

during a long period, as I heard it reported to be "showing a little firmness at last." Scammony was said to be "drooping;" as for castor-oil, there was not the slightest hope of its "recovering." It was curious to hear those articles destined for the cure of human maladies, or the ease of human sufferings, thus intimately linked in their own capacities with worldly ailings and earthly infirmities. I almost expected to hear that some of the dyes had got the measles or that whooping-cough had made its appearance in the younger branches of the drug family.

A better estimate of the actual amount of patent medicine which the human family, somehow or other, contrives to imbibe, can scarcely be arrived at, than by an attendance or two at these sales.

Twice in every month—on each alternate Thursday—whole fleet loads of deadly narcotics, drastic aperients, and nauseous tonics and febrifuge, are disposed of as sheer matter of course. At each of these auctions, as much castor-oil is sold as would suffice to float a first-rate frigate. In the course of about three hours, what with drugs, dyes, and perfumery, full fifty thousand pounds worth of property is disposed of, and that, too, of articles which the world at large have no conception of, except as distributed by chemists and others in twopenny packets or sixpenny phials. Vast, indeed, must be the amount of mortal suffering and affluent luxury that can thus absorb, week by week, these gigantic cargoes of physic and fragrance. From east and west the freighted ships arrive. Every nook and corner, every mountain and desert place, is secured for contributions to our Pharmacopœia.

Let any new disease make its appearance among us, and immediately the busy hand of science is at work, and in some remote corner of this wondrous world, some root or seed, or oozing gum is found to battle with the newly-found enemy. Cost is of little moment, so that the remedy be efficacious. It was not many months since "Koussou," a new and valuable medicine from Abyssinia, was introduced. It was immediately bought up at a guinea an ounce, and that amount drew such abundant supplies to this country, that the same article is now selling at two shillings the ounce.

It may be truly observed that every nation under the sun is busily occupied in collecting products for our dispensaries and hospitals, in China, Tartary, Egypt, America, in the southern isle of the South Pacific, on the loftiest peak of the mighty Andes, in the most pestilential bunds of India, men are toiling for the inmates of the sick-room to aid that high and holy art whose noble aim is to win our bodies from penalty and pain.—*Household Words.*