

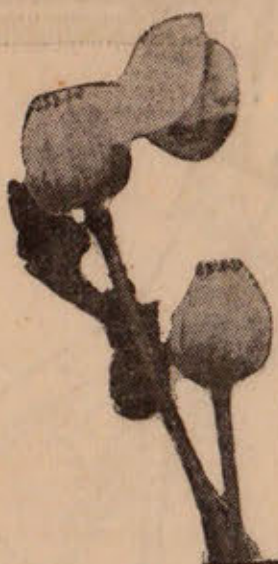
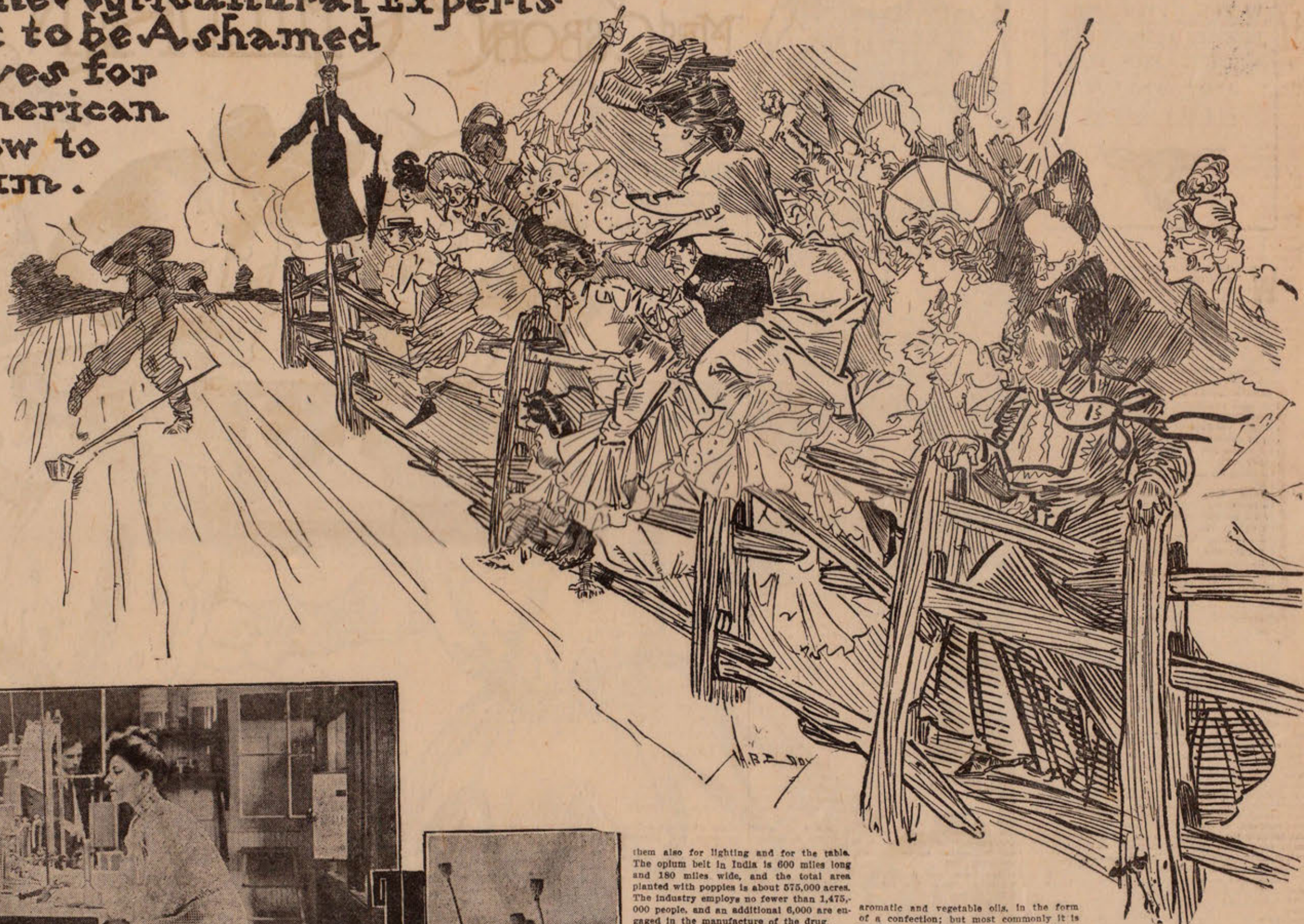
Our Wicked Government Scientists

How the Womens Christian Temperance Union Have Told the Agricultural Experts they Ought to be Ashamed of Themselves for Telling American Farmers How to Grow Opium.

WICKED Government scientists! What do you think they are actually doing now?

Raising opium! Teaching the farmers to raise it! Experimentally? Yes; but the object of the experiments is to find out whether the drug can be successfully produced on a commercial scale in this country.

