspends the terror that haunts my mind; but, when I am alone, the horrors I have suffered from laudanum, the degradation, the blighted utility, almost overwhelm me."

To recur to my own case again: the terrific pain before mentioned lasted not long; it was simply impossible for me to bear it. I had gone to bed, but was compelled to get up. The pain (seemingly in my whole body, but particularly in my head and limbs) finally became so severe that I had to run about the room; I could not bear it either standing, sitting, or lying still. After it had continued this way for some time, seeing no prospect of abatement, but certainty of growing worse, I took a small dose of opium. Oh, with what despairing thoughts I always returned to the cause of all my misery,—as to the den of "Cerberus and blackest midnight!"

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Jeremy Taylor, in his address to the clergy, prefacing his work on repentance, says: "For, to speak truth, men are not very apt to despair; they have ten thousand ways to flatter themselves, and they will hope in despite of all arguments to the contrary." This is "too much proved," as old Polonius would say. But if there is ever a despairing time in life, it is when an opium eater, who has been earnest and determined in his effort to quit, sees himself forced back again into the habit, and realizes that life to him must ever be "but a walking shadow;" that he must languish out his natural existence, locked a close prisoner in the arms of a grisly demon!

"Oh, Christ, that ever this should be!"

This refers to a period while there is yet hope and expectation; while there is confidence that health would bring happiness; while yet the victim can realize this. But though at all times, in trying to quit, the victim clutches with eagerness his nepenthe, when he sees that he cannot succeed, nevertheless, it is with an awful sensation of hopelessness that he returns to opium; there is an undercurrent of the deepest despair: this ever continues to be the case,—that is, such is *my* experience; upon thought, I will not cast beyond that. The reason why the opium eater does not despair after getting back into the habit is, I presume, because his feelings are too much benumbed; he is too dead to feel many deep pangs that his miserable situation would otherwise inflict upon him. I mean, now, suicidal despair;—to "curse God and die."

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He has already, in common parlance, despaired of any happiness in his future;—in his future natural life, I mean. That is to say, he does not, like other men, expect to be happy on this or that occasion, though he works and expects more security and ease of mind on the attainment of this or that end.

Still, the opium eater's sensibilities are not armor. A wound from a cruel word pierces deep and rankles. In truth, I used to have to watch myself closely, to see whether in reality my wounds had their origin in fact or imagination. Any fancied neglect or slight from the business manager lay upon my heart with sickening weight. Direct and "palpable hits" cut to the bone. During the past year or so, although I have not changed my business situation, I seem to have been treated better, and have not been so much ruffled in this respect. But the opium eater's general state of feeling, aside from pains in body and hurts in mind, is such as might be left behind by some great sorrow; an abiding gloominess of feeling is cast over his spirit. This exists in varying degrees of depth or intensity, of course:—it depends upon his condition as to opium, and the particular state of his body and mind as an opium eater.

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Julius C. Hare, in speaking of Coleridge, said: "His sensibilities were such as an averted look would rack, who would have stood in the presence of an earthquake unmoved." In reading an article on Tom Hood, some time ago, I observed that the author, in speaking of Hood's companions in literature, alluded to the "pale, sad face of De Quincey." Oh, that men of such transcendent powers as Coleridge and De Quincey should be stricken down by the fiend of opium! Verily, if "in struggling with misfortune lies the proof of virtue," I have not the slightest doubt that to-day these two stars in literature, their bright spirits divested of the mask of opium, shine with light ineffable in the councils of the blest! What they did is not so much, as that they accomplished it under the withering curse of opium. And yet what they have left will stand comparison with that of the best of their contemporaries, each in his particular field or fields of literature. And if

"Tears and groans, and never-ceasing care,  
And all the pious violence of prayer,"

avail to redeem a man from his sins, surely Coleridge fully atoned for all the fault that could be imputed to him for taking opium. His course ought to satisfy the most exacting now, as it should have done in his own age. But prejudice! Alas! who or what is equal to it? His getting into opium was without fault upon his part. He was afflicted with rheumatism, and all who have read his life know why. A medicine, called the "Kendal Black Drop," was prescribed for rheumatism in a medical work which he had read. He obtained the medicine, and it worked wonders; his swellings went down, and his pains subsided. It was a glorious discovery, and he recommended it wherever he went. The pains would come back, however, so he kept the medicine handy. It is unnecessary to pursue the phantom any further; the ever-effectual remedy was nothing but opium, and Coleridge was into the habit before he knew what he was about. And for such a nature as Coleridge's to get out of opium, when once in it, is not

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among the things that happen.

De Quincey took laudanum for the toothache, and afterwards continued it at intervals for the pleasure it gave him, until finally, his stomach giving way, he was precipitated into the daily use of it.

