

least, he has done so; if his profits are small, he has, on the other hand, the advantage of prompt cash payments and exemption from the liability to bad debts. We are not aware to what extent this sort of speculation has been carried by the foreign producers, or whether it has ever been followed by other than jewellers and makers of time-pieces; but there are so many curious things in the mass of matters to be sold, which could never have got there out of the grasp of the contrabandist, that we are inclined to think that the *ruse* is, or rather has been, pretty generally practised.

But, to return to the exhibition. It is not by any means a crystal palace sort of affair. The show-room is a place of plastered walls and unpolished undusted wooden counters, and the exhibitors are the officers and their subordinates, who keep a sharp eye on everybody and everything. The room is crowded with people, among whom the gentler sex are not wanting, and there is further present a generous sprinkling of sons and daughters of Israel; and all are busy in viewing, handling, and testing the plethora of goods exposed on all sides. Whoever wants to inspect a particular lot, asks for it by the number in his catalogue, and it is pointed out to him if exposed to view, or if not, is withdrawn from the lockers and put into his hands. The catalogue is a bulky pamphlet, containing something short of two thousand lots in all, and therefore it takes several days for all the buyers to become satisfactorily acquainted with the goods: they make the best use of their time, for they know—what perhaps you do not know—that the whole stock to be sold will be seen no more after this exhibition is closed, until the several lots are knocked down and the wares are deliverable to the buyers.

The sale by auction, which will extend over several days, comes off, as before stated, in Mincing Lane, and it presents a scene differing most essentially from that of the average auction rooms of the metropolis. You will note, in the first place, that not only is there no exhibition of the goods sold, but there is no description of them: all that is put up for sale is Lot 45, or Lot 450, irrespective whether it be a child's cradle or a score of revolvers; and, in the second place, you will note that there is none of that ridiculous waste of time observable elsewhere, while a lot destined to sell for £7 is crawling up to that climax, under the competition of the crowd, from a bidding of 10s. The Customs auctioneer will submit to no such nonsense as that: generally, he starts the lots himself. Supposing it to be Lot 246, three gold watches, he says, "246, £25;" and if he says that, you may be sure he does not intend to take less. Somebody is pretty sure to nod, and thus accept the bidding, when, unless there be an almost instantaneous advance, down goes the hammer, and the watches are "gone." In all such "sudden death" movements you may imagine, if you like, that the goods sold are the retained *ad valorem* goods, and that the upset price is the price that has been paid for them by the seizing officers, plus the duty and a small percentage for expenses; and if you imagine that, be assured that you will not be always mistaken. When the lot is not started by the auctioneer, but

is left to the unguided competition of the crowd, if you watch the proceedings you may see something to astonish you—only do not let yourself be tempted, by the appearance of a great bargain, to bid for what you know nothing about: if you do, it may happen to you, as it has happened to others before to-day, that, when the hour of delivery comes, you shall be glad to pay the price you have bidden for the goods, and yet leave them still in the Queen's warehouse. The fact is, that you may be called on to pay the duty in addition to the price at which the lot was knocked down, and may find that the said duty alone is far more than the lot is worth to you or any one else.

There is another respect in which the Custom House sale differs from all other miscellaneous sales in the metropolis—it is a *genuine* sale; and we should hesitate positively to affirm as much of any other goods sale advertised in the "Times" throughout the year. Whatever the wares at the Custom House are worth in ready money, that the owner of the property receives. Her Majesty is not exposed, as her subjects are, to the gross villainies of auction conspirators, and "knocking-out" gangs, who, all London over, make a prey of the unfortunate, and fatten on the spoils of the widow and the orphan.

We have given the above brief sketch of a Custom House sale at this time, because it is one of our commercial phases which we have a notion is on the point of disappearing. The new tariff, which came on the carpet along with Mr. Gladstone's budget, will put an end to the levying of duties on so many articles of foreign manufacture, that, when that has once come into operation, the attractions of the Custom House sale will have vanished, if the sale does not die out altogether. If any of our readers, therefore, wish to have a deal with her Majesty, they had better make haste about it, and not miss the next busy gathering in Mincing Lane, which it is probable will be the only opportunity ever offered them in that quarter, of purchasing, as Messrs. Chowser would say, "unprecedented bargains" from such an "extensive assortment of continental manufactures."

UP THE HOOGLY.

"HEAVE the main yard aback, and lay to for a pilot." We have arrived at the mouth of the Hooghly, and want a pilot for Calcutta. Valuable freights have drawn so many ships here, that the "Board" cannot supply pilots fast enough to meet the demand for them; so we shall probably have to remain where we are all night, and wait the arrival of some homeward-bound vessel down the river from Calcutta, which will have no further need of one. The wished-for gentleman at length arrives, and, being favoured by the south-west monsoon, we proceed rapidly up the river.

