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MORPHINE.

by

J.C.Layard

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erward, because they have appreciated only emotionally; it is necessary to have intellectual perceptions, in order to build up a serviceable observatory for the taste. At present, the world swears by Shakespeare; and reads too much trash, because its allegiance to him is mainly perfunctory. Fashions change, and we fancy we have progressed. But this is not enough.

Still, in the lapse of some hundreds of years, the average merit of fiction has been increased. As we have seen, the worst came first, — the egg-shell romances; next, the polished anecdotes of the Italians intervened, followed by all sorts of fabulous adventures, and the affectation of long, simpering pastorals, in France. Then satire came; and the drama emptied its ebbing tide into the novel-form; and now we have seen the days of Jane Austen, Walter Scott, Thackeray, George Eliot, Balzac, and Hawthorne. For something like a century, we have been feeling earnestly after real life. The era of conscientious and artistic novel-writing has been fairly and fully inaugurated. But do not many of the highest summits of possible achievement in this region still remain unscaled? The few dry husks of knowledge here stripped off from that central life of artistic truth, which never will be shown in words, may avail to feed a public interest that is prophetic, in the interval through which we are now passing. But it remains for the masters whom the future may bring us, feeling the press of history behind them, and, within, the inextinguishable impulse to create, — it remains for these still further to expand and ennoble, in their own style, this vital and speaking form which we call the novel.

G. P. Lathrop.

MORPHINE.

I HAVE lived for ten years of my life in a dream; a waking dream. I say a dream because, although that term does not exactly describe my mental condition during the period alluded to, it still describes it with sufficient accuracy for all practical purposes, and, when qualified by the adjective I have here associated with it, describes it perhaps more accurately than any other which I could employ. Yes, dear reader, I have spent ten years of my life in a dream; ten of the best years of my life, those occurring between thirty and forty years of age, — that period of a man's life when he is, or ought to be, in the prime and vigor of his manhood; when, if ever, the foundations of his fortune are laid; when, if ever, fame and distinction are acquired; when, if ever, he feels ambition stirring within him. During this most important period of my life I was living in a dream. It was a dream of morphine, opium. But for this I might have won fortune, and perhaps fame. But it was not to be. The light of my life was obscured by the dark clouds of opium. Thus were ten of the best years of my life wasted, utterly wasted.

I made my first acquaintance with morphine through the medium of a physician's prescription. From my earliest youth I had been afflicted with neuralgia, as had been my father before me, and other members of our family as well. In fact, the disease seemed to be hereditary in our family. At first it made its appearance in the form of *tic-douloureux*, a most excruciating pain in the face and jaws. Removing at nineteen years of age to a large city, where the services of better dentists could be had than a country place affords, the extraction of all badly decayed teeth, and some attention to those that remained, removed the exciting cause of

the *tic*, and so I was happily rid of this disturber of my peace for a period of some years.

This immunity from suffering was not however of permanent duration. In the summer of 1857 my old enemy returned. The stomach this time was selected as the point of attack; that being, I presume, the most vulnerable point. Every evening, about dark, the enemy commenced his assault. Then it was that for the first time, by direction of my physician, I took *morphine*. A solution was made of one grain sulphate of morphia in an ounce of water, of which I was directed to take one quarter, then wait for half an hour, and if by that time relief had not been obtained, I was to repeat the dose, and so on every half-hour, until I found myself free from pain. The first dose produced no sensible mitigation of the symptoms. The second merely took the wire edge off the pain, so to speak. The third dose rendered me comparatively comfortable, but it was only after I had taken the fourth and last portion, a whole grain of morphine in all, that I experienced full and entire relief. I may be pardoned the minuteness with which I have dwelt upon the circumstances connected with my taking morphine for the first time; because it was the first link in a long chain of evils. and as such it forms an incident in my life's history indelibly stamped upon the tablet of memory, and therefore not to be slightingly passed over; and because of the interest which others of my class — I mean the class of opium-eaters; and a large class it is — take in the recital of anything relating to their habit, not to speak of the interest which medical men and others have also in this subject. To say that I was now free from pain would be to describe only the negative effects of the drug I had taken. I went to bed and lay during the whole night in a most delightful reverie. Time seemed to speed onward with increased velocity. Oh how the hours flew by! It seemed to be but twenty minutes from one stroke of the clock to another. I felt a tingling sensation as of prickly heat, all over the body. With this trifling exception, my condition physically was one of the most perfect comfort and satisfaction; and not until morning came, did I feel that sense of drowsiness and stupor resulting from the morphine as its secondary effect.

Finding, then, that a grain of morphine was just the quantity required in my case, I took that amount every day, in the evening, while the neuralgia continued, which was for three or four weeks; when the disease left me. Being now free from pain, I ceased taking morphine, as the necessity for it had ceased. This was my first experience with morphine; would to God it had been my last! And this experience was pleasant, leaving no sting behind. Is it then to be wondered at, that upon the next attack of my hereditary enemy, and in all subsequent attacks, I employed a remedy which had worked so well before, in fact the only remedy I knew of for this painful affection? Before I became acquainted with morphine as a remedy for neuralgic pain, its periodical attacks were anticipated with dread. Now I was able to look the enemy in the face with some degree of composure, not to say complacency. Its advent was viewed with horror and dismay no longer. For had I not discovered a remedy, a sovereign remedy, a remedy at once prompt, efficient, and *safe*? And not only that, but one which at the same time that it relieved my sufferings, yielded me the most exquisite delight.

But there came a time when matters took a different turn, when my relations with morphine were not of so friendly a nature, and when my reflections became of a more sombre hue.