Which of these men was the most to blame in getting into the habit, is not the object of these present remarks. I agree, however, with Coleridge, that De Quincey's work, entitled, "The Confessions of an English Opium Eater," tends rather to induce others into the habit, "through wantonness," than to warn them from it. Coleridge said as much in a couple of private notes, which were printed, after his death, in his "Life" by Gillman. He likewise used the following significant language in one of the said notes:

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"From this aggravation I have, I humbly trust, been free, as far as acts of my free will and intention are concerned; even to the author of that work ('Confessions of an English Opium Eater'), I pleaded with flowing tears, and with an agony of forewarning. He utterly denied it, but I fear that I had, even then, to *deter*, perhaps, not to forewarn."

This raised the ire of De Quincey, who animadverted very freely upon Gillman's "Life of Coleridge," Coleridge and Gillman, in a paper entitled, "Coleridge and Opium Eating," which is, in my opinion, far more creditable to the parties attacked than to its author. In this paper he also attempts to give some excuse for writing his "Confessions," in the doing of which he makes a most startling blunder, by assuming that Milton's "Paradise Lost" is the true history of our first parents; and then, on the strength of that, proving that laudanum was known and used in Paradise!

See a separate note at the end of this work, in which this unlooked for, though unmistakable, evidence and result of having too freely "eaten on the insane root that takes the reason prisoner," is fully discussed.

His excuse for writing his "Confessions" I give in his own words:

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"It is in the faculty of mental vision; it is in the increased power of dealing with the shadowy and the dark, that the characteristic virtue of opium lies. Now, in the original higher sensibility is found some palliation for the practice of opium eating; in the greater temptation is a greater excuse; and in this faculty of self-revelation is found some palliation for reporting the case to the world, which both Coleridge and his biographer have overlooked."

The world had much better have remained in ignorance, if it was necessary for the "Confessions" to be written in their present spirit. But there was no necessity for calling the attention of the public to the "pleasures of opium," thereby drawing into the vortex of the habit any who might rely too much upon his statement, that he had used opium periodically for eight years, without its having become necessary as "an article of daily diet."

"Wanton" is the very word that describes his "Confessions" to my mind. He has thrown a glamour of enchantment over the subject of opium, irresistibly tempting to some minds.

Yet I can conceive, I think, the state of mind necessary to produce the "Confessions" as they are. De Quincey had been for a long time passing through the fiery ordeal of reducing the quantity of opium taken, preparatory to its final abandonment. The appetite must have been strong upon him. He felt free from the oppression of opium, and his spirits were good. He could only realize in his own mind the "pleasures of opium," without its "pains;" he was under the thralldom of the appetite which perverted his judgment; that is, the appetite would not allow him to give the pains their due weight, or of course they would have kicked the pleasures "higher than a kite." His mind, I say, under the influence of the appetite, dwelt upon the pleasures; he yearned towards them, and longed to indulge himself to the full. But he had given out that he was quitting opium; he dared not indecently ignore his own declarations, and the expectations of his friends, by unceremoniously suspending his efforts to quit, and plunging at once and unrestrained to his fullest depth into opium; he must prepare the way, he must break the fall; and this he did in the "Confessions." That is, this is my theory of the case. I pretend to have no direct evidence of the fact; I simply derive my opinion from the work itself, and other of his works. He therein (that is, in the "Confessions") involves as many as possible, and makes the habit "as common as any, the most vulgar thing to sense." He gave a dangerous publicity to opium that it never had before. He gave a fascination to the drug outside of its own influence; to wit, the drug, when it gets hold of one, is fascinating enough, but he gave to the *subject* of opium allurements to those who had never yet tasted the article itself.

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To explain to, and inform the world of, "the marvellous power of opium in dealing with the shadowy and the dark," did not require him to run riot in his imagination, in calling up and "doing" over again his opium debaucheries. I fail utterly to perceive the part "the shadowy and the dark" play in them. [That section of De Quincey's work relating to his dreams is not here referred to; neither is there in it anything dangerous to the public that I recall.] But, lest we "crack the wind of the poor phrase, wronging it thus," we desist; there is no use in driving a question to beggary, or in searching for reasons where they never were "as thick as blackberries."

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Poor De Quincey, rest to his shade!—he suffered enough for all purposes.

“No further seek his merits to disclose,  
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),  
The bosom of his Father and his God.”

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## CHAPTER XVI.

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### CONCLUSION.

**I**N the preceding chapter I have apparently gone out of my way to strike a blow at De Quincey's "Confessions." So I have, because it was a part of the purpose of this treatise so to do.

While I seek at every opportunity to commiserate the condition of the man De Quincey, his works are public property, of which every man has a right to express his own opinion. With these remarks, I now conclude this work; hoping, trusting, praying, that it may be the means of warning others, before they *taste* the venomous stuff, of the chasm before them; that to touch it is to tread upon "a slumbering volcano," and that, once into the crater, they are lost for life. I warn them of a reptile more subtle and more charming than the serpent itself, under whose fascination it conceals a sting so deadly, that

—"no cataplasm so rare,  
Collected from all the simples that have virtue,"

can save its victims from destruction.

