

years, doubtless for as long or longer than in Bengal and the North-western provinces; and it may be that the opium from India was first introduced into China by the Nepalese, and afterwards by the Dutch, who used to purchase the drug for export, long before the East India Company held possessions in this country.

The process of the manufacture in India at the present day is as follows:—

About the end of January the poppy plant commences to flower, and continues till March; the petals are watched, and are carefully collected in the following manner,—

The forefinger and thumb encircle the stem just beneath the pod, and with the other fingers drawn inwards a kind of tube is formed; this tube is then gently raised straight over the pod, and if the petals are matured, they come off. They are never plucked off, as it would injure the pod. When a sufficient quantity has been collected in this manner, the cultivator proceeds to manufacture them into flat cakes, something like pancakes, or, as they are technically termed, flower-leaves, and the opium cakes are wrapped in these leaves.

The manufacture of the flower-leaf is simple and inexpensive. A circular-ridged earthen plate, about 12 inches in diameter, is placed over a slow fire, the required quantity of petals is then placed in it, and pressed with a damp cloth pad till they have adhered together; the flower-leaf is then removed and allowed to dry, when it is ready for use in the manufacture of opium.

In February the poppy plant is pretty well advanced, and the prospects of the season can then be fairly ascertained.

In some instances in January, but generally in February and March, the pods mature, and are lanced in the afternoon; the opium is allowed to exude and remain on the pod till the next morning, when it is scraped off gently with a small iron scraper, and the thumb or finger is then run over the incisions to close them. The number of incisions required to complete exudation of all the juice varies, and ranges from one to five and six, and occasionally to seven and eight in some isolated cases. The opium thus collected is placed in earthen or brass vessels slightly tilted, to drain off the dew and any opium juice it may contain; and when the whole of the drug is collected and thus treated, it is carefully manipulated, put into a new earthen pot, and set aside in some ventilated and safe place. Should the opium be of low spissitude, it is exposed in some shady place (not in the sun), turned over occasionally and very carefully, so as not to injure the grain, and is so treated till it reaches the required consistency, and remains in the custody of the cultivators until it is weighed.

After the opium has been extracted, the pods are allowed to dry, and are then broken off, and the seed collected. An ample quantity is kept by the cultivator for next season's sowings, and the remainder disposed of to traders.

The leaves of the plant are left on the podless stalks, and when withered are collected and delivered into the Government opium factory, and termed technically *trash*, for packing the opium balls in the chests, for which payment is made at the rate of annas 12 a maund.

The flower-leaves are weighed in March and April, and are sorted into classes. The first is of fine texture and colour, and from 8 to 10 inches in diameter; the second slightly inferior in both texture and colour.

and the third is of a roughish and thicker quality; as sorted they are weighed, and the weight of each quality is entered in the leaf weightment book, when the value of each quality is calculated at the rate of Rs. 10, Rs. 7, and Rs. 5 a maund.

The flower-leaves are despatched by country boats or carts to the factory at Ghazee-pore, and on arrival are weighed, examined, and classified.

Before the opium weightments commence, the several books are prepared; new earthen jars and pots, with covers, are purchased and carefully weighed, coarse cloth, sealing wax, and twine for closing and sealing the jars, and baskets for holding the filled jars, are also purchased; every scale, beam, weight, pan, and reservoir is carefully examined and tested, and then the weightments take place.

After the opium has been brought in by the cultivators, it is tested, and samples of each consignment are taken for a careful chemical analysis to the opium examiner's room to detect adulteration. The opium is then stored in large wooden vats.

The pure opium, which is fit for the China provision, and the consumption of the local market, is stored in large wooden vats, each holding about 50 maunds (about 1½ tons weight); the opium derived both from the assameewar and chullan sources is not stored anyhow, but each parcel according to its class is emptied into a vat bearing the designation of that class; the light divisions are arranged in lines.

As much opium as can be removed from the vessels by light scraping is taken, that which adheres is afterwards removed by second scraping, and set aside for lewah, and that which persistently adheres is removed by water; this is called washings, and when evaporated is used in making lewah; the washings alone are valued at about Rs. 65,000 a season at Ghazee-pore Factory, and the opium thus recovered amounts to over one ton in weight.

When a vat is filled, the opium in it is stirred by long wooden poles daily until the drug is used for caking.

When there are about 2,000 maunds (about 75 tons) stored—we have accommodation for upwards of 6,000 maunds—we can, if we possess the proper quantities of the various consistencies, commence caking. One may ask, but why have you not caked before you collected so much? The reply is, we are bound by order to cake at a consistence of 70°; that is, when the opium contains 70 per cent. of the pure dry drug and 30 per cent. water. We are allowed—as it is very difficult to hit off the consistence of 70° exactly when manipulating such a large quantity (nearly three tons) as we require daily for caking—to cake when the assay shows the opium to be above 69·50° and under 70·50°, so that we are allowed half a grain above and below the standard of 70°.

To prepare the opium for caking, a certain number of vats are marked of each class; a long iron instrument, something like a cheese-taster, is thrust from the top to the bottom of the vat (it forms half a hollow cylinder when open, and a complete cylinder when shut), and closed; the sample of opium is withdrawn, the contents of the sample drawn are thoroughly mixed up, and three specimens of 100 grains are assayed; the mean of the three results is taken as the correct consistence. By the same process the samples from all the vats, which have been marked, are taken and assayed; those which will give, when mixed together in certain proportions (by rule of alligation), opium at a consistence of 69·30 or 69·40° are exported to the alligation vats, and the contents of the selected vats are equally distributed over the