

## OPIUM SMUGGLING.

### Ingenuity of the Smugglers—Necessity of Severe Measures by the Custom- house Officers—"Don't Shoot."

Each arrival of a vessel from the Orient is of peculiar interest to the employees of the Government whose especial duty it is to see that the revenue laws are enforced and that no article of commerce is brought into this port unless the duties have first been paid thereon. To a Chinaman opium is as much a necessity as is whisky to a Californian, lager to a German or poi to a Kanaka. The amount of opium consumed each month by our Chinese population is simply wonderful; and as the price of opium in China is only about \$12 per pound, and there is an *ad valorem* duty of 100 per cent. upon the imported article, every artifice is made use of to smuggle the drug into the city. Time and again confiscations have been made, but still the practice is in full favor with those who desire the article. Chinese business-houses write to their correspondents, who ship the consignments of biped Mongolians, to load the persons of the passengers with opium in the hope that over one-half may escape detection and so return a profit to the consignee.

#### REMARKABLE INGENUITY

In concealing the opiate was illustrated on the arrival of the last steamer from China—the *Japan*. It is necessary to search each individual Chinaman, as well as each package landed, for the opium may be concealed in hat, undergarment, and in some instances bound about the thigh. On Wednesday last the *Japan* brought an unusually small number of passengers, but they made every effort to smuggle the taxed drug on shore. The ingenuity of the Custom-house officials, however, discovered several hundred dollars worth concealed in the most ingenious manner. In one instance a heavy, ponderous chest was brought on the wharf, which looked so exceedingly innocent, like an old convict, that it became an object of suspicion. Examination of the contents showed no contraband goods, but it was finally discovered that the chest had false sides, the interstices being filled with opium. A lot of

#### VENERABLE CHINESE PAIRS

Were landed. They looked almost too old, too venerable. A gimlet showed them to be constructed of opium, with a shell of wood for an exterior. The owners turned pale when they found their trick discovered. About three dozen pair of shoes were found, tin cans containing the opium extract cunningly concealed in the thick sole. In the crowns of hats worn by the arriving Mongolians were often discovered layers of opium covered with tin foil and paper. On a former occasion

#### A BUNDLE OF FEATHER DUSTERS

Was taken possession of. The bundle was apparently O. K., the band which confined the several brushes simply passed about the center, and innocent rattans stuck out of one end, while graceful feathers waved from the other. Breaking into the package a considerable amount of opium was found in the center.

#### DRUGGED BOOTS.

On this occasion a Chinaman was noticed about to pass out of the gate with a trunk, whose slim shanks were decorated with a pair of large water-proof boots. He was grabbed and told to take off the ponderous leathers. "Me no shabby; me wally good; me catchee one Ousson-house officer before!" But John's expostulations were vain; his boots were taken off and about ten pounds of opium were discovered bound about his legs.

#### SMUGGLING BY WHOLESALE.

On Wednesday evening last, after the passengers by the *Japan* had all left the wharf, the Custom-house officers took possession of the vessel. At half-past one o'clock their attention was attracted by sounds under the paddle-box. Looking over, and under the guards, a boat was discovered containing two men, one of them a Chinaman. When hailed the boatman pulled away, when Inspector Gibson fired five shots and Inspector Chute one shot at the boat. The white man cried out, "For God's sake, don't shoot!" and the two commenced tumbling packages of opium out of the boat. It is estimated that at least 160 pounds of opium, which the smugglers had received from some one in the ship, was turned over to Father Neptune; we trust it put him to sleep.