I trust I have said nothing that can allure any one into the habit: my whole object has been, professedly and in reality, to do the contrary.

Referring him, if so inclined, to some fragmentary notes on different subjects connected with opium and opium eaters in the Appendix to this work, I now respectfully bid the reader farewell.

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## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE No. 1.—COLERIDGE AND THE CRITICS.

**C**OLERIDGE was unfortunate in having lived in an age in which party spirit was bitter in the extreme, and literary criticism, either from this or other causes, was no less malignant and bitter. It seems that Coleridge claimed that the "Edinburgh Review" *employed* the venomous Hazlitt to "run him down," in a criticism on the Lay Sermon—that Hazlitt had been employed by reason of his genius for satire, being a splenetic misanthropist, and for his known hostility to Coleridge. The "Edinburgh Review" denied that he was *employed* for this purpose. Whether he did the job of his own volition and spontaneous motion or not, he did it, and did it well; he noted him closely to "abuse him scientifically." All this after Coleridge had received him at his house, and given him advice that proved greatly to his advantage. Hazlitt, in an essay on the poets, acknowledges and explicitly states that Coleridge roused him into a consciousness of his own powers—gave his mind its first impetus to unfolding. It is said that Coleridge encouraged him when every one did not perceive so much in the "rough diamond."

Jeffrey, editor of the "Edinburgh Review," in a critique on the Christabel, took occasion to thoroughly personally abuse and villify Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge. He accorded no merit whatever to the Christabel. This after he had been the recipient of Coleridge's hospitality, and had acted in a friendly manner.

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I copy the following from the memoir of Keats, introductory to a volume of his poetical works, edited by William B. Scott:

"It is not worth while now to analyze the papers that first attracted notice to 'Blackwood's Magazine,' by calling Coleridge's 'Biographia Literaria' a most execrable performance, and the amiable, passive, lotus-eating author, a compound of egotism and malignity...."

I think "respectable gentlemen" did "do things thirty years ago (now, say fifty), which they could not do now without dishonor." Thank Providence for the march of civilization, genius has now a better recognition, and knowledge and taste being more generally disseminated and cultivated, the masses of the reading people, who are now the true judges and regulators of these matters, would not brook it for a moment. In vulgar phrase, it is "played out." The genius is valued higher than the malignant hack critic.

From what I read, Hazlitt died miserably as he had lived. "Sacked" by a woman beneath him in station, "and to recline upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor to those of his;"—now one of oblivion's ghosts.

#### NOTE No. 2.—COLERIDGE AND PLAGIARISM.

That Coleridge did borrow the *language* of Shelling is of course indisputable. See that part of the "Biographia Literaria" which treats of the Transcendental Philosophy. But Coleridge plainly, and in a manner that cannot be mistaken, makes over to Shelling anything found in his works that resembles that author. He "regarded truth as a divine ventriloquist. He cared not from whose mouth the sounds proceeded, so that the words were audible and intelligible." He sought not to take anything from Shelling; on the contrary, he pays him a high tribute, and calls him his "predecessor though contemporary." He said he did not wish to enter into a rivalry with Shelling for what was so unequivocally his right. 'Twould be honor enough for him (Coleridge) to make the system intelligible to his countrymen. But Coleridge made over everything that resembled, or coincided with Shelling, to the latter, on condition that he should not be charged with intentional plagiarism or ungenerous concealment; this because he could not always with accuracy cite passages, or thoughts, actually derived from Shelling. He was not in a situation to do so, hence he makes this general acknowledgment and proclamation beforehand.

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He says, indeed, that he never was able to procure but two of Shelling's books, besides a small pamphlet against Fichte. But the reason why he could not designate citations and thoughts, is, that he and Shelling had studied in the same schools of philosophy, and had taken about the same path in their course of philosophical reading; they were both aiming at the same thing, and although Shelling has seemingly gotten ahead of Coleridge, they would most likely have arrived at about the same conclusions, had the works of each never been known to the other. In short, the ideas of the two men were so similar, that it must have been perplexingly difficult, if not impossible, for Coleridge to tell whether he derived a particular thought from Shelling, or from his own mind.

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#### NOTE No. 3.—A MARE'S NEST.

In De Quincey's article entitled "Coleridge and Opium Eating," in the concluding part, after making some very just observations in relation to the peculiar temperament most liable to the seductive influences, and "the spells lying couchant in opium," he proceeds to make a very strange assertion concerning the properties of opium being known in Paradise, and—mark the bull—refers to Milton's Paradise Lost in proof! We quote as follows: "You know the Paradise Lost? And you remember from the eleventh book, in its earlier part, that laudanum already existed in Eden,—nay, that it was used medicinally by an archangel; for, after Michael had purged with 'euphrasy and rue' the eyes of Adam, lest he should be unequal to the mere *sight* of the great visions about to unfold their draperies before him, next he fortifies his fleshly spirits against the *affliction* of these visions, of which visions the first was death. And how?"

