and the physician must resort to individual study—study in books, but especially applied study. The latter is the most important. Experiment is the only certain way of progress. Those who have the opportunity can render a most important service by determining the field of usefulness of the more promising of the honest new remedies. The reports of their results, favorable or unfavorable, would also aid the Council in exacting from manufacturers definite scientific proof of therapeutic actions as well as of chemical composition.

In this clinical work, however, it should be remembered that indecisive experiments are worse than none, for they will only tend to confusion. Those who lack the necessary facilities, material, or time, will do better to hold fast by what has been proven, and leave the task of "trying out" new things to others.

In conclusion, if we, each for himself, insist on the highest standard of honesty in our therapeutics—honesty in ourselves, honesty in the manufacturers and honesty in the products—the end, I feel certain, will be an art and science of therapeutics, such as at present is but a Utopian dream.

Correspondence

United States Opium Commission.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, D. C., July 30, 1908.

To the Editor:—In the autumn of 1906 the Imperial Chinese Government issued an edict commanding its viceroys, the Tartar generals and the governors of provinces to join in suppressing the opium habit among the Chinese people. In the previous May the English House of Commons, by unanimous vote, had expressed the opinion that the opium traffic between India and China was morally indefensible.

The British Government entered into an agreement with China, Jan. 27, 1908, to reduce the amount of opium exported from India to China by one-tenth per annum, so that it would be wiped out in ten years. The total amount exported at that time from India to China was about 51,000 chests. That amount is now being reduced at the rate of about 5,100 chests per annum. This agreement is contingent on the Chinese Government being able to show at the end of three years that it has made a sincere and effective effort not only to stamp out the use of opium among the Chinese, but also to stamp out the growth of the poppy. This, of course, will be an immense undertaking for the Chinese Government, as, according to the latest estimate we have, the production of opium in China alone amounts to about 325,000 piculs, while China's importations are about 54,000 piculs, a picul being about 133 pounds.

On March 8 last our very effective prohibition of the illicit use of opium went into operation in the Philippines, as the result of the investigation by the Philippines Opium Commission under the leadership of the Right Rev. Charles H. Brent. While this movement for the suppression of the opium traffic was going on, Secretary Root conceived the idea of helping China, as well as ourselves, by calling an international conference to study the opium question and decide, if possible, on some measure of joint action by the powers especially interested.

The nations invited to this conference were those with territorial possessions in the far east, Great Britain, Germany, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, China and Japan. All these powers consented, in April last, to appoint three commissioners each, to meet the American commissioners Jan. 1, 1909, at Shanghai, China. In the meantime each national commission is to study the question from a national point of view with relation to its social, economic and other sides.

Just before the adjournment of Congress \$20,000 was appropriated in the sundry civil appropriation act to cover the expenses of the commission of the United States; and the President appointed the Right Rev. Charles H. Brent as chairman, Mr. Charles D. Tenney, who was Yuan Shi Ki's right-

hand man in his educational reforms in China and is now the secretary of the American legation in China, and myself. Mr. Tenney is to remain in China and make a thorough study of the opium question there, while I am at present engaged on the study of the question as it affects our national life, and the international aspects of the case.

I am following every method that suggests itself, or is suggested to me, for getting accurate data as to the amount of opium actually needed to supply the legitimate demands of this country. The following table shows our practically net importations of crude opium containing 9 per cent. or more of morphin, of morphin and its salts, and of chandu or smoking opium. Inquiries are being directed to importers, to merchants and to manufacturers of morphin, to retailers, to physicians, to the police departments of our cities, to state and city health boards, in an effort to find out how much opium is licitly and illicitly used.

Years.	Opium crude, containing 9 per cent. or more morphin. Pounds.	Chandu. Pounds.	Morphin or its salts. Ounces.
1878-1882	1,341,702.44	375,315.83	71,474.75
1883-1887	1,664,712.25	447,329.53	97,264.25
1888-1892	2,353,307.00	351,556.25	128,155.00
1893-1897	3,125,642.00	481,678.90	84,410.50
1898-1902	1,992,693.63	676,675.50	143,660.50
1903-1907	2,436,771.54	783,258.82	59,060.00

I am getting estimates from manufacturers of morphin and from handlers of opium that anywhere from 60 to 75 per cent. of the crude opium is manufactured into morphin and estimates that from 50 to 90 per cent. of the morphin so manufactured is used illicitly, and that its use is on the increase among all classes of people, more especially among prostitutes and their followers, the criminal classes, and what might be termed our fast set. Much of this information is conjectural, of course. If there were some method by which we could get truthful answers from those who sell the drug illicitly, there would be no great difficulty in the question, but such answers are out of the question.

The surprising thing is the immense amount of smoking opium we import, paying our duty of \$6 per pound, and this in spite of the fact that our Chinese population to-day is smaller than it was twenty years ago. It is impossible, judging from answers to inquiries that I have made among the Chinese, to suppose that they are using all of it. I have one estimate that there are over five thousand American smokers in New York city and I have another estimate that there are probably over a hundred thousand Americans who smoke opium.

It is such points as this that must be cleared up and if the members of the medical profession will send to me here in Washington, well considered statements as to the amount of the drug that, in their opinion, is illicitly used, it will aid the commission tremendously in its inquiry. The joint conference at Shanghai will study all the compiled data and our instructions are to try to agree on some joint recommendation to the various governments participating in the conference which will lead to international control of the opium traffic. Just what the lines of such recommendation will be it is impossible to say at present, but I have in mind the international regulations which governed the slave trade.

I sincerely hope that we may get the cooperation of the medical profession in this movement.

HAMILTON WRIGHT,
Acting Chairman.

Medical Work in Vienna.

NEW YORK CITY, Aug. 12, 1908.

To the Editor:—Your editorial, "Medical Work in Vienna," in THE JOURNAL, July 25, is timely and, in the main, correct though based on resolutions, protests and correspondence originating from the discussions of the little colony of American physicians in Vienna. Under the circumstances, as I happen to be a recent "long-timer"—according to your classification, I

*See editorial in this issue, page 678.