

caine! For here is bitterness, irony, cruelty ineffable. This gift of sudden and sure happiness is given but to tantalize. The story of Job holds no such acrid draught. What were more icy hate, fiend comedy than this, to offer such a boon, and add "This you must not take?" Could not we be left to brave the miseries of life, bad as they are, without this master pang, to know perfection of all joy within our reach, and the price of that joy a tenfold quickening of our anguish?

The happiness of cocaine is not passive or placid as that of beasts; it is self-conscious. It tells man what he is, and what he might be; it offers him the semblance of divinity, only that he may know himself a worm. It awakes discontent so acutely that never shall it sleep again. It creates hunger. Give cocaine to a man already wise, schooled to the world, morally forceful, a man of intelligence and self-control. If he be really master of himself, it will do him no harm. He will know it for a snare; he will beware of repeating such experiments as he may make; and the glimpse of his goal may possibly even spur him to its attainment by those means which God has appointed for His saints.

But give it to the clod, to the self-indulgent, to the blasé—to the average man, in a word—and he is lost. He says, and his logic is perfect; *This is what I want*. He knows not, neither can know, the true path; and the false path is the only one for him. There is cocaine at his need, and he takes it again and again. The contrast between his grub life and his butterfly life is too bitter for his unphilosophic soul to bear; he refuses to take the brimstone with the treacle.

And so he can no longer tolerate the moments of unhappiness; that is, of normal life; for he now so names it. The intervals between his indulgences diminish.

And alas! the power of the drug diminishes with fearful pace. The doses wax; the pleasures wane. Side-issues, invisible at first, arise; they are like devils with flaming pitchforks in their hands.

A single trial of the drug brings no noticeable reaction in a healthy man. He goes to bed in due season, sleeps well, and wakes fresh. South American Indians habitually chew this drug in its crude form, when upon the march, and accomplish prodigies, defying hunger, thirst, and fatigue. But they only use it in extremity; and long rest with ample food enables the body to rebuild its capital. Also, savages, unlike most dwellers in cities, have moral sense and force.

The same is true of the Chinese and Indians in their use of opium. Every one uses it, and only in the rarest cases does it become a vice. It is with them almost as tobacco is with us.

But to one who abuses cocaine for his pleasure nature soon speaks; and is not heard. The nerves weary of the constant stimulation; they need rest and food. There is a point at which the jaded horse no longer answers whip and spur. He stumbles, falls a quivering heap, gasps out his life.

So perishes the slave of cocaine. With every nerve clamoring, all he can do is to renew the lash of the poison. The pharmaceutical effect is over; the toxic effect accumulates. The nerves become insane. The victim begins to have hallucinations. "See! There is a grey cat in that chair. I said nothing, but it has been there all the time."

Or, there are rats. "I love to watch them running

up the curtains. Oh yes! I know they are not real rats. That's a real rat, though, on the floor. I nearly killed it that time. That is the original rat I saw; it's a real rat. I saw it first on my window-sill one night."

Such, quietly enough spoken, is mania. And soon the pleasure passes; is followed by its opposite, as Eros by Anteros.

"Oh no! they never come near me." A few days pass, and they are crawling on the skin, gnawing interminably and intolerably, loathsome and remorseless.

It is needless to picture the end, prolonged as this may be, for despite the baffling skill developed by the drug-lust, the insane condition hampers the patient, and often forced abstinence for a while goes far to appease the physical and mental symptoms. Then a new supply is procured, and with tenfold zest the maniac, taking the bit between his teeth, gallops to the black edge of death.

And before that death come all the torments of damnation. The time-sense is destroyed, so that an hour's abstinence may hold more horrors than a century of normal time-and-space-bound pain.

Psychologists little understand how the physiological cycle of life, and the normality of the brain, make existence petty both for good and ill. To realize it, fast for a day or two; see how life drags with a constant subconscious ache. With drug hunger, this effect is multiplied a thousandfold. Time itself is abolished; the real metaphysical eternal hell is actually present in the consciousness which has lost its limits without finding Him who is without limit.

III.

Much of this is well known; the dramatic sense has forced me to emphasize what is commonly understood, because of the height of the tragedy—or of the comedy, if one have that power of detachment from mankind which we attribute only to the greatest of men, to the Aristophanes, the Shakespeares, the Balzacs, the Rabelais, the Voltaires, the Byrons, that power which makes poets at one time pitiful of the woes of men, at another gleefully contemptuous of their discomfitures.

But I should wiselier have emphasized the fact that the very best men may use this drug, and many another, with benefit to themselves and to humanity. Even as the Indians of whom I spoke above, they will use it only to accomplish some work which they could not do without it. I instance Herbert Spencer, who took morphine daily, never exceeding an appointed dose. Wilkie Collins, too, overcame the agony of rheumatic gout with laudanum, and gave us masterpieces not surpassed.

Some went too far. Baudelaire crucified himself, mind and body, in his love for humanity; Verlaine became at last the slave where he had been so long the master. Francis Thompson killed himself with opium; so did Edgar Allen Poe. James Thomson did the same with alcohol. The cases of de Quincey and H. G. Ludlow are lesser, but similar, with laudanum and hashish, respectively. The great Paracelsus, who discovered hydrogen, zinc and opium, deliberately employed the excitement of alcohol, counterbalanced by violent physical exercise, to bring out the powers of his mind.

Coleridge did his best while under opium, and we owe the loss of the end of Kubla Khan to the in-