In the autumn of 1858, in consequence of an attack of typhoid fever, which was characterized throughout its continuance by extreme pain in the head, the battle-ground was again shifted from the stomach to the head. Though the pain varied much in its character and in its immediate locality; being sometimes in the front of the head and sometimes in the back; sometimes confined to one spot, as just over the right or the

left eye, or to one or the other of the posterior inferior angles of the cranium, and sometimes diffused over the whole coronal region, rendering the scalp sore to the touch — so sore that while it continued I could wear no head-covering except a knitted woolen cap, or a hat made of the softest and lightest felt; when to cut my hair was agony, and even to comb it drew tears: however much the disease varied in its manifestations or in its special locality, the *head* was always, from this time forward, the *point d'appui*. Not only was the seat of the pain changed from this time, but the character of the disease upon which it depended was also changed. Whereas before, it was periodical in its manifestations, occurring once or twice a year, and lasting from one to four weeks, now it continued — with the exception of such intermissions as I shall note in the course of my narrative — all the time. In short, the malady had changed from the acute to the chronic form.

Before I had fully recovered from the effects of the fever, the neuralgia set in, in the chronic form; and I was never free from pain a single day for four months, except when under the influence of morphine. In the mean time I had become an inmate of a water-cure, but had not as yet received any benefit from the treatment. At the end of four months the neuralgia suddenly ceased, and I immediately laid aside the morphine, as I had done always before on the subsidence of the pain. Although I had been using the drug in moderation, never exceeding a grain to a grain and a half daily, yet having taken it continuously for four months, I found a difficulty in thus suddenly leaving it off which I had never experienced before. I felt as weak as a child, and as though I was falling to pieces. All the secretions of the system, which under the influence of the morphine had been locked up, were now poured forth abundantly. Perspiration was profuse. Yet it was a cold and clammy sweat, and I was compelled to go to bed and cover up with blankets in order to keep warm in the middle of a July day. I had a gnawing sensation in my stomach which demanded for its satisfaction mustard, pepper, and other hot and stimulating condiments. And for eight days and nights I never closed an eye in sleep. But in a little over a week, the system had fully reacted, and I began to feel pretty comfortable. I had not yet become a confirmed opium-eater, but I had made a narrow escape. I had been standing on dangerous ground.

The neuralgia returned before I had been free from it a month. Being still at the water-cure, I brought to my aid all the resources of hydropathy. I tried cold baths and warm baths, and a most rigid diet, all to no purpose; and after suffering as none but a neuralgic invalid can suffer, I again resorted to the old remedy, and the only remedy for this protean malady. It may be that I resumed the use of the drug without proper reflection; but when does a man in severe and agonizing pain ever reflect? Although I suffered, suffered severely, when last I abandoned the use of the morphine, still I did not suffer as much from that cause as I was now suffering from neuralgic pain. I thought I was choosing the least of two evils.

I now struggled both against the disease and against the remedy. I tried hard not to become an opium-eater. I tried hard to sever the links of the chain rapidly forging about me, links which were becoming every day more adamantine. And at one time, and that within four months of the date of my last resumption, taking advantage of a temporary cessation of pain, I almost succeeded. Yet I did not succeed. After this period my pains increased, calling for increased doses of morphine.

I had now become a confirmed opium-eater. I had been taking morphine every day continuously for several months. My custom was to take it twice a day; the first portion immediately on rising in the morning, and the second about the middle of the afternoon; though sometimes I took it three or four times a day, if upon occasion I had more pain than common; and of course making the amount taken for that day largely in

excess of the usual daily quantum. I bought my supplies — one eighth of an ounce at a time — put up in the bottles containing that amount, which are familiar to druggists, physicians, and all others accustomed to use the article, and which I kept in the drawer of my wash-stand, convenient of access. Besides this I carried a little vial, — such as homeopathic physicians use to contain their pellets, — with a few grains, in my waistcoat pocket, so as to have it always at hand in case I should be away from home for a day or a part of a day.

My health was, during most of this winter (1859–60), very poor indeed. I was as thin as a shadow; did not weigh a hundred pounds. My complexion was sallow, the secretions of the body all locked up, and all the organic functions sluggishly performed. But the morphine kept me for the most part free from pain. Under its influence I slept well at night, and for a while in the beginning of the winter I spent the time, in daylight, in dozing upon the sofa. After mid-winter my health improved somewhat, I lessened the quantity of morphine I was using, and in consequence I became more wakeful, and my mind more active. I now spent my time mostly in reading and writing. I also took up the study of stenography. Although I had given up all idea of business long before, I was still unwilling that my time should be wholly lost; so I pursued this study not alone as a pastime, but with a view to its profitable employment at some future time as a means of gaining a livelihood, if I should ever be so fortunate as to recover my health sufficiently to work at it.

Towards spring I left the water-cure and went for a while to Philadelphia, and soon after to the country again, where I spent most of the two years following. I have nothing special to record as to this period of my career, until we come to the summer of 1861. It was at this time that I took the largest doses of morphine that I ever attained to, amounting to an average of ten grains daily. That was the maximum. The disease was generally worse in the winter season, owing to confinement indoors and want of exercise, thus requiring larger doses of morphine for its relief. Under these circumstances I sometimes took six or eight grains a day; but on the advent of warm and pleasant weather, when I could be more out-doors, my health would improve, so that I was enabled to come back to the old standard of about half that amount. But now at the end of summer, with all the advantages of the season in my favor, the disease grew worse than it had ever before been. It was under these circumstances that I gradually advanced to ten grains of morphine a day. My health, as I have just stated, was miserable indeed. Though when under the influence of the morphine I suffered no actual pain, still I never felt completely well; and taking the drug in such enormous quantity as I did, I could lie down and go to sleep at any hour of the day or night. In fact, it was difficult for me at all times to keep awake. Although the stimulating effect of the large doses I was taking at this time was very great, the narcotic effect was still greater, indeed overpowering. The drug had lost its exhilarating effect on the mind, and I had become gloomy and despondent. I had almost lost hope.

But just here, when I least expected it, deliverance came. It was on the night of the last day of September. I went to bed on that evening in my usual health, no better and no worse than common. But I awoke some time in the night feeling deathly sick, and suffering severe pain in the stomach. About daylight I attempted to take my usual morning dose of morphine. I had scarcely set down the glass from which I had taken it, dissolved in a little water, according to my customary method, when I threw it — the morphine — up again. This alarmed me very much, for I thought that if I should not be able to retain the morphine on my stomach, I should die for the want of it. I had not learned then, as I have since, that morphine could be dispensed with thus suddenly, after the habit of taking it had been formed. I made another attempt

to take morphine during the day, with better success. A critical action by vomiting and diarrhœa now commenced, which seemed to tear down the system to its very foundations. Every vestige of disease was cleared out by this convulsion of nature, and at the end of a week, when the vomiting ceased, I found myself, for the first time in some years, free from neuralgic pain. The diarrhœa continued for three months afterwards.

