

much better in the Price Current, and would make the total so much more easy to cast in the account sales. His winning eloquence was fruitless; the unpronounceable drug was knocked down at two-pence three-farthings. When I expressed my astonishment that men of such undoubted substance as I saw there, should condescend to haggle, like any hucksters, at an odd farthing, I was told that trifling as the difference appeared by the single pound weight, the aggregate of the extra farthing upon the quantity offered for sale that day, would amount to some thousands of pounds sterling; and that, at certain seasons, some paltry odd farthing had realised or lost fortunes. There were a few more unintelligible things—Mining Lane jargon—that required interpretation. What "overtakers" could mean, I was at a loss to know; but I learnt that they were certain extra packages required to re-pack goods, after they had been opened out in the dock warehouses. One smart-looking seller astonished me by putting up what he termed a lot of "good handy sweeps!"—not climbing-boys, but the sweepings of the warehouses.

When the day's work was over; when the last lot of "sweeps" was disposed of, and buyers and sellers, Lane men and Lane lads, once more mingled in Babel discord; the dense green fog in the narrow alley peeped in at the sooty windows; the hazy gas-light over the pulpit, winked at the murky fog through the glass, flickered, struggled, waned, and went out; we turned towards the old stair-case, slowly merging into the general crowd, and I again heard the names of strange chemicals, and gums, and substances, spoken of in kindly sympathising brotherhood. Cream of tartar had no doubt, felt rather poorly a short time since, for it was said to be "decidedly improving." Opium must have been in an undecided and vacillating mood during a long period, as I heard it reported to be "showing a little firmness at last." Scammon was said to be "drooping;" and 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 ease of human sufferings, thus intimately linked in their own capacities with worldly ailments and earthly infirmities. I almost expected to hear that some of the dyes had got the measles, or that hooping-cough had made its appearance in the younger branches of the drug family.

A better estimate of the actual amount of potent 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 fleets 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, fully fifty thousand pounds worth of property is disposed of, and that, too, of articles which the world at large have no conception of, save 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 scoured 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 very many months since "Koussa," a new and valuable vegetable medicine from Abyssinia, was introduced; it was immediately bought up at a guinea an ounce, and that price 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 most southern isle of the South Pacific, on the loftiest peaks of the mighty Andes, in the hottest deserts of Arabia or Africa, in the most pestilential bounds 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 the penalty of pain.

THE DAYS GONE BY.

The burthen of the world's old song,
Must have its share of truth,
That the most honoured life and long
Was happier in youth.
It is only Memory's cheat
That prompts the heart's deep sigh,
When, mid prosperity's defeat,
We think of days gone by.
A feeling lost, we know not what,
Sweet, because undefined,
Replaced by knowledge sadly got,
The cancer of the mind;
A glory on the youthful head,
A brightness in the eye,
Hues of our native Heaven are fled,
Among those days gone by.
Yet, O my friends, if this be sooth,
Yet faint not, but be sure
The vanished freshness of your youth
Was ignorant, not pure.
Heaven's glories may again be won,
And, streaming from on high,
As after moonset comes the sun,
Outshine the days gone by.

India, 1851.

H. G. K.