'He from the well of life three drops instilled.'

"What was their operation?"

'So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,  
Even to the inmost seat of mental sight,  
That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,  
Sank down, and all his spirits became entranced.  
But him the gentle angel by the hand  
Soon raised.'

"The second of these lines it is which betrays the presence of laudanum."

The fundamental error here, and that which vitiates and renders ridiculous all that follows, is the purblind assumption that Milton's Paradise Lost is a true account of the transactions of our first parents in the garden of Eden. But it is not, and Adam had no vision of the future or of death. Even if Milton's were the true account, I would not be inclined to believe that he meant laudanum. If the archangel had power to show visions of the future he would have had power to prepare Adam for the spectacle by far other than earthly means. There was a *tree of life* in the garden of Eden, but no well of life is recorded in sacred history. But Milton says of the archangel (as De Quincey quotes): "He from the well of life three drops instilled." A rather small dose to see visions upon; I believe the ordinary dose for an adult is from fifteen to twenty drops. However, a well of life would hardly be the designation for a well of

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laudanum. Milton undoubtedly derived his idea of a well of life from the tree of life spoken of in holy writ, whose fruit had the power of conferring immortality. "And the Lord God said, behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Gen. iii. 22-24. Milton is indebted to this hint, and his own imagination, for his well of life, and the powers he ascribes to its waters; and De Quincey is indebted to his imagination solely for his idea that it was laudanum which constituted the potent waters of this imaginary well. The whole thing is simply ridiculous. Still, it has an object, which object is, taken in connection with what remains of his essay on Coleridge and opium eating, to give some excuse, or palliation, as he puts it, for writing his (De Quincey's) opium confessions. We give his own words: "It is in the faculty of mental vision, it is in the increased powers of dealing with the shadowy and the dark, that the characteristic virtue of opium lies. Now, in the original higher sensibility is found some palliation for the practice of opium eating; in the greater temptation is a greater excuse. And in this faculty of self-revelation is found some palliation for *reporting* the case to the world, which both Coleridge and his biographer have overlooked."

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The idea that laudanum was known and used in Paradise, on the authority of the Paradise Lost of Milton, is as bad as the foolish opinions of some over-wise persons that Shakespeare's Hamlet was really insane.

#### NOTE No. 4.—SECOND NOTE ON COLERIDGE AND PLAGIARISM.

De Quincey, in his essay on Samuel Taylor Coleridge, while treating of the subject of Plagiarism, several minor charges of which he had just been firing off in his blind endeavor to do Coleridge good by destroying his good name forever, admits that said minor charges amount to nothing as plagiarism; but says, that "now we come to a case of real and palpable plagiarism." The case arises in the "Biographia Literaria." De Quincey says, regarding a certain essay on the *esse* and the *cogitare*, that Coleridge had borrowed it from beginning to end from Shelling. But that before doing so, being aware of the coincidence, he remarks that he would willingly give credit to so great a man when the truth would allow him to do so, but that in this instance he had thought out the whole matter himself, before reading the works of the German philosopher. Now the truth is, Coleridge said nothing of the kind. He first warned his readers that an identity of thought or expression, would not always be evidence that the ideas were borrowed from Shelling, or that the conceptions were originally learned from him. They (Coleridge and Shelling) had taken about the same course in their philosophical studies, etc.

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He says: "God forbid that I should be suspected of a wish to enter into a rivalry with Shelling for honors so unequivocally his right, not only as a great and original genius, but as the founder of the philosophy of nature, and the most successful improver of the dynamic system," etc. He then says: "For readers in general, let whatever coincides with or resembles the doctrines of my German predecessor, though contemporary, be wholly attributed to him, provided that the absence of direct references to his works, which I could not always make with truth, as designating thoughts or citations actually derived from him, and which, with this general acknowledgment, I trust would be unnecessary, be not charged on me as intentional plagiarism or ungenerous concealment." This is what he did say, and a sufficient acknowledgment for anything borrowed from Shelling. He then says that he had been able to procure but two of Shelling's books, in addition to a small pamphlet against Fichte. The above is from the prefatory remarks to which De Quincey alludes, but his memory must have been gone on a "wool-gathering" at the time.

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Instead of gaining, Coleridge is the loser by adopting the *language* of Shelling in his treatise on the transcendental philosophy in the "Biographia Literaria."

Having made over to Shelling everything that resembled or coincided with the doctrines of the latter, he lost much of the most important labors of his life.