Owing to the absence of neuralgic pain, I was now enabled to reduce at once the daily rations of morphine to about half the amount I had lately been using. From this point I made further reduction, week by week and day by day, until by the first day of January following, just three months after the commencement of my late illness, I was able to lay it aside entirely. While the morphine was in process of reduction, and for some time afterwards, by medical advice I made free use of alcoholic stimulus, in order to supply the place of the stimulus of the morphine which was being gradually withdrawn. But whether this was of any advantage or not, I am not now able to say. I did not suffer much while disusing the morphine, except from that gnawing sensation in my stomach, which I have adverted to as occurring on a former occasion, when I left off the drug suddenly. I suffered also from sleeplessness. During the period of my convalescence I went to Philadelphia, and not being able to content myself in bed when I could not sleep, I usually spent the first half of the night at the theatre, or at some concert-saloon, listening to the music and drinking whisky punch. Sleep at length came back to me, and I was now in a better condition of health than I had enjoyed for years. I had gained about thirty pounds in weight.

In the month of March, 1862, I left Philadelphia and went to reside with Dr. ——, in southern New York, to enter upon the study of medicine, and at the same time to assist him in the conduct of the institution of which he was proprietor, a sort of private hospital. In the capacity of assistant to Dr. ——, I had an opportunity of witnessing the cure of several opium-eaters by his method, as a number of his patients were drawn from that class. Dr. ——'s plan was to have the patient abandon the use of the drug at once, without any preliminary. This plan, though always attended with an immense amount of suffering, was generally successful, at least for the time being, though relapses sometimes occurred after the patient had left the institution.

My health had now become pretty well established. But it was for a very brief period indeed. About the beginning of July of this year, symptoms of my old malady began again to make themselves felt. I took every precaution to ward off the attack. I tried all the resources of allopathy, homeopathy, and hydropathy, together with a most rigid regimen; for above all things I did not wish again to become an opium-eater. But what was to be done? Although my condition before, when taking morphine habitually, was a truly deplorable one, still it was more tolerable than my condition was now, without it. While using it moderately I could give some attention to business; I had still some enjoyment of life, especially in intellectual pursuits, for it seemed to stimulate the intellectual faculties to increased activity. And, barring all considerations of this kind, I was free from pain while under its influence. Now I was wholly incapacitated for business of any kind, and enjoyment was out of the question. I had no pleasure in existence; life was a burden. I fought the enemy long and desperately; fought him with the energy of despair, until, overcome with suffering, I finally succumbed. Then I took morphine for a single day, making a truce with the enemy, as it were, for that short period, only to renew the battle the day following. Then on the third day I took morphine again. In this way I kept the enemy at bay for several weeks, making it a rule never to take morphine two days in succession, thus giving the system time fully to recover from the effects of one dose before tak-

ing another. I thought that in this way I incurred less danger of falling back again into my old habits. But the time came when this rule could no longer be observed, and I took morphine every day; but once a day for a while, and, by the time winter had set in, twice a day, or oftener, as required. Thus, in about a year from the time I had gone through the tremendous crisis described a little further back, I was again in the gall of bitterness. Indeed, I had come to that condition in which I cared but little whether I lived or died. I had become, in short, perfectly reckless of consequences.

Under the influence of the morphine I was comparatively comfortable; and being at this season of the year — winter — in a measure released from duty in Dr. ——'s institution, I had increased opportunity to pursue my medical studies. I studied diligently this winter, and made good progress. In the spring, I left Dr. ——'s and went to Brooklyn to reside with another physician, in much the same capacity as that in which I had lived with Dr. ——. I still continued to pursue my medical studies, assisting my present preceptor as I had done my former one. In the autumn of 1863 I left Brooklyn and went again to the country. I was now entirely out of business.

It is needless here to recapitulate the numerous frantic attempts I made to break my fetters since my last resumption of morphine; how I tried to substitute chloroform in its stead, and sometimes liquor. All of which attempts failed, as I predict all such attempts must fail. Nor need I tell how, while yet I was in Brooklyn, I went resolutely to bed for a whole month and tried to starve out the neuralgia, taking no nourishment during that time except a plate of soup every day at dinner time. I had also a cup of cocoa for my breakfast, and a cup of tea for supper. There was no nourishment in these last, of course, except what was due to the milk and sugar which they contained. This experiment also was a failure. After this I gave over all such experiments, satisfied that they could never succeed.

My health was at this time variable, sometimes better and sometimes worse, and the amount of morphine used varied as did my health. Still I was not at this period of my career using it in inordinate quantities. The average, one month with another, was not more than three or four grains a day. Sometimes for months together it was even less than this. I now read a good deal, as formerly, especially on medical subjects; for having entered upon the study of medicine, I was determined to go through with it, my condition at this time being not so bad but that I could make good progress. I also kept up my practice at short-hand, and in time managed to acquire such a degree of expertness in the stenographic art, as to warrant me in offering my services as a professional reporter. I had now been out of employment for a long time, and began to feel the necessity of exerting myself to gain a livelihood. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1864 I went to New York and engaged as reporter at Fowler and Wells's, phrenologists, to report phrenological examinations. Soon after going to New York, I made trial of electricity for my neuralgia, but without experiencing any benefit.

Under the close confinement incident to a sedentary occupation, my health now still further declined, until at length I again got up to my old maximum of ten grains of morphine a day. Using a large amount of morphine as I did at this time, a time when the drug was at its highest price, and eating but little, my weekly bills therefor were sometimes in excess of the amount I paid at a restaurant of the middle class for food. Morphine was to me, at this period, board and lodging, fuel and washing, combined. It destroyed any natural appetite for food I might otherwise have had, and therefore but little food was required. And under the narcotic effect of such large doses, I could sit down and fall asleep anywhere, and at any time, night or day. As under like circumstances before, I could scarcely

keep sufficiently awake to attend to business. Stimulating as it was, it kept me always warm; and checking as it did the excretion from the skin, I could wear a shirt a week without soiling.

