

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 everything 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.

"From Gibraltar we proceeded to Sicily, where we found Lord Nelson surrounded by the *élite* of Neapolitan society, amongst whom he was justly regarded as a deliverer. It was never my good fortune to serve under his lordship, either at that or any subsequent period. During our stay at Palermo, I had, however, opportunities of personal conversation with him; and from one of his frequent injunctions, 'Never mind manœuvres—always go at them,' I subsequently had reason to consider myself indebted for successful attacks under apparently difficult circumstances.

"The impression left on my mind during these opportunities of association with Nelson, was that of his being an embodiment of dashing courage, which would not take much trouble to circumvent an enemy, but, being confronted with one, would regard victory so much a matter of course as hardly to deem the chance of defeat worth consideration.

"This was, in fact, the case; for though the enemy's ships were for the most part superior to ours in build, the discipline and seamanship of their crews was in that day so inferior as to leave little room for doubt of victory on our part.

"Trafalgar itself is an illustration of Nelson's peculiar dash. It has been remarked that Trafalgar was a rash action, and that, had Nelson lost it, and lived, he would have been brought to a court-martial for the way in which that action was conducted. But such cavillers forget that, from previous experience, he had calculated both the nature and amount of resistance to be expected; such calculation forming an essential part of his plan of attack as even his own means for making it. The result justified his expectations of victory, which were not only well founded, but certain.

"The fact is, that many commanders in those days committed the error of overrating the French navy, just as, in the present day, we are nationally falling into the still more dangerous extreme of underrating it. Steam has, indeed, gone far towards equalizing seamanship; and the strenuous exertions of the French department of Marine have perhaps rendered discipline in their Navy as good as in ours. *They, moreover, keep their trained men; whilst we thoughtlessly turn ours adrift whenever ships are paid off—to be re-placed by raw hands in case of emergency!*"

The "Speedy" was the vessel which Lord Cochrane was now appointed to command. She was a curious-looking craft, though a sad nuisance to the enemy. Says his lordship: "She was about the size of an average coasting brig, her burden being 158 tons. She was crowded, rather than manned, with a crew of eighty-four men and six officers, myself included. Her armament consisted of fourteen *four-pounders*!—a species of gun little larger than a blunderbuss."

But still, she occasionally got into a scrape. Her mode of operating was to keep out of sight by day, and run into shore by night, to cut out the enemy's gunboats, etc., and carry off whatever was neither too hot nor too heavy for removal. On one of these occasions, however, Cochrane caught a Tartar; having, on the supposition that she was a huge merchant-ship, run the little "Speedy" under the port-holes of a Spanish 50-gun vessel. His lordship was prompt, and, though he has been assailed for not attacking and carrying the enemy under such circumstances, the *ruse* to which he had recourse was perfectly justifiable, and reflects not less honour on him than his most dashing exploits.

He soon showed that his forbearance on that occasion did not arise from any want of audacity; for, shortly afterwards meeting at sea a large Spanish Xebec frigate, he performed one of the

most dashing deeds ever done on the ocean. The following is his own account of this action:—

"As some of my officers had expressed dissatisfaction at not having been permitted to attack the frigate fallen in with on the 21st of December, after her suspicions had been lulled by our device of hoisting Danish colours, etc., I told them they should now have a fair fight, notwithstanding that, by manning the two prizes sent to Mahon, our numbers had been reduced to fifty-four, officers and boys included. Orders were then given to pipe all hands, and prepare for action.

"Accordingly we made towards the frigate, which was now coming down under steering-sails. At 9.30 A.M. she fired a gun, and hoisted Spanish colours, which the 'Speedy' acknowledged by hoisting American colours, our object being, as we were now exposed to her full broadside, to puzzle her, till we got on the other tack, when we ran up the English ensign, and immediately afterwards encountered her broadside without damage.

"Shortly afterwards she gave us another broadside, also without effect. My orders were not to fire a gun till we were close to her; when, running under her lee, we locked our yards amongst her rigging, and in this position returned our broadside, such as it was.

"To have fired our pop-gun four-pounders at a distance would have been to throw away the ammunition; but the guns being doubly, and, as I afterwards learned, trebly shotted, and being elevated, they told admirably upon her main deck; the first discharge, as was subsequently ascertained, killing the Spanish captain and the boatswain.