We were joined at Diamond Harbour by a gang of Lascars, called "tow-boat-wallah," who assisted our crew in working the ship. The leadsmen give their soundings in a most plaintive tone: "Sát baam milla nai," "Cheh baam," etc. etc.—no bottom

at six or seven fathoms. A boat-load of hats of rice straw, fans of cocoa-nut leaf, and curiosities of all sorts, came alongside. I need only repeat the boat-wallah's own recommendation of his cargo: "Ebery ting got, sahib." But on my requiring something he did not happen to possess, he very promptly and wisely qualified that assertion by saying, "Ebery ting got—dat ting not got."

We moored the ship off Coolies' Bazaar, about a mile below Calcutta, and were soon thronged with *bāboos*, *sircars*, *dobie-wallahs*, etc. Now, *bāboos* are merchants, *sircars* ship's messengers, and *dobie-wallahs*, washmen. There, on the quarter-deck, is a *chicon-wallah* (seller of *chicon* work embroidery), and the custom-house officer making a bargain with him for the captain's lady, well knowing that he best can do it, as Mr. *Chicon-wallah* is completely in his power, and if he does not quietly submit to be beaten down to about half his first-named price, all his *chicon* work will be seized and safely lodged in the customs. All greeted us with the most profound salaams, submissively waiting to be taken notice of in their turn, and receiving with the most servile adulation any favours we might bestow.

The captain and his lady are now going on shore to take their evening drive on the Esplanade, and the boatswain is giving vent to one of his most piercing pipes, as the latter is hoisted over the ship's side in a chokey (or chair in slings) and lowered into the dingy alongside. They are carried from the boat to the landing-place in a chair, between two coolies; and, on the lady's placing her foot once more on *terra firma*, she is beset with the attentions of some half-naked black little urchins, who are longing to wipe her shoes, not admitting the question as to whether they require it or not, and crying loudly for "Backshish, mem sahib!" "Charity, lady!" and anything in the shape of a copper satisfies them. In fact, the assiduous attentions that ladies meet with in India, from whites as well as blacks, are, in the humble opinion of the writer, apt to spoil some of the most simple-minded and well-intentioned of the sex.

Calcutta has been aptly named "the City of Palaces;" in fact, there would be no living in the small close houses they build in England, with a view to exclude the cold air. The houses, or bungalows (as they are called), are surrounded by a verandah, or passage round the building, which is quite open on the outside; the roof is supported by massive pillars, which take the place of an exterior wall; the rooms are entered from the verandah, the smaller apartments surrounding one of large dimensions in the centre. There is generally one story above the ground-floor. Punkahs are suspended from the ceiling the whole length of the apartment, which are kept in motion by strings leading into an adjoining room through a hole in the partition, and held in the hands of bearers (or native footmen), who are never better pleased than when they have a job they can manage on their haunches or some other lazy position. Nearly all the churches in Calcutta, too, are possessed of these useful appendages, and they are kept in motion all Sunday; so that a church in Calcutta is about the coolest place in the city.

The scenery on the banks of the Hooghly is not very striking. The foliage is rich, and here and there overtopped by a towering palm tree; in the immediate vicinity of the river are paddy fields, skirted with cocoa-nut trees.

The river, I cannot say, adds much to the beauty of the scene; it is very muddy, and the dead bodies of natives that float down the stream at ebb tide, some with vultures and cormorants hovering about them, do not present the most agreeable spectacle. Some of these are probably devotees, trusting in Gunga (the Ganges) for the washing away of their sins, and sacrificing their lives to that deity. The tide ebbs very fast, at the rate of about twelve miles an hour, which makes it rather a precarious roadstead for ships to anchor in.

The bore (as it is called), or great tidal wave, comes up sometimes, lifting ships clean out of their moorings, some of which consequently come into collision with each other, and others drift on shore, incurring great danger to the lives of those on board, as well as damage to the ships themselves. The bore is a single gigantic wave, some ten or even twenty feet high, which crawls stealthily up the river, generally at spring tides. It also is worshipped as a deity: in fact, any great natural phenomenon is regarded as a powerful author of mischief, and therefore deprecated from committing its ravages on them.

But our serang (boatswain) tells me that there is a "hobsonjobson" (great merry-making) going on on shore this afternoon, when there is to be a "tum-tum," and a "putelleh-nautch," which I must witness, if possible, leaving the description of it till some future time.