While in New York this winter I saw many openings for business in the line of the profession which I had adopted, which were suited to my capacities and tastes; opportunities to engage in enterprises affording scope to such talents as I possessed, but all of which I was compelled to forego in consequence of the state of my health. I was bound hand and foot. These considerations, at times, almost maddened me. I finally grew so restless under this condition of affairs that I determined to achieve my freedom at all hazards. My friend and former preceptor, Dr. ——, urged me to come to him, enter his institution as a patient, and give up the morphine at once and forever. It was one of Dr. ——'s favorite theories that any one in my circumstances, taking morphine for neuralgic pain, would have pain as long as he continued to take morphine. That is, that though he took morphine in consequence of pain, yet after a time the pain would persist in consequence of the daily doses of morphine — just as old coffee-drinkers sometimes have a headache which coffee alone will relieve, but which will return next day in consequence of the coffee drunk the day before to cure it. He thought that if I could but give up the morphine, I would in a week's time thereafter find myself free from pain.

Accordingly, in the beginning of March of the year we have now arrived at, that is, the year 1865, I left New York and went to Dr. ——'s. I arrived at my destination the same day I left the city. This was Saturday. In the morning, before going aboard the cars, I took five grains of morphine, and I had five grains yet remaining, which I had intended for my afternoon dose, thinking it would be the last I would take. But reflecting that the sooner the struggle commenced, the sooner it would be over, as I was not suffering much pain, I decided not to take it, for I would thereby gain a few hours' time. I had the five grains of morphine still in the little vial which I carried in my waistcoat pocket, when Dr. —— came to visit me in my room the next morning, and I gave it to him then and there, well knowing that the time would soon come when I would not be able to resist the temptation to make use of it if left anywhere within my reach. Two days afterwards I would have given five dollars for those five grains of morphine. Yes, I would have given all I was worth for even one grain.

I slept pretty well the first night, notwithstanding the want of my usual afternoon dose. This was, I suppose, partly owing to the fatigue of my journey. The next day I kept my bed, as I was suffering considerably from pain in the head; but I had not yet come out from under the influence of the morphine. I had my breakfast in bed; ate some dinner, too; but before tea-time I had got beyond the point where food could be tolerated. The second night I did not rest so well. But it was not until the morning of Monday, forty-eight hours after I had taken the last morphine, that the struggle may be said to have fairly commenced. I can take enough of morphine in one day to have its effects last for two days afterwards. During the forenoon of this day I rolled and tossed and threshed about in my bed, in a perfect agony of nervousness and distress. A freezing perspiration broke out over the whole body, alternated with flushes of heat. At one moment I felt as if buried deep in Arctic snows; the next as though I lay on a lake of burning lava. Then came violent and protracted sternutation. I sneezed like one taking a severe cold; sneezed as though I should dislocate some of the cervical vertebræ. At length a bilious diarrhœa set in, accompanied with vomiting of a dark, bilious matter. All the secretions of the body, long suppressed by the morphine, were now poured forth with unexampled profuseness. Nature, long cheated of her rights, was now making reprisals. The liver, especially, was now exacting cent

per cent. for long years of abuse. That terrible gnawing in my stomach, which I have alluded to before as occurring in like circumstances, was again felt. The vomiting gave relief to this for a few minutes afterwards. Sometimes, too, after vomiting I could lie back in bed and doze for perhaps five minutes. This was the only sleep I had, and the only cessation of my sufferings, night or day, for a week.

After this had gone on for three or four days, I begged the doctor to give me morphine — but a single grain — in order that I might have a short respite from my sufferings, promising that when the effect of that had passed off, I should want no more, but would allow things to take their course. But he was inexorable. I then wanted liquor of some kind. That too was refused. He said, however, he would give me some bromide of potash, which would make me sleep. Of this I took double, triple, quadruple doses, but all without the least effect. One night as I lay on my bed, suffering more than tongue can tell, I bethought me of a vial containing about two fluid-drachms of extra strong laudanum, which I had in a medical case in my trunk. Quick as lightning I bounded out of bed, got it out of my trunk, and before the attendant could prevent me, took out the cork and swallowed the whole. I had not time to return the vial to its case before I threw the laudanum up again. My stomach had by this time become too irritable to retain it. Thus nature was left to fight out the battle alone and unaided, and that was perhaps the best way, since the experiment had proceeded so far. Matters continued in pretty much the same state until the end of the week. On Saturday the violence of the reaction began to subside. At noon of that day I felt as though I could eat something, and accordingly I made a light dinner. This was the first food I had taken since noon of the Sunday previous, just six days. I was pretty comfortable during the afternoon.

I now felt that the long struggle was over. And more than all, I was now free from neuralgic pain. Dr. —— said that here was proof of the truth of his theory. I did not so regard it. I thought that my freedom from pain was alone due to the tremendous crisis I had just passed through, a crisis which few diseases could withstand. I was now a truly happy and thankful man. The next day — Sunday — I still kept my bed, happy in contrasting my situation now with what it had been but a week before. On Monday I was able to get out to the bath-room and take a bath, after which I went into the parlor and lay on the sofa for the rest of the day, only too glad to escape from confinement within the four walls of my chamber, the silent witnesses of my sufferings, and mingle once more with congenial society. I was extremely weak, as I might be supposed to be, after a week's battling with the enemy, and fasting the while. But my appetite was now keen, and my digestion rapid, and I bade fair to make up very soon for my previous fasting. I could hardly wait from one meal to the next.