"My reason for locking our small craft in the enemy's rigging was the one upon which I mainly relied for victory, viz. that from the height of the frigate out of the water, the whole of her shot must necessarily go over our heads, whilst our guns, being elevated, would blow up her maindeck.

"The Spaniards speedily found out the disadvantage under which they were fighting, and gave the order to board the 'Speedy'; but as this order was as distinctly heard by us as by them, we avoided it at the moment of execution by sheering off sufficiently to prevent the movement, giving them a volley of musketry and a broadside before they could recover themselves.

"Twice was this manœuvre repeated, and twice thus averted. The Spaniards, finding that they were only punishing themselves, gave up further attempts to board, and stood to their guns, which were cutting up our rigging from stem to stern, but doing little farther damage; for after the lapse of an hour the loss to the 'Speedy' was only two men killed and four wounded.

"This kind of combat, however, could not last. Our rigging being cut up, and the 'Speedy's' sails riddled with shot, I told the men that they must either take the frigate or be themselves taken, in which case the Spaniards would give no quarter—whilst a few minutes energetically employed on their part would decide the matter in their own favour.

"The doctor, Mr. Guthrie, who, I am happy to say, is still living to peruse this record of his gallantry, volunteered to take the helm: leaving him therefore, for the time, both commander and crew of the 'Speedy,' the order was given to board, and in a few seconds every man was on the enemy's deck—a feat rendered the more easy as the doctor placed the 'Speedy' close alongside with admirable skill.

"For a moment the Spaniards seemed taken by surprise, as though unwilling to believe that so small a crew would have the audacity to board them; but soon recovering themselves, they made a rush to the waist of the frigate, where the fight was for some minutes gallantly carried on. Observing the enemy's colours still flying, I directed one of our men immediately to haul them down, when the Spanish crew, without pausing to consider by whose orders the colours had been struck, and naturally believing it the act of their own officers, gave in, and we were in possession of the 'Gamo' frigate of 32 heavy guns and 319 men, who, an hour and a half before, had looked upon us as a certain prey."

For this bold deed, however, Cochrane received no promotion. He had already had the misfortune to fall under the reprobation of Lord St. Vincent, for making some remarks more complimentary to his lordship's age than his capacity for command as chief Lord of the Admiralty; and his first lieutenant, Mr. Parker, having been refused promotion, on the baseless pretext that "the number of men killed on board the 'Speedy' did not warrant the application," he retorted with a spirit—impelled, doubtless, more by youth (for as yet he was not more than five-and-twenty) than prudence, though we honour him the more for it—that long placed him on what are termed the "black books" of the Admiralty. This was the secret of his lordship's disfavour for many years with the naval authorities at home, though his disgrace has been most falsely attributed by their apologists to his inordinate appetite for prize-money.

He, in fact, contemplated retiring from the service, so strongly did he find the official tide set in against him; and for some months he withdrew to the University of Edinburgh, where he then studied, in the year 1802, along with the present British premier, Viscount Palmerston, under the celebrated Dugald Stewart.

But the salt water possessed superior charms for him. On the renewal of the war with France, next year, he applied for the command of a ship, but was several times put off or refused by Lord St. Vincent. "In short," said the disappointed hero, "it became clear that the British navy contained no ship of war for me. I frankly told his lordship as much, remarking that as 'the board were evidently of opinion that my services were not required, it would be better for me to go back to the College of Edinburgh and pursue my studies, with a view of occupying myself in some other employment.' His lordship eyed me keenly, to see whether I really meant what I said, and observing no signs of flinching—for, beyond doubt, my countenance showed signs of disgust at such unmerited treatment—he said, 'Well, you shall have a ship. Go down to Plymouth, and there await the orders of the Admiralty!'"

The "Arab," however, the vessel to whose command he was now appointed, was a still more disreputable affair than the "Speedy." She was also yet more inappropriately named, being, says his lordship, a regular "tub," so utterly unfit for all hostile purposes, that he was sent to look after the fishing-boats in the North Sea. This, of course, was only an act of malevolence on the part of poor old Lord St. Vincent, now becoming utterly unfit for administration in his age. But Lord Melville being shortly afterwards appointed to the control of the navy, justice was at last done to Cochrane, and he was appointed to the command of the "Pallas," a new 32-gun frigate.