Dr. Russell, the "Times" reporter in India, thus gives his first impressions of the Hooghly:—

"This morning the noble river—for all rivers are noble which are big, dirty, and have plenty of ships, though this stream is as full of danger as the Mississippi is of snags—has narrowed considerably. We lay to during the night to suit some phase of tide or bank, and now we are screwing up against the very muddy boiling current, increased in force by an ebb tide. Here we are amid 'The Silas E. Burrowes, of Boston, U.S.,' 'The Marquis of Tweeddale, of Glasgow,' 'Rustamjee Puckerjje, of Calcutta,' 'Les Trois Frères, Bordeaux,' and several native vessels of large tonnage, which are trying, by the aid of a light wind, to beat up against the tideway, and the hands at our wheel must be strong and quick. And there, in effect, with real straw hats, under which are curled long tails which would enrapture Marsh or Truffitt, in neat clean toggery, bull-necked, square-shouldered, and strong-legged, stand the four Chinese helmsmen, conned by the English quarter-masters, upping with the helm and downing with it, and—letting her go about or round, or keeping her just within a few yards of the Parsee's quarter—we scrape through and screw on, and by-and-by, the banks on each side strike out bodily to meet us, and the faint verge of green, which refreshed the eye last night, turns into a belt of cocoa-nuts worthy of Ceylon. Villages there are also up muddy creeks, which put one in mind of tide-deserted



A GRIFF LANDING AT A GHAT IN A DINGY.

eyots at Chiswick suddenly tenanted by quaint boats, and people who had just bathed in the Thames and had not scraped the black mud off them.

"The river itself is not interesting; the tropical vegetation and hues which give such a charm and novelty to Ceylon have disappeared, and the cocoanut trees which fringe the banks are wearisome to the eye, owing to their uniformity of size, foliage, and colour. The muddy river, churned into yellowish buttery foam where it chafes against the sandbanks, is of the colour and breadth of the Mersey at New Brighton. There is immense noise on board, and great anxiety, for the luggage and baggage is coming out of the hold, swayed up by reckless arms on the running tackle, and the fine overland trunks, hat-boxes, gun-cases, and ladies' boxes, arrive on deck in various stages of ruin. Indeed, one gentleman suggests that the Company must be in league with the overland trunk and portmanteau makers, and permit several of the *employés* of the latter to live down in the hold and break up the luggage at their leisure. Meanwhile, the river

narrows, and the navigation becomes more dangerous. The masts of a full-rigged ship, which rise above the surface close to us, at an obtuse angle, point out the place where one fine vessel was lost a few days ago. The tides and currents are so very strong and rapid, that if a ship touches the bank they capsize her the moment her keel strikes, and the suddenness of the exploit is in proportion to the fineness of her lines and the depth of the keel.

"About noon we have advanced to a more civilized country; the villages are larger, the fields better cultivated. After a time, detached houses, with high sloping roofs like those of the older Swiss farm-houses on the Bernese Oberland, come into view, mostly on the right bank of the river. A few of them are two-storied, and the sides are protected by deep verandahs and porticoes. They are painted white and buff, or light-bluish grey, and stand in detached gardens, fenced in by trees, plantations, and shrubberies. I make my first bow to a 'pucka' house. In the balconies, sheltered from the sun, are groups of Europeans—mostly

women, for the bread-winners have gone up to Calcutta—who salute imaginary friends and wave their handkerchiefs as the vessel surges upwards.”

LORD DUNDONALD.*

LORD COCHRANE—his original title, and that by which he is still best known, as it was that under which his great exploits were achieved—was born at the ancestral mansion in Scotland, in the year 1775. His lordship sets out with a due account of his family—especially of his father, a man of genius, too, who lost a fortune, while speculators realized more than one, by his devotion to the pursuit of science. His father's watch, or portrait, or snuff-box—or some other trifle, we forget which—was consequently all that our hero, out of originally broad domains, inherited from his ancestors. By his own good sword, however, we trust he has fully restored their patrimony, and unquestionably he has for ever increased their fame.

He was originally destined for the army—a point on which his father was somewhat despotic. The son's inherent taste for the sea, however, broke through all these paternal bonds; and, after figuring some time in pipe-clay, pig-tail, and hair-powder, and being subjected to other military barbarities in the days of George III, as a subaltern of the 104th regiment, he resolutely renounced the army, and entered as a midshipman on board the ship of his uncle, the Honourable Admiral Cochrane. He was in the seventeenth year of his age at this time, and precociously tall. He describes himself as previously, in his military capacity, presenting a most burlesque appearance.