Although the worst of my sufferings were now over, I was still far from being comfortable. That freezing perspiration was always present, especially down the spine, and I was exceedingly nervous and irritable and impatient, ready to fly into a passion upon the slightest occasion, or without occasion. And worse than all, I could not sleep. With the exception that immediately after a meal I could lie down on the sofa and doze for five or ten minutes, I got but an hour or two of sleep at night for a month afterwards. I kept a lamp burning on my table all night, while I lay in bed and read De Quincey. After an absence of four weeks I returned to New York and to business. I was not yet fit for business, being so nervous that I could scarcely write. I therefore remained in New York but a fortnight after my return, when I resigned my situation at Fowler and Wells's and went into the western part of the State, to recruit for awhile and then enter upon a professional engagement with another party.

It was now about six weeks since I had taken the last morphine. My health in the mean time had not improved to that degree which I thought I had a right to expect. I was free from neuralgic pain, it is true, but I was still nervous and irritable, and exceedingly uncomfortable every way. That cold and clammy perspiration still continued. It seemed indeed to be more profuse than it had been three weeks before. Other symptoms there were too, which, along with this, indicated a state of great relaxation of the general system. I saw that tonic remedies were called for, and I took quinine, but without any effect whatever. Mine is one of those constitutions upon which quinine never seems to have any effect. At length the time came when I must go to work, though in no fit condition for it. Short-hand reporting is a pursuit requiring in those who would practice it the best condition of mental and physical capacity. The mental faculties which it calls into action are put to the utmost stretch, and the physical health must be such as to give them adequate support. However, the attempt must be made, and I made it. I very soon found that without assistance from some quarter I could not succeed. What was to be done now? I ventured to take a grain of morphine. The effect was marvelous! I could report now, verbatim, never losing a word. And I could do any amount of labor at transcribing, the drudgery of the stenographer. I now liked to work, the harder and the more of it the better. The morphine had such a bracing and tonic effect! I felt when I walked as though I had a man on each side of me, supporting me. It brought such a feeling of physical and mental vigor, such a feeling of *wellness*, — to coin a word, — as I had never experienced before. The next day I felt not quite so vigorous, but still I was by no means so weak and languid as I had been two days before. It was not until the third day that I lapsed fully into my former condition. I then repeated the dose. Two days subsequently I took morphine again. I found myself necessitated to take it every second day in order to be able to work, and I was determined not to take it oftener, for I knew that in this way alone could I preserve my freedom. I thought that in the mean while, perhaps in two or three weeks, my system might rally, and so become able to work itself out of its relaxed condition, when the morphine could be dispensed with.

Here, and here only, do I acknowledge guilt in my dealings with morphine: that is, in taking it merely to remove languor of the system, and brace it up sufficiently to enable me to attend to business, at a time when I was not suffering actual pain. Had I had my time fully at my own command I would doubtless have acted differently. But I was the victim of circumstances. Work I must, and in my then condition I could not work. Say, ye cavilers, what in like circumstances would you have done? It seemed too as though I had now lost that wholesome fear of morphine which I had once entertained. I had once understood that the opium-habit was one from which, when once formed, there was no escape except by death; that to continue it was death, and to stop it was equally fatal. My recent experience had taught me differently. I had now learned that the habit could be broken off instantly with safety, if the unfortunate victim could but muster up the requisite degree of pluck to enable him without flinching to undergo the punishment that must of necessity ensue. I knew that if I should unluckily fall back into my old habits, I could get out of them again by the same course which I had taken so recently. So I played with morphine as a child plays with fire.

Instead of any improvement taking place in my physical condition, such as I had hoped for, matters only grew worse; and to add to my other difficulties, neuralgic troubles began again to make their appearance about this time. It was not long, under this new condition of affairs, before I found myself compelled to take morphine every day, then twice a day, and also to in-

crease the dose. Thus gradually and imperceptibly, almost before I knew whither I was drifting, I slipped back again into the gulf from which I had been so lately rescued. In a few months after this I got up to my old average of ten grains a day.

I continued to work at my profession all this summer, but I was determined as soon as circumstances would permit, that is, as soon as I should get a sufficient sum of money by me, to take a furlough, and turn my attention to the recovery of my health. Accordingly, in the autumn of this year I resigned my situation with this view, and went under medical treatment. I wished again to make the experiment which I had made six months before, that is, of giving up the morphine at once. My medical adviser this time, however, was a physician who was opposed to any such violent measures. His plan was to reduce the quantity of morphine used, day by day, and thus bring the patient down gradually, and almost insensibly, to nothing at all. I set out now, fully intending to pursue the course I had taken before; but after I had been for two days without morphine, I was induced by the doctor — and that without much persuasion on his part, you may be sure — to change my tactics, and consent to follow his plan instead of my own. By so doing, I succeeded in about a week in bringing down the daily quantum from ten grains to one, and that without much suffering except from a severe pain in the head, which, however, gradually declined, until at the end of the week it left me entirely.

Here now was pretty good proof of the correctness of Dr. ——'s theory before alluded to, namely, that the pain I suffered was in a great measure caused by the morphine I was constantly using. I was unwilling to believe this when I left off the morphine abruptly before, and found myself free from pain soon after; because, as I have already stated, I attributed my release from pain on that occasion to the violent revulsion which had resulted from its sudden abandonment. But in reducing the quantity consumed gradually, as I had now done, no such revulsion occurred. And although I was not yet entirely free from the morphine, still I was not taking it in an amount sufficient to interfere materially with the organic functions. I had arrived at that happy mean where the amount taken was just sufficient to answer the demands of an organism long accustomed to a powerful stimulus, yet not enough to oppress; and the system was working better under the influence of this small quantity than it was possible for it to do had the drug been wholly and at once withdrawn, which would only have created disturbance.