He had studied metaphysics and philosophy for years, and not having "shrank from the toil of thinking," he must have evolved much original matter; being a man, as De Quincey says, of "most original genius." Shelling no doubt had gotten ahead of him in publication, but Coleridge had nevertheless undoubtedly thought out the transcendental system before meeting with the works of Shelling. He says himself emphatically, that "all the fundamental ideas were born and matured in my own mind before I ever saw a page of the German philosopher." However, Coleridge says of the whole system of philosophy—the Dynamic System, as I understand the matter—"that it is his conviction that it is no other than the system of Pythagoras and Plato revived and purified from impure mixtures."

[The quotations in the above note are from memory, and though not given as exact, they carry the idea intended.]

#### NOTE No. 5.—ON DE QUINCEY'S STYLE OF WRITING.

As to De Quincey's style, I think it may be summarized about thus:

Fine writing. Afflicted with ridiculous hyperbole. Too discursive. In his narrative pieces he is too rambling and digressive. I have read but one article of those classed under the title of Literary Reminiscences, namely, the one on Coleridge; it does well enough, but I have read other narrative pieces having the faults mentioned. But then his writings are nearly all of a narrative nature. However, the faults above named are not special to his narrative pieces only—they are general defects in his style. In his shorter pieces, such as his article on Wordsworth's poetry, on Shelley, and on Hazlitt, and likely some others of the same series which I have not yet read, he is interesting and sufficiently to the point. But in his essay on the works of Walter Savage Landor, is he not a little too inflated, and does he not run his ironical style into the ground? His "Confessions" I have come to regard more as a literary performance than for any benefit to mankind on the subject of opium there is in them, and as a literary performance the work was undoubtedly intended. There is more uniformity of style in it than in any of his other works of that length that I have read. He is more equable, though smooth and fluent. Still there is a break or two of humor in it that may sound harsh, though not the horrible, grisly, blood-curdling humor that he has in some of his pieces in the shape of irony. He oversteps the modesty of nature in his use of the satirical, I think. He seems hard and cruel sometimes, especially in "Coleridge and Opium Eating," when speaking of Coleridge enticing Gillman into the habit of eating opium, and other places in the same paper. In many instances I think he loses his dignity altogether and becomes very coarse; that is, slangy and common. He ever seems to think that to be smart, to be a success, to be formidable, is to be humorous. He has many brilliant flashes of intellectual humor, but it is all from the brain, and lacks the true ring that comes from the healthy overflowing of nature. He has cold, steel-like wit, that comes from the head.

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My recollection of his "Antigone of Sophocles," is as of a man jumping upon horseback and riding the animal to death, unless the journey's end be reached previously. There is no resting-place—on the reader goes after the idea till the end, and it is a long and barren road to travel. He (De Quincey) seems nervous—highly so; too much so to allow his reader peace and ease in reading this paper and others, and parts of other long ones, I judge. I fear the reader would fain cry out, "What, in the name of Judas Iscariot, is the man after, and when is he going to catch up to it? I am out of breath." This "Greek Tragedy" paper, as it is called elsewhere,<sup>[6]</sup> seemed lean and very wordy to me. Still, with all his faults, De Quincey was a brilliant writer, and *generally* on the right side of questions—humane, and upholding the down-trodden whenever opportunity offered.

#### NOTE No. 6.—THIRD NOTE ON COLERIDGE AND PLAGIARISM.

De Quincey, in his article entitled "Samuel Taylor Coleridge," descants as follows: "Coleridge's essay in particular is prefaced by a few words, in which, aware of his coincidence with Shelling, he declares his willingness to acknowledge himself indebted to so great a man, in any case where the truth would allow him to do so; but, in this particular case, insisting on the impossibility that he could have borrowed arguments which he had first seen some years after he had thought out the whole hypothesis *pro pria marte*. After this, what was my astonishment, to find that the entire essay, from the first word to the last, is a *verbatim* translation from Shelling, with no attempt in a single instance to appropriate the paper, by developing the arguments, or by diversifying the illustrations. Some other obligations to Shelling, of a slighter kind, I have met with in the 'Biographia Literaria:' but this was a barefaced plagiarism, which could in prudence have been risked only by relying too much upon the slight knowledge of German literature in this country, and especially of that section of the German literature." De Quincey goes on to say, in the way of extenuation of his charge of plagiarism against Coleridge, that Coleridge did not do this from poverty of intellect. "Not at all." He denies that flat. "There lay the wonder," he says. "He spun daily and at all hours," proceeds De Quincey, "for mere amusement of his own activities, and from the loom of his own magical brain, theories more gorgeous by far, and supported by a pomp and luxury of images such as Shelling—no, nor any German that ever breathed, not John Paul—could have emulated in his dreams." There you go again De Quincey—the demon of hyperbole again driving you to extremes; forever denouncing beyond reason or praising beyond desert. No one else ever claimed so much for Coleridge. De Quincey says Shelling was "worthy in some respects to be Coleridge's assessor." He accounts for Coleridge's borrowing on the principle of kleptomania... "In fact reproduced in a new form, applying itself to intellectual wealth, that maniacal propensity which is sometimes well known to attack enormous proprietors and *millionnaires* for acts of petty larceny." And cites a case of a Duke having a mania for silver spoons. This is "all bosh," and the wrong theory of Coleridge's borrowing from Shelling; and as to his loans from any one else, they were as few as those of any writer. The true theory is, that he was after truth, and had thought out as well as Shelling the doctrines promulgated by the latter. He could claim as much originality as Shelling in a system, "introduced by Bruno," and advocated by Kant, and of which he (Shelling) was only "the most successful improver."

