

mined to get rid of them and he really would not allow his friends to leave the room without distributig his goods among them. Considering his liberal spirit, I thought his friends evinced very little thankfulness ; for the lots moved as slowly as presents could be supposed to do.— There was one nice little parcel—about twenty cases of aloes—that he was determined on giving away to a very musty old dealer, who however, shook his ancient head, and declined the bitter bargain.

There were a few score tons of some mysterious article, with an unintelligible name, that hung somewhat heavily at two pence three farthings per pound.

It was amusing to see how politely anxious the broker was to work the figure up to threepence ; not that he wanted the extra farthing ; he'd rather have flung it into the sea than have felt such a paltry desire ; but he just wanted to see the thing go at even money : it would look so 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 twopence 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 realized or lost fortunes.

There were a few more unintelligible things—Mincing 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 small 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 murkey fog through the glass, flickered, struggled, waned, and went out ; we turned towards the old staircase, 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