I wish just here to say a word to neuralgic sufferers in regard to this pain in the head which is caused by taking morphine or other preparations of opium. It is not true neuralgia. Persons who habitually use stimulants or narcotics of any kind are very apt to have headache when the effect of the dose begins to pass off, demanding a renewal of the dose for its relief, and thus a continued use of the agent they are accustomed to employ, whatever that may be. This headache is almost always worse in the morning, after having slept under the influence of the potion taken the evening before. One is most likely to awake out of a hypnotic sleep with a headache. To obtain permanent relief, then, from a headache caused thus indirectly by a stimulant or narcotic of whatever kind, the entire abandonment of such stimulant or narcotic is indicated. Although the affection under consideration might be termed a nervous headache, it is not neuralgic. I could always distinguish between it and neuralgia. Whereas the former is a dull pain diffused over the frontal region, the latter is a sharp, lancinating pain, mostly confined to one spot. Any one who has ever suffered from neuralgia never fails afterwards to distinguish it from every other kind of pain. In my own case, the affection in question usually followed an attack of neuralgia, in consequence of the morphine I had used to relieve it.

But to return to my story; I continued to take one grain of morphine daily during the second week, and after that I gradually reduced the amount from week to week, hoping in this way finally to abandon it altogether; but before I got quite to the end, I began to be again troubled with neuralgia, and so had to make a retrograde movement. I suppose I had not been sufficiently careful in my diet; for my stomach was yet weak, and under the lessened doses of morphine, and the full play of all the excretory functions incident thereto, my appetite became so keen that I could with difficulty control it. I believe this is the experience of all opium-eaters retiring — as De Quincey would say — or lately retired from business. Here then I again met with a defeat to all my recently cherished hopes, as I had often done before, and from the same cause.

Before six months had gone round, I once more arrived at my old maximum of ten grains of morphine a day. I kept up to the maximum but for a very short time now, however, and I may here state that this was the last time — namely, June, 1866 — that I ever attained to this large quantity. In all my subsequent experience, I never, under the most unfavorable circumstances, got much beyond half that amount as a daily ration. Herein is shown the falsity of the opinion very generally entertained, that the longer a man uses opium, the greater will his daily doses of it become. The same doctrine is held by most people in regard to other stimulants and narcotics, and I believe it to be equally fallacious as respects them.

Reflecting upon the many failures I had made to disuse the morphine, when I was almost at the point of success, I resolved that the next time I should succeed in bringing down the daily quantum to one grain, I would then, and at that point, stop entirely, without waiting for a further reduction, and running the risk while doing so of having something interfere to cause a retrograde movement, and a loss of all that had been already gained, as had always occurred before. I thought that if I could go from ten grains of morphine a day to none at all, at one step, as I had once done, and yet live, I could surely step down from one grain to nothing without much inconvenience. The time came at length when I was afforded an opportunity of carrying my newly formed resolution into effect. I made the trial. I passed successfully through all the stages of nervousness and uneasiness, immediately following the abandonment of the morphine, and though my condition after that was one of unmitigated misery, still my sufferings were not greater than I was able to bear. But after the lapse of two days, that gnawing sensation in the stomach, before adverted to, again set in. It was worse now than it had ever been before under similar circumstances. It seemed to be even more severe now, when breaking off from a ration of one grain of morphine a day, than it had been when breaking off from ten grains a day. On the latter occasion, the revulsion that resulted was so great that the gastric disturbance was in some degree masked by the violence of the other symptoms. And moreover, the emesis that then occurred gave me some relief, as has been already stated. The change in coming down from one grain of morphine to nothing was not so great as to produce any such violent reaction as I had before experienced; and there was now no emesis. I bore my sufferings as well as I could till the end of the fourth day, and then I had to yield. A few weeks afterwards I made another trial with the same result. And in all subsequent trials that I made, I could never hold out against these gastric symptoms beyond the fourth day.

I had now been idle for a year and a half, and the time had come round again when, sick or well, I must work. I accordingly made an engagement as private secretary and amanuensis to a professional man living in western New York, who had a large correspondence, and who was also engaged in authorship. Though the salary was not large, the work to be done did not require my whole time. It was stipulated that

I should board in the family of my employer, who was a health reformer of the hygienic school. I had been compelled to use the graham bread ever since my use of morphine commenced. I was not always able to obtain as good a quality of the article as I wished, but here I got the staff of life made to perfection, together with an abundance of good fruit. The diet was plain and simple throughout, and I derived immense benefit from it. To this cause more than to any other, do I attribute the measure of comfort, not to say health, which I enjoyed while I remained in this situation. My daily consumption of morphine at this period was from two to three grains. It rarely, if ever, exceeded four grains. For weeks together I got along very well on two grains a day; one of the ordinary drachm bottles sometimes lasting a month.

When my time here expired by limitation, I refused to renew the engagement. I had now a little money ahead, and I determined to turn my attention for a while to the recovery of my health, and solely to that. Soon after this time I met with a gentleman, an old friend of mine, who had rather an exaggerated opinion of my capacities, and who in consequence offered to employ me at a much greater salary than I had yet received, if I would only quit taking morphine: this was a condition precedent to his employing me; and also that I took no morphine as long as I remained with him. He wished me to put myself under the care of a certain physician whom he named, and who he thought could cure me. This was an opening, to one in my circumstances, too good to be lost; and I thought it worth while to make some effort in order to take advantage of it. Accordingly I consented to the terms proposed, and in a few days afterwards commenced treatment in accordance with my friend's desires. I was deprived of all morphine at once, and put under surveillance, not being allowed to leave my room for any purpose whatever. I went through the usual course of suffering incident to the sudden abandonment of the morphine, until I arrived at the point where the gastric disturbance begins. I have spoken of this as a gnawing sensation in the stomach, which seemed to increase in severity at each subsequent attempt I had made to quit the morphine. But nothing that I have said of these gastric symptoms heretofore will serve adequately to describe what I suffered now. I felt as if the mucous membrane of the stomach was being torn with pincers. I endured it with as much fortitude as I could bring to bear on the case, until the end of the third day, when I saw that to endure it longer and at the same time retain my sanity was out of the question. I begged for morphine, but the doctor was inexorable, and the attendants were watchful that I should not get out of the house to go for it myself. I managed, however, to elude their vigilance by getting up one night at midnight and going with tottering steps to a drug store a mile distant. I took one grain at once before leaving the druggist's. I could scarcely wait until he weighed it out for me. I started for home as soon as I had taken it. Before I got half-way home I felt better. That is, my nervous system was composed, and I felt sufficiently stimulated by the morphine I had taken to walk along quite briskly. But that awful pinching, tearing sensation in my stomach was not yet entirely removed. It required an additional grain of morphine to give me complete relief from that. I have always found in the attempts I have made to quit the morphine abruptly, that if I allowed matters to progress until the stage of gastric irritation is reached, it took a triple or quadruple dose to bring me back to a condition of comfort. For instance: if I have been taking one grain of morphine daily for a week, and leave it off entirely, certain feelings of uneasiness and discomfort are felt for the first two or three days; then these may subside in some measure, and the gnawing sensation commences. If any time previous to the commencement of the latter, I take half to three quarters of a grain of

morphine, I am at once restored to comfort of body and serenity of mind. If, however, I wait until the gastric disturbance begins, a few hours later, nothing less than one and a half to two grains will then suffice to restore me to my former condition.