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And also, that "he" (Coleridge) "regarded truth as a divine ventriloquist, he cared not from whose mouth the sounds were supposed to proceed if only the words were audible and intelligible." He borrowed the *language* of Shelling, but that is all. But De Quincey, after all his flourish of trumpets and initiatory war-whoop, volunteers to say that "Coleridge, he most

heartily believes, to have been as entirely original in all his capital pretensions, as any one man that ever has existed as—Archimedes, in ancient days, or as Shakespeare, in modern.”

In estimating the value of Coleridge’s “robberies,” their usefulness to himself, etc., De Quincey draws a parallel between them and the contents of a child’s pocket.

He says: “Did he” (the reader) “ever amuse himself by searching the pocket of a child—three years old, suppose—when buried in slumber, after a long summer’s day of out-a-doors intense activity? I have done this; and, for the amusement of the child’s mother, have analyzed the contents and drawn up a formal register of the whole. Philosophy is puzzled, conjecture and hypothesis are confounded, in the attempt to explain the law of selection which *can* have presided in the child’s labors: stones, remarkable only for weight, old rusty hinges, nails, crooked skewers stolen when the cook had turned her back, rags, broken glass, tea-cups having the bottom knocked out, and loads of similar jewels, were the prevailing articles in this *proces verbal*. Yet, doubtless, much labor had been incurred, some sense of danger, perhaps, had been faced, and the anxieties of a conscious robber endured, in order to amass this splendid treasure. Such, in value, were the robberies of Coleridge; such their usefulness to himself or anybody else; and such the circumstances of uneasiness under which he had committed them. I return to my narrative.” “So much for Buckingham.” Pity he wandered from his “narrative” at all. But he also says, and previous to the foregoing extract, in giving his reason for noticing the subject at all: “Dismissing, however, this subject, which I have at all noticed only that I might anticipate and (in old English) that I might *prevent* the uncandid interpreter of its meaning.”... Then it is that he goes on to state that he believes him to have been as original in his capital pretensions as any man that ever lived, as before noticed. Being such a small matter, it is “really too bad” that he should thus waste his labor of love. Had he read Coleridge more faithfully, he would have found that he had made over to Shelling everything which the reader might think resembled the doctrines of the latter. And this was, perhaps, the best, and about the only thing he could have done, for undoubtedly the ideas of the two men were so similar, having taken the same course in their philosophical studies, that it must have been perplexing, and may have been impossible, for Coleridge to tell “which was whose.”

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Coleridge claimed, indeed, that all the main and fundamental ideas were born and matured in his own mind before he ever saw a page of the German philosopher. If Coleridge was capable of spinning from “the loom of his own magical brain theories more gorgeous by far,” and “such as Shelling nor any German that ever breathed could have emulated in his dreams,” it is probable that he was able to think out this bit of philosophy for himself, especially also as we have his word for it besides (which I am rejoiced to say still passes current with some men), and it is most probable that he simply adopted the language of Shelling for convenience. He disputed no claim of Shelling’s, and although he had thought out the system with Shelling, what he *claimed* can be seen in the following: “With the exception of one or two fundamental ideas, which cannot be withheld from Fichte, to Shelling we owe the completion, and the most important victories of this revolution in philosophy. To me it will be happiness and honor enough should I succeed in rendering the system itself intelligible to my countrymen,” etc. Although he thought it out, he denies not that Shelling thought it out; he says in effect that Shelling, by publication, has accomplished the object sought by him (Coleridge), and all the honor and credit he will now claim will be in rendering the *system* intelligible to his countrymen. Although Coleridge had thought out this philosophy, now, however, it is total loss to him in the minds of those who know not what was the truthfulness and dignity of his nature, as they will attribute to Shelling (and give Coleridge no credit whatever, though he may have devoted years to their development) any ideas that are expressed in the language of the German. However, after subtracting all that is expressed in the language of Shelling, he has enough left to embalm his name for ages to come; and that of a kind so unique, characteristic, and eminently original, as to afford no scope for friendship and admiration so incomprehensible as that of De Quincey, or the open attacks of the most malignant of enemies.