Cochrane had now an opportunity of doing something for himself as well as his country; for he was stationed off the Azores, which then presented an admirable field for the acquisition of that prize-money, which he, in common with all seamen, like. So zealous was he in the pursuit of this, that not only did he secure a very satisfactory supply of

"jewels, ingots, dollars, and plate," but returned to Plymouth, on one occasion, like another Van Tromp; the only difference between him and the celebrated Dutch admiral, who swept the English Channel with a broom at his mast-head, being, that he (our hero) returned to Plymouth "with three golden candlesticks, each about five feet high," placed upon the summits of his masts.

He had got so much money, indeed, that he had enough to spare for the very expensive luxury of contesting the representation of Westminster in Parliament, and was now returned, along with Sir Francis Burdett, as member for that immaculate city. He did not, however, shine in Parliament, his politics being of a somewhat radical hue, and himself having a most disagreeable habit of speaking the truth. To get rid of him, and the unpalatable inquiries he instituted into naval abuses, he was consequently soon appointed to the command of the "Impérieuse" frigate.

His most celebrated action of all, accordingly, now commences. Duly appointed by Lord Colingwood, a man equally good and great, he had now an opportunity of showing what he could do; though, unfortunately, he was placed under the immediate command of Lord Gambier, a naval officer equally destitute of courage and capacity. Before, however, Cochrane had fallen under the blight of this incompetent naval commander, Colingwood, the darling friend of Nelson, thus bears testimony to his merits:—

"I inclose a letter which I have just received from the Right Hon. Lord Cochrane, captain of the 'Impérieuse,' stating the services on which he had been employed on the coast of Languedoc. Nothing can exceed the zeal and activity with which his lordship pursues the enemy. The success which attends his enterprises clearly indicates with what skill and ability they are conducted, besides keeping the coast in constant alarm, causing a general suspension of the trade, and harassing a body of troops employed in opposing him. He has probably prevented those troops which were intended for Figueras from advancing into Spain, by giving them employment in the defence of their own coasts."

Lord Cochrane's acknowledgment of this high compliment was commensurate, and in terms not unworthy of his fame.

"My object then was," says he—"as from long and unceasing experience I considered myself entitled to the command of more than one ship—to propose to the Government to take possession of the French islands in the Bay of Biscay, and to let me with a small squadron operate against the enemy's seaboard there, as I had previously done with the 'Speedy' and 'Impérieuse,' from Montpellier to Barcelona. Had this permission been granted, I do not hesitate to stake my professional reputation that *neither the Peninsular war, nor its enormous cost to the nation, from 1809 onwards, would ever have been heard of.* It would have been easy—as it will always be easy in case of future wars—that is, provided those who have the direction of national affairs have the sagacity to foresee disaster, and, *foreseeing it, to take the initiative*—so to harass the French coast as to find full employment for their troops at home, and thus to render any operations in western Spain, or even in foreign countries, next to impossible."

His lordship's italics, we may subjoin, are his own; and shortly afterwards he proceeded to his memorable attack on the fleet of the enemy in Basque Roads.

The French fleet, under Villeneuve, was at

anchor in a position of great strength, protected by heavy batteries on shore, and guarded from attack by a formidable boom, "composed of large spars bound by chains, and moored along its whole double line with heavy anchors, forming the most stupendous structure of the kind on record." It was most important that this fleet should be disabled, because at any moment when unwatched it might have slipped out to sea, and been down upon the West India Islands or elsewhere. The English admiral, Lord Gambier, would not take the responsibility of attacking such a position, and the senior captains were equally averse to so perilous an enterprise as that which Lord Cochrane proposed.

On the night of the 11th of April, 1809, the wind blowing hard, and the sea being high, Lord Cochrane was at last permitted to make the attack. The service being a desperate one, as the manning and conduct of fireships ever must be, it was left to volunteers; but a sufficiency of officers and men came forward for the purpose. The "Impérieuse" stood in to the edge of a shoal, where she anchored, with one of the two explosion-vessels prepared by Lord Cochrane, made fast to her stern; it being his intention, after having fired the first, to return for the other, to be used as circumstances might suggest. Three frigates were anchored at a short distance from the "Impérieuse," to receive the crews of the fireships on their return. Lord Cochrane had also contemplated that their position there would enable them to support the boats of the fleet, which should have been ready to assist the fireships. "But," says he, with significant brevity, "the boats of the fleet were not, for some reason or other, made use of at all."