Thus I again failed to achieve my freedom; ingloriously failed, and that at a time when I had a powerful motive to succeed. I had now tried every plan I could think of, by which to escape from bondage, and they had all equally failed. The gradual plan of breaking off from my habit had failed a number of times. The abrupt plan had also failed. Although I did succeed at one time in quitting the morphine for a while, by the latter plan, still I had had no permanent success, having been driven to resume it again within two months. And my recent experience had demonstrated that, however successful that plan might have been at an earlier period of my career, it was now no longer feasible. I had no further plan to propose to myself, and I saw that if I got out of my difficulties at all, it must be in virtue of assistance derived from some source foreign to myself.

In the beginning of the next year — 1869 — I heard that opium-eaters were sometimes received at the New York State Inebriate Asylum at Binghamton, and that Dr. Day, the superintendent of that institution, had by his method of treatment succeeded in curing some desperate cases. I therefore wrote to Dr. Day, giving him a history of my case, and making inquiries. Dr. Day thought I might be cured, as he considered my case by no means a bad one. Accordingly, in the month of June, I went to Binghamton and became an inmate of the Inebriate Asylum. I had been more than usually unwell this spring, and for some time previous to this, I had been taking four grains of morphine a day. Upon entering the asylum I was wholly deprived of morphine, and given instead a substitute, which seemed fully to supply its place. At least, while using the substitute, I suffered no inconvenience from the want of the morphine. Here was a desideratum found at length, and I was highly elated with the prospect. What this substitute was composed of I know not. I once asked Dr. Day if it contained opium. He said it did not. He did not, however, say that it contained no morphine. His reply to my inquiry may, therefore, have been strictly correct; for although opium is morphine, and more, yet, strictly speaking, morphine is not opium. The greater always embraces the less. I thought it did contain morphine, or at least some preparation or some principle of opium, for it had all the effects of that upon the system. Whatever this substitute may have been, I took it in daily diminishing doses; and when, at the end of three weeks, — for causes, the explanation of which I need not enter upon here, — I left the asylum, I found myself still necessitated to use morphine, though in greatly lessened doses. The only result of my stay there was to reduce the daily consumption of morphine from four grains to one. I believe that had circumstances been such that I could have remained longer, I might have got entirely out of the difficulty, but the time was not sufficient to perfect the cure.

The question now arose, What is next to be done? In order to solve this problem satisfactorily, it became necessary to take a review of the situation. I knew that the amount of morphine I had been using of late years was considerably less than it had been formerly, and that this amount had been progressively decreasing from year to year. I knew that whereas for the first five years of my career as an opium-eater, the average daily consumption had been six grains, and the maximum ten grains; for the next three years the average had been about three and a half grains a day, and the maximum five; and for the last year the average had been only two and a half grains, with a maximum never exceeding four grains. Here was evidence that the habit, *as a habit*, had not grown upon me. I was not taking morphine for the sake of the morphine, but for relief from agonizing pain, and

as that was less severe than formerly, it required less morphine for its relief. I found some crumbs of comfort in these two associated facts. I had also learned in the course of my medical reading that the malady from which I suffered was in many cases limited to subjects under forty years of age, and that neuralgic sufferers often found relief from their ailments when they arrived at that period of life. Here was further ground for hope. As I was fast approaching that age beyond which I would most likely have no further trouble from neuralgia, and as I knew that the violence of the disease had already somewhat abated within the last few years, I cherished the hope that I might, at a time now not far distant, outgrow it entirely. And, if happily I should do so, I thought that I could in that case abandon the use of the morphine gradually and without suffering. I had never yet experienced much difficulty, indeed any difficulty, in reducing from day to day the quantity of morphine I was using, when *free from pain*. The only difficulty hitherto had been, that before sufficient time had elapsed to get quite to the bottom of the long descending scale, the neuralgia would return, preventing, for the time being, not only any further descent, but necessitating an upward movement. That I could disuse the morphine by degrees, and without suffering, if I could but procure exemption from pain for a sufficient length of time, I knew from the fact that I had once done so; namely, in 1861, after the occurrence of that violent illness already referred to. In consequence of that illness, and the critical action which then took place, the neuralgia was, for the time, so thoroughly cleared out of the system, that it did not return for a long time afterwards; so that I had upon this occasion sufficient time to bring the experiment to a successful issue, without the interference of any untoward occurrence to interrupt my progress. But such an opportunity as this had never since occurred.

Thus, upon a review of my entire career as an opium-eater, things did not, after all, look so desperate. All I had to do, I thought, was merely to have patience and wait. It was only a question of time. And however long that time might be, relief must come finally. I endeavored to console myself as well as I could with this reflection, but every now and then the thought would arise in my mind that I might have to wait too long; might have to wait, in fine, until the strength and vigor of manhood were past, beyond recall, and every opportunity for fulfilling life's mission forever gone.