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This article of De Quincey’s was not approved by Coleridge’s friends and relations; on the contrary, it roused their indignation and incurred their just resentment. “Defective sensibility” is something De Quincey is forever referring to, often to “depraved sensibility.” What madman would not have known he was injuring his friend by hauling into notice and retailing such stuff as this? Aggravating and augmenting it by his terse and vigorous mode of expression! The following passage from De Quincey, is enough to have brought upon himself perpetual infamy as the most traitorous of friends, and sufficient to have caused the outraged feelings of Coleridge’s friends, expressed in indignation, to have persecuted him to the grave; yet it is expressed in such language as exhibits an utter unconsciousness of the injury done, of the poison administered. In fact, the assumed attitude of the writer is that of a panegyrist, while his *real* attitude would be more truthfully compared to that of a venomous reptile, which charms its prey with beautiful visions only that its final attack may be more fatal—it is the song of the siren alluring to deadly rocks.

“Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed.” “Listen to this: “... I will assert finally, that having read for thirty years in the same track as Coleridge—that track in which few in any age will ever follow us, such as German metaphysicians, Latin school men, thaumaturgic Platonists, religious mystics,—and having thus discovered a large variety of trivial thefts, I do nevertheless most heartily believe him to have been as entirely original in all his capital

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pretensions as Archimedes in ancient days, or as Shakespeare in modern." Did any one ever before hear such an insane compound of contradictions? "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." 'Tis "the juice of the cursed hebenon," set forth in a glass of highly colored wine.

"No man can ever be a great enemy but under the garb of a friend. If you are a cuckold, it is your friend that makes you so, for your enemy is not admitted to your house; if you are cheated in your fortune, 'tis your friend that does it, for your enemy is not made your trustee; if your honor or good name is injured, 'tis your friend that does it still, for your enemy is not believed against you."—*Wycherly*.

That De Quincey did this maliciously, I do not pretend to state; what I know of its animus I gather from the paper itself. But I can truly say, in the language of Julius Hare, "God save all honest men from such foremost admirers." Whether he wanted to injure Coleridge or not, the result is the same—he *did* injure him. I am inclined to believe, however, that De Quincey's article was well intended by him, but from defective sensibility his judgment was corrupted; he thought the honey he would infuse into the gall would annihilate its bitterness and leave the decoction sweet. He was mistaken. After proving Coleridge to be guilty of robbery, he could not convince the ordinary mind that he was an honest man. After having declared him to be guilty of a "large variety of trivial thefts" in literature, he could not induce people generally to believe him to have been "entirely original." On De Quincey's hypothesis, Coleridge was a thief and an honest man, a plagiarist and entirely original, at one and the same instant. This, ordinary readers would naturally have some difficulty in swallowing. But De Quincey might have spared himself this undertaking, and himself and Coleridge its injurious results (as it proved to be a two-edged sword and cut both ways), by making his early reading in the "Biographia Literaria" a trifle more extensive. There he would have seen that the "real and palpable case of plagiarism" was fully met and anticipated—averted, confounded, and explained; having noticed this, he might have thought these "trivial thefts" unworthy of mention. However, as the result stands to-day, Coleridge is a classic, and those who have any interest whatever in his compositions, being persons generally of some literary acquirements and judgment, are capable of judging of the originality and genuineness of his works, as he himself pertinently remarks, "by better evidence than mere reference to dates."

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I subjoin a copy of the prefatory remarks to which De Quincey refers, in stating that Coleridge, "aware of his coincidence with Shelling, declares his willingness to acknowledge himself indebted to so great a man in any case where the truth would allow him to do so," etc. The reader will perceive that there is no such language in them; but he will see in them a complete refutation of the charge of plagiarism from Shelling, and an honorable acknowledgment of his indebtedness to that author.

"In Shelling's 'Natur-Philosophie and System des transcendentalen Idealismus,' I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do. I have introduced this statement as appropriate to the narrative nature of this sketch, yet rather in reference to the work which I have announced in a preceding page than to my present subject. It would be a mere act of justice to myself, were I to warn my future readers that an identity of thought, or even similarity of phrase, will not be at all times a certain proof that the passage has been borrowed from Shelling, or that the conceptions were originally learned from him. In this instance, as in the dramatic lectures of Schlegel, to which I have before alluded, from the same motive of self-defence against the charge of plagiarism, many of the most striking resemblances, indeed all the main and fundamental ideas, were born and matured in my own mind before I had ever seen a single page of the German philosopher; and I might indeed affirm, with truth, before the more important works of Shelling had been written, or at least made public. Nor is this coincidence at all to be wondered at. We had studied in the same school, been disciplined by the same preparatory philosophy, namely, the writings of Kant. We had both equal obligations to the polar logic and dynamic philosophy of Giordana Bruno; and Shelling has lately, and as of recent acquisition, avowed the same affectionate reverence for the labors of Behmen and other mystics, which I had formed at a much earlier period. The coincidence of Shelling's system with certain general ideas of Behmen, he declares to have been mere coincidence, while my obligations have been more direct. He needs to give Behmen only feelings of sympathy, while I owe him a debt of gratitude. God forbid that I should be suspected of a wish to enter into a rivalry with Shelling for the honors so unequivocally his right, not only as a great and original genius, but as the founder of the philosophy of nature, and the most successful improver of the dynamic system, which, begun by Bruno, was re-introduced (in a more philosophical form, and freed from all its impurities and visionary accompaniments) by Kant; in whom it was the native and necessary growth of his own system.... With the exception of one or two fundamental ideas which cannot be withheld from Fichte, to Shelling we owe the completion and most important victories of this revolution in philosophy. To me it will be happiness and honor enough should I succeed in rendering the system itself intelligible to my countrymen, and in the application of it to the most awful of subjects for the most important of purposes.