Accompanied by one lieutenant (Bissel) and four seamen, Lord Cochrane went on board the largest of the explosion-vessels, containing fifteen hundred barrels of powder, several hundred shells, and nearly three thousand hand-grenades. The fireships were to follow. Drifting through the darkness, the gallant six soon neared the estimated position of the French ships, and Lord Cochrane having kindled with his own hand the port fires, they hurried into the boat, and pulled away for their lives, with a strong wind and sea against them, which materially retarded their progress.

"To our consternation, the fuses, which had been constructed to burn fifteen minutes, lasted little more than half that time, when the vessel blew up, filling the air with shells, grenades, and rockets; whilst the downward and lateral force of the explosion raised a solitary mountain of water, from the breaking of which in all directions our little boat narrowly escaped being swamped. In one respect it was, perhaps, fortunate for us that the fuses did not burn the time calculated, as, from the little way we had made against the strong wind and tide, the rockets and shells from the exploded vessel went over us. Had we been in the line of their descent at the moment of explosion, our destruction from the shower of shells and other missiles would have been inevitable.

"The explosion-vessel did her work well, the effect constituting one of the grandest artificial spectacles imaginable. For a moment the sky was red with the lurid glare arising from the simultaneous ignition of 1500 barrels of powder. On this gigantic flash subsiding, the air seemed alive with shells, grenades, rockets, and masses of timber, the wreck of the shattered vessel; whilst the water was strewn with spars shaken out of the

enormous boom, on which, according to the subsequent testimony of Captain Proteau, whose frigate lay just within the boom, the vessel had brought up before she exploded. The sea was convulsed as by an earthquake, rising, as has been said, in a huge wave, on whose crest our boat was lifted like a cork, and as suddenly dropped into a vast trough, out of which, as it closed upon us with the rush of a whirlpool, none expected to emerge. The skill of the boat's crew, however, overcame the threatened danger, which passed away as suddenly as it had arisen, and in a few minutes nothing but a heavy rolling sea had to be encountered, all having again become silence and darkness."

By the *monstre* explosion the boom was shattered, and a clear way made for the fire-ships. Out of twenty-five only five approached the enemy, and even these did no damage. The alarm caused by them, however, was so great that the French ships cut their cables and drifted ashore. Daylight revealed the helpless condition of Villeneuve's fleet, and Cochrane anxiously signalled for the advance of the British ships—"All the enemy's ships, except two, are on shore"—"The enemy's ships can be destroyed"—"Half the fleet can destroy the enemy"—"The frigates alone can destroy the enemy"—"The enemy is preparing to heave off." No reply was vouchsafed, save the acknowledgment that the signals had been observed!

The conduct of Lord Gambier at this juncture forms a disgraceful episode in the naval history of England. It would be painful to dwell on the subject, but it is only right to state that it was not Lord Cochrane's fault that an attack of unparalleled daring was not followed by complete success.

AN HOUR WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

WEARIED with the tediousness of the debates in Congress, which (unlike those of our cherished British Parliament, that resemble the discourse of the ancient philosopher, "on all things and some others besides"—*de rebus omnibus et quibusdam aliis*)—are usually confined to a very limited and domestic range, we at length seized an hour for paying our respects to President Pierce. We had been duly provided with an introductory letter some time before, from New York, by a politician of the most "rowdy" order; but, having some doubts whether our friend was now in estimation at "the White House," in consequence of his having declined to put the wheels in motion, or "pull the wires" for a re-nomination, had hitherto refrained from presenting it.

In this emergency we were recommended to have recourse to the advice of Sergeant —, a noted Hibernian official, once, we believe, an officer (non-commissioned) in the British army, but who now presides over the door department of the chief magisterial residence of the United States with an ability and potentiality truly astonishing. The Sergeant, we were informed (we regret his name has escaped our recollection, and that we cannot thus in these pages hand him down to that immortality of which he is worthy), was the most powerful man in the whole length and breadth of the Republic. "He wakes up the President," said a gentleman to