But such a thing is not to be permitted if some people can prevent it. Already the Women's Christian Temperance Union is up in arms, having been apprised of the scheme in contemplation, and thousands of letters from all parts of the country are reaching the Department of Agriculture at Washington, demanding that the project shall be abandoned. "Infamous!" say the ladies of the W. C. T. U. "Is this Government to be allowed to engage in an enterprise calculated to foster among the American people a hideous and abominable Asiatic vice? Not, you may well believe, if we can help it!"



Poppy Plant in Full Bloom, with Opium Ripe for Extraction.

The W. C. T. U., through the powerful influence it was able to bring to bear upon Congress, wiped out the army canteen. Efforts even stronger, if required, will be made to nip this new evil in the bud. The Secretary of Agriculture is astonished at the fervor of the sentiment aroused on the subject, as evidenced by the letters that are pouring in upon him from all parts of the country.

"A disgrace to our country!" "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!" "It is bad enough to put the official stamp of approval on the manufacture of rum and beer without encouraging the opium habit." And many other denunciations equally as strong are being registered by the energetic and angry members of the W. C. T. U., who are thoroughly determined to kill our newest infant industry.

An Acre of Government Poppies.

Meanwhile a considerable patch of opium poppies, covering about an acre of land, is already in bloom in southern Texas, under Government auspices, and some time in August the crop will be gathered, the deadly gum obtained from the seed pods of the plants being so manipulated as to convert it into the opium of commerce. Incidentally, experiments will be made in the manufacture of laudanum from the opium, and morphine, that dangerous and destructive alkaloid, will be extracted.

Inasmuch as immense quantities of opium are consumed annually in this country, all of it imported from India and China, it has occurred to the Department of Agriculture that the stuff might as well be produced in the United States for the benefit and profit of our farmers. It is with this idea that the experiments in question have been undertaken, and not with the notion of encouraging the consumption of the drug among the American people. The only question from Secretary Wilson's point of view is whether opium can be grown as cheaply here as in Asia, where planters engaged in the industry have the advantage of low-priced labor. But he thinks that intelligent methods and labor-saving machinery will enable the American farmer to compete with his Asiatic rival—especially with the help of the high tariff on the imported article.

Going to Extract Morphine, Too.

In India and China opium has been produced in the same old way for centuries; but in taking up the business our government purposes to introduce radical improvements from the outset. In the first place, there must be some better way to collect the gum from the seed pods than to squat on the ground and perform a surgical operation on each pod with a knife, gathering upon a leaf the few drops of juice that exude, and repeating the process every day or two for a fortnight. Professor B. T. Calloway, of the Department of Agriculture, who has charge of the experiments, has found it much more satisfactory to reap the poppy crop with a mowing machine, throw seed pods and stalks into a retort, and separate the opium from them by a simple process of distillation.



Testing the Opium in the United States Government Plant Pathological Laboratory.

Thus far only a beginning has been made, but it is expected that, while the method of growing the poppies as practiced in Asia may not be susceptible of improvement, an exact and scientific process for obtaining the opium from the plants will soon be evolved. The plan adopted in India and China must necessarily involve the loss of a large part of the gum, whereas by distillation every bit of it is separated from the plant.

Opium is one of the most complex organic substances, and up to the present time chemists have succeeded in obtaining from it nearly one hundred distinct "active principles." Of these active principles, or alkaloids, the best known is morphine—a substance which, while dangerous when misused, is justly to be regarded as one of the greatest blessings bestowed upon mankind. It is the arch pain-killer, and makes easy the path to death for many a sufferer who would otherwise undergo indescribable agonies in passing out of life.

It is important, therefore, to make note of the fact that the government experts have newly discovered a process by which morphine may be extracted directly from the seed pods of the poppies, instead of from the opium, as heretofore. Just how this is accomplished will not be known until, within a few months of the present time, the secret is made public in a bulletin of the Department of Agriculture.

Curing Morphine Habit with Opium.

It may be said incidentally that the morphine habit once acquired, is far more destructive than the smoking or eating of opium. To a large extent this alkaloid is used by hypodermic injection—a highly specialized vice, which soon ruins the nervous system, and, if pursued, inevitably causes death within half-a-dozen years at the most.

Not very long ago an enterprising "foreign devil," with "M. D." tacked to his name, established himself in business in the city of Canton, in China. He advertised to cure the opium habit, and many people who were victims of the drug came to him for treatment. By leaps and bounds his practice grew, because it was found that the little pills which he sold at a high price took away the craving for opium. Not until he had accumulated a big fortune—as it discovered that the pills in question were loaded heavily with morphine—a consequence of the enterprise of this "foreign devil" being that thousands of unfortunate persons became addicted to a vice far worse than the one they had been so anxious to get rid of.

All parts of the poppy plant contain opium, though it is the milky juice of the seed pod that is most rich in the substance. The seeds (in India) are planted broadcast, the fields being afterward divided into beds ten feet wide, and when the crop is approaching the stage of ripeness such a

plantation presents a beautiful appearance, the ground being covered with the flowers, which are not red in color, like the poppies most familiar to us, but white.