I spent the summer and autumn of this year with my old friend and former preceptor, Dr. ——, giving him in exchange for my board and lodging such assistance in the oversight of his patients and the general conduct of his institution, as I was able in my then state of health to render. Although I was now sometimes free from neuralgic pain, sometimes I suffered severely. The favorite locality of the pain this season seemed to be in the left posterior inferior angle of the cranium. When situated here it seemed to be more severe than when felt anywhere else, requiring a larger amount of morphine to overcome it. I could hardly ever get relief with less than two or three grains. I began to be troubled also this summer with gastric irritation, in a way that I had never been troubled before. This, too, seemed to require large doses of morphine for its relief. So for a great part of the time, when I had not neuralgia I had gastric irritation, and when I had not gastric irritation I had neuralgia, and sometimes I had both together. I was thus placed between two fires, one or the other of which was always burning, and sometimes both together. Owing to this unlucky combination of circumstances, I was compelled to use the morphine to a greater extent than I had done the previous year; and it now began to tell with disastrous effect upon the general economy.

I had determined in the spring of this year that I would get out of my difficulties, if possible, before another winter should set in, as, owing to the chilliness

and the freezing sensation immediately succeeding the abandonment of the morphine, the summer is a rather more favorable time for laying it aside. But spring had run into summer, summer into autumn, and now winter was approaching, and I was still in the slough of despond. What could I do? All my previous attempts to free myself from this incubus had failed. I had never yet been able to endure that terrible gnawing sensation in my stomach beyond the fourth day. At length it occurred to me to try the following plan: to go without morphine for two or three days, then take a single moderate dose; then go without again for two or three days, and again take a moderate portion; and so on, perhaps increasing the length of the intervals of abstinence as I progressed, but never pushing the matter so far at any one time as to arrive at the stage where the gastric disturbance begins; for when I did this, it always took, as I have previously remarked, a much larger quantity of morphine to restore me to my pre-abstinent condition than it did when I stopped short of this stage. As I had always derived signal advantage from an abstinence from the morphine, if but for a few days, my general health being invariably improved thereby, which improvement sometimes continued for months afterwards, I thought the experiment which I now proposed to try, whether it succeeded fully or not, could not fail to be of some benefit to me. It might start some of the organic functions into activity, which seemed to have almost ceased; it might bring me, physically, up to the plane I had occupied six months before.

Accordingly, I laid the morphine aside for the space of two days and a half to begin with; then I took a single dose. Then I quit again for three days and a half; then took morphine again. I now thought that at the next trial I could abstain for a week; and if for a week, that I could do without it entirely, — for all time. I got along very well for three or four days. To my surprise, none of the untoward symptoms which usually succeed the sudden abandonment of the drug had as yet occurred. Although I felt exceedingly uncomfortable, there was no violent reaction. I did not refuse my food; had missed my meals scarcely for a single day. Were the powers of nature so far gone that there was not vigor of constitution left sufficient to get up a reaction? Matters went on in this way, without much variation, until about the end of the fourth day, when in the evening, after I had gone to bed, my old acquaintance, that terrible sensation in the stomach, again put in an appearance. I have before described this symptom as progressively increasing in severity at each subsequent trial I had made to abandon the use of the morphine, until at the last trial it seemed as though the mucous membrane of the stomach was being torn with pincers. It was now something exceeding even that in severity; something, indeed, far beyond all that I had ever before experienced. My stomach seemed to burn. *I seemed to be on fire of hell.* I now had evidence, very palpable evidence, that the powers of nature, though far spent, were not completely exhausted; that the nerves of sensation at least, though paralyzed, were not yet dead. I did not call for morphine, as it might be supposed that under such circumstances I would. No; I did not want that, for I knew that I had got beyond the point where a moderate quantity of morphine would bring relief. I wanted a diffusible stimulant; liquor of some kind. I knew that my suffering was caused by the want of stimulation, and an alcoholic stimulus would, I thought, best answer this indication. Accordingly, they brought me a glass of old bourbon, which I lost no time in drinking. The effect was truly magical. That glass of whisky, as soon as it touched the mucous membrane of my stomach, seemed to put out the fire that was raging there as quickly as you could extinguish the live coals in a brazier by pouring on them a dipperful of water. Two hours later the burning returned, when the same remedy was applied with the same happy effect.

I had now taken, within two hours, a quantity of liquor which, taken overnight by almost any man unaccustomed to it as I was, would be sufficient to produce a splitting headache next morning; but to my surprise, no such event occurred. On the contrary, I found that the severe pain in the head from which I had been suffering for two days previously had now altogether left me, and I now felt better every way than I had hitherto done. This was additional evidence that the whisky was, under the circumstances, an eminently proper remedy. I had no further trouble that night; but on the following night the burning in my stomach again returned, though it was less severe. It continued to return at intervals for a week afterwards, but with steadily decreasing severity. It always yielded promptly to the alcoholic stimulus.

I had now discovered a method by which the gastric disturbance, the only bar to my success heretofore in leaving off the morphine, could be controlled. But I was in other respects very uncomfortable. I had hoped that in about a week these other unpleasant feelings would subside, as they had done before when I abandoned the morphine abruptly, though I was taking ten grains a day. But now I seemed to be in this respect very little better at the end of a week than at the beginning. Then I suffered intensely for a week, when my sufferings suddenly ceased. By the persistent use of mercurials, I succeeded at length in getting the liver aroused to action, and the only difficulty that now remained was want of sleep. But after long and weary waiting, sleep did come to my eyes, and slumber to my eyelids at last.

I have now done with morphine, I hope, forever. And although my condition is one of comparative comfort, I am not yet restored to perfect health. That must be the work of time, if, indeed, it be ever accomplished. Had I known in the beginning all that I know now, I might have achieved my freedom much sooner; yes, years before. I think I could point out where my mistakes occurred, so that others of my class, in attempting to do what I have done, might avoid them. I believe that all opium-eaters, at least all who have not yet suffered some organic lesion, may be saved. And believing that my experience with morphine may be useful to others, it is now given to the public.

James Coulter Layard.

MORGAN STANWOOD.

Cape Ann, 1775.

Morgan Stanwood, patriot!
Little more is known;
Nothing of his home is left
But the door-step stone.

Morgan Stanwood, to our thought
You return once more;
Once again the meadows lift
Daisies to your door.

Once again the morn is sweet,
Half the hay is down, —
Hark! what means that sudden clang
From the distant town?

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