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"Whether a work is the offspring of a man's own spirit, and the product of original thinking, will be discovered by those who are its sole legitimate judges, by better evidence than the mere reference to dates. For readers in general, let whatever in this or any future work of



mine that resembles or coincides with the doctrines of my German predecessor, though contemporary, be wholly attributed to him, provided, that in the absence of direct references to his books, which I could not at all times make with truth, as designating citations or thoughts actually derived from him—and which, I trust, would, after this general acknowledgment, be superfluous—be not charged on me as an ungenerous concealment or intentional plagiarism.” (See “Biographia Literaria.”)

Either in forgetfulness or ignorance of this “general acknowledgment,” which goes so far as to make over to Shelling anything and everything that may be found to resemble the doctrines of that author, the identical charge which he so honorably provides for, anticipates, and defeats, is brought against him; and by one professing to be a friend, and one of Coleridge’s “foremost admirers.” “Oh, shame, where is thy blush?” Now for the conclusion of this note.

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It is *my* conviction that Coleridge had worked out, just as stated by him, “all the main and fundamental ideas” embraced in that part of Shelling’s system which appears in the “Biographia Literaria.” I believe that he had thought it out, but that the incubus of opium weighing down and poisoning the very springs of his energies with “all blasting” power, “o’ercrowed” his spirit and prevented his realizing in a palpable form, by publication, the knowledge he had accumulated. Thus Shelling got ahead of him, and being ahead, Coleridge was forestalled and estopped from developing to the world his philosophical acquirements. ’Twas thus he came to recommend Shelling’s system, and when writing the fragment of transcendental philosophy that appears in the “Biographia Literaria,” his and Shelling’s opinions being about the same, he expressed himself in the language of the latter.

He considered the subject as one in which all were interested, and the thought of “rendering the system itself intelligible to his countrymen,” for their benefit, so engrossed his mind as to render him less regardful of other questions involved in the matter than he should have been. “Rest perturbed spirit.”

THE END.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] At that time. For the cause of this depravity, see theory of the “Confessions,” chapter xv.

[2] This was by hypodermie, and in the first stages. Taking it by mouth, it is not so *much* disposed to run off in this way; the stimulation is less evanescent and more stationary; still, one is more or less extremely nervous in the first stages, when under the stimulation of opium, no matter how administered.

[3] That is, after my rupture with the doctor; but about all that I have stated in this chapter must be referred to that period,—(to wit, ensuing after my break with the physician;)—save the remark touching the hypodermic syringe, which was interpolated and stands somewhat out of place, though intended as cumulative as to general suffering.

[4] See note at end of chapter.

[5] A very important incident in the life of an opium eater has been omitted here in the text, namely: the occasional recurrence of an overdose. This event is more likely to arise when one has been drawing rather heavily, than otherwise, upon his supply of opium. He gets clogged up and miserable,—and from too much; but *then* is the very hardest time to reduce, and, instead of diminishing the quantity, he, blind in his anxious search of happiness, takes more. He apparently notices no material difference at first, and may add still to this. But the night cometh, and with the shades of night the heavy and increased volume of soporific influence descends upon his brain; frightening him into a sense of the present, at least, if ineffectual as to the past or future. He dare not surrender himself to the pressure of sleep, lest he yield to the embrace of death. And so, in this anomalous condition, he passes the hours that relieve him of his dangerous burden. Never was man so sleepy, yet never sleep so dangerous. Scarce able to resist the temptation, which his stupefaction renders more potent in disarming his faculties and vitiating his judgment to some degree, he sits upon the edge of eternity. Now giving way, now rousing up frantically, he passes a terrible night. When the benumbing effects so torpify the mind that a man no longer appreciates the danger of his situation, he tumbles off into the everlasting. No sounding drum, or “car rattling o’er the stony street,” can awaken him now. No opium can hurt him. He furnishes an item for the morning papers, and an inquest for the coroner, and his affairs earthly are wound up.

[6] This is a mistake; it is another paper that is entitled “Greek Tragedy.”



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