The juice, collected on leaves in small quantities, is partly evaporated, and, being thick of the consistency of stiff molasses, is worked into balls about six inches in diameter. These balls, dried in the sun and

them also for lighting and for the table. The opium belt in India is 600 miles long and 180 miles wide, and the total area planted with poppies is about 575,000 acres. The industry employs no fewer than 1,475,000 people, and an additional 6,000 are engaged in the manufacture of the drug.

The Department of Agriculture is also engaged at the present time in the experimental production of "hashesh," a drug much more dangerous than opium. It is used to some extent in medicine, but is famous chiefly as a narcotic taken for the purpose of engendering fantastic visions. The word "hashesh" must forever be intimately connected with the most extraordinary association of criminals that ever existed—the so-called Hashishish, who were organized for the purpose of systematic murder. It is from the name of this organization, indeed, that we get our English word "assassin."

Hashesh's Hypnotic Influence. It was in the eleventh century that this murder society flourished, the head of it being known as the Old Man of the Mountains. He was no mythical character, but an actual personage, who, by means of the drug in question, which he alone knew how to supply, obtained over his followers an influence more absolute than has ever been possessed by one man over others before or since. In this way he was able to wield considerable power, and anybody who opposed or offended him was pretty sure to suffer swift death at the hands of his half crazy devotees.

Hashesh is obtained from a variety of hemp, quite a patch of which is now growing in the experimental gardens of the Department of Agriculture.

It was in the eleventh century that this murder society flourished, the head of it being known as the Old Man of the Mountains. He was no mythical character, but an actual personage, who, by means of the drug in question, which he alone knew how to supply, obtained over his followers an influence more absolute than has ever been possessed by one man over others before or since. In this way he was able to wield considerable power, and anybody who opposed or offended him was pretty sure to suffer swift death at the hands of his half crazy devotees.

Hashesh is obtained from a variety of hemp, quite a patch of which is now growing in the experimental gardens of the Department of Agriculture.

Hashesh is obtained from a variety of hemp, quite a patch of which is now growing in the experimental gardens of the Department of Agriculture.

Hashesh is obtained from a variety of hemp, quite a patch of which is now growing in the experimental gardens of the Department of Agriculture.



OPIMUM POPPY GROWN BY THE DEPT OF AGRICULTURE



Professor B. T. Calloway, of the Department of Agriculture, Who is Conducting the Opium-Raising Experiments.



Interior of Opium Joint in Chinatown.

which the poppies could be grown advantageously. To give a notion of the possible money gains, it may be mentioned that the average annual value of the opium crop of India is \$60,000,000, without counting \$5,500,000 received by the growers for "opium trash" (stalks, leaves and seeds), which is utilized in a variety of ways. The seeds are eaten raw or parched and are ground for a condiment. An oil is produced from

aromatic and vegetable oils, in the form of a confection; but most commonly it is smoked in pipes or in cigarettes. Frequently the pipes are passed from mouth to mouth, and the smoke, which is of an agreeable odor, gently intoxicates even those who are not taking part.

Hashesh is of some value as a pain-killer, though not much used in medicine. In moderate doses it produces a pleasant intoxication, which does not stupefy, but engenders an extraordinary clearness of brain. Thoughts crowd upon one another so rapidly that language does not suffice to give them utterance. At the same time everything is wonderfully magnified. Small distances become enormously great. Going up a ladder, the rounds appear to reach the sky; a bridge stretches out to an unheard-of length; the slightest sound becomes a crash, and seconds appear like hours. Such a sense of lightness and agility is felt that a person mildly drunk with hashesh may attempt to fly out of the window. Larger doses produce frightful delirium, and the effect of the drug when

habitually used for a long time is nothing short of horrible. The cultivation of the hashesh-producing hemp is only a part of the work now being done by the Government in the experimental growing of drug plants, which at the present time are imported to the extent of something like \$8,000,000 worth yearly—including both the drugs and the plants brought in as raw material. Secretary Wilson thinks that most of this money might just as well go into the pockets of American farmers, who can easily be taught

Experimenting With Germ-Proof Beef.

THE Government Bureau of Chemistry has been making experiments with jerked beef, which on the plains of the West is prepared by the simple process of cutting up a steer and hanging strips of its flesh in the air to dry. It becomes

of the Bureau of Chemistry is to eat and drink articles of which scientific tests are being made. Sometimes they suffer, but they do not complain. During recent experiments jerked beef was tried on them in every possible form, and it was pronounced a great success. The verdict rendered was that it is an ideal food—highly nutritious, very palatable, portable in small bulk and germ-proof.

It is urged that such beef, compressed into tablets, would be particularly suitable for army rations—a better form of meat, indeed, than any other procurable for troops in the field. The chief chemist will recommend it for use by our own soldiers. All the armies of the world now employ dried foods, for the sake of ease of transportation. When provisions are carried in a water-free condition they weigh much less and take up comparatively little room. Thus the Japanese depend mainly upon dried fish and rice.

Leaves and Flowers of the Hashesh Plant.



Leaves and Flowers of the Hashesh Plant.