“By way,” he says, “of initiation into the mysteries of the military profession, I was placed under the tuition of an old sergeant, whose first lessons well accorded with his instructions not to pay attention to my foibles. My hair, cherished with boyish pride, was formally cut, and plastered back with a vile composition of candle-grease and flour, to which was added the torture incident to the cultivation of an incipient *queue*. My neck, from childhood open to the lowland breeze, was encased in an inflexible leathern collar or stock, selected according to my preceptor's notions of military propriety—these almost verging on strangulation. A blue semi-military tunic, with red collar and cuffs, in imitation of the Windsor uniform, was provided; and to complete the *tout ensemble*, my father, who was a determined Whig partisan, insisted on my wearing yellow waistcoat and breeches; yellow being the Whig colour, of which I was admonished never to be ashamed. A more certain mode of calling into action the dormant obstinacy of a sensitive, high-spirited lad could not have been devised than that of converting him into a caricature, hateful to himself, and ridiculous to others.

“As may be imagined, my costume was calculated to attract attention, the more so from being accompanied by a stature beyond my years. Passing one day near the Duke of Northumberland's palace at Charing Cross, I was beset by a troop of ragged boys, evidently bent on amusing themselves at the expense of my personal appearance, and in their peculiar slang indulging in comments thereon far more critical than complimentary.

“Stung to the quick, I made my escape from them, and, rushing home, begged my father to let me go to sea with my uncle, in order to save me from the degradation

of floured head, pig-tail, and yellow breeches. This burst of despair aroused the indignation of the parent and the Whig, and the reply was a sound cuffing. Remonstrance was useless: but my dislike to every thing military became confirmed; and the events of that day certainly cost his Majesty's 104th Regiment an officer, notwithstanding that my military training proceeded with redoubled severity.”

The instructor to whom he was next turned over was as great an oddity as himself, with his “floured head, pig-tail, and yellow breeches.” Mr. Larmour, the naval officer alluded to, belonged to a race now extinct in Her Majesty's service; and the details given of him by his lordship are rich indeed:—

“My kind uncle, the Hon. John Cochrane, accompanied me on board the ‘Hind,’ for the purpose of introducing me to my future superior officer, Lieutenant Larmour, or, as he was more familiarly known in the service, Jack Larmour—a specimen of the old British seaman, little calculated to inspire exalted ideas of the gentility of the naval profession, though presenting at a glance a personification of its efficiency. Jack was, in fact, one of a not very numerous class, whom, from their superior seamanship, the Admiralty was glad to promote from the fore-castle to the quarterdeck, in order that they might mould into ship-shape the questionable materials supplied by parliamentary influence—even then paramount in the navy to a degree which might otherwise have led to disaster. Lucky was the commander who could secure such an officer for his quarterdeck.

“On my introduction, Jack was dressed in the garb of a seaman, with marling-spike slung round his neck and a lump of grease in his hand, and was busily employed in setting up the rigging. His reception of me was anything but gracious. Indeed, a tall fellow, over six feet high, the nephew of his captain, and a lord to boot, were not very promising recommendations for a midshipman. It is not impossible that he might have learned from my uncle something about a military commission of several years' standing; and this, coupled with my age and stature, might easily have impressed him with the idea that he had caught a scapegrace with whom the family did not know what to do, and that he was hence to be saddled with a ‘hard bargain.’”

Jack, however, after cruelly cutting off his lordship's sea chest by the key-hole, as too big by half, improved upon acquaintance:—

“Poor Jack! his limited acquaintance with the world—which, in his estimation, was bounded by the taffrail and the bow-sprit—rendered him an indifferent judge of character, or he might have seen in me nothing but an ardent desire diligently to apply myself to my chosen profession, with no more pride in my heart than money in my pocket. A short time, however, developed this. Finding me anxious to learn my duty, Jack warmly took me by the hand, and as his only ideas of relaxation were to throw off the lieutenant and resume the functions of the able seaman, my improvement speedily rewarded my kind though rough teacher, by converting into a useful adjunct one whom he had, perhaps not unjustifiably, regarded as a nuisance. We soon became fast friends, and throughout life few more kindly recollections are impressed on my memory than those of my first naval instructor, honest Jack Larmour.”

His lordship, thus well trained betimes, had the satisfaction of being received in 1798 as a supernumerary by the brave Lord Keith, who was at this period appointed to supersede the now incompetent (from age) Earl St. Vincent. Our hero, too, about this time, had the good fortune to meet a congenial spirit, the immortal Nelson, of whom he has given some interesting notices, as well as subjoined some remarks, which at the present moment may be serviceable:—

* The Autobiography of a Seaman, by the Earl of Dundonald, G.C.B. London: Bentley.