

and through dangers and difficulties which might have overcome the courage even of a British sailor, they arrived at home.

“But this letter, together with the strict observance of a given or even implied parole, on the part of all the prisoners, even to the lowest amongst them, so raised the character of the English at Givet, that the Commandant was quite persuaded, that they were most in safety when they were most in the enjoyment of liberty. Many of the men therefore were permitted to work in the town, and were much sought after by those who wanted workmen or servants ; and a great number walked out into the town, and even into the country every day. But though they were constantly escaping from the prison, they never betrayed the confidence placed in them. The midshipmen were now all allowed their parole ; and shewed themselves as worthy of it, as established officers.

“One circumstance, indeed, of a very lamentable description, ought not perhaps to be passed over. Two of these young gentlemen, Mr. H. and Mr. G. went out, accompanied by one of the gens d’armes, before they obtained their parole ; and while the soldier was occupied, they got away and escaped. They were hid during the whole day in the souterrain of a fortified mountain, on the other side of the river. In the evening however they became alarmed. They thought they heard something like the noise of a horse shaking himself ; and immediately after the name of Mr. H. called out loudly ; and this repeated three times. They left the place, and in their fears wished, perhaps,

rather to be retaken than not. An unhappy Englishman, in the pay of the Commandant, saw them coming down the hill, and instantly informed the gens d'armes from whom they had escaped. This man had been drinking all day ; and setting out after them, filled with rage, he soon overtook them, and cut down Mr. H. who died immediately, and wounded Mr. G.

“ This murder was savagely exulted in by the General, and shamelessly excused by the Commandant. The latter, however, was there only for a short time ; but this circumstance, as may be supposed, made much ill feeling in the depôt. The midshipmen wrote a spirited note to the Commandant. The prisoners would have taken summary vengeance upon the spy, had he not been taken out of their hands, and kept out of prison. I thought it my duty to withhold from him every assistance given to the rest of the prisoners. The Commandant insisted on its being paid, but I refused. He then denounced me to the Minister of War, as assisting the midshipmen to escape ; but at that period, I was not unknown by character to the Minister, and it happened providentially, that the former Commandant, was at that moment in Paris, returning to Givet ; and thought it for his interest, knowing that I was now zealously supported by Colonel Flayelle, and some other persons of influence, to assist me ; and our treacherous Commandant was, to our great gratification, soon removed.

“ Even here there was no breach of parole. But shortly after the return of the Commandant, three of the young gentlemen gave a proof of adherence to that

pledge, which would reflect credit upon officers even of rank in the army or navy. Their friends had now been some time gone away, and had arrived at home, and they began to regret that they had not gone with them. They came to me, to ask me to give them money for their bills upon their friends, which I did, asking them of course no questions. The same evening they conducted themselves in such a manner, as, they were persuaded, would cause the Commandant to take away their parole. But he suspected what they were meditating, and refused to put them in prison. The next night they made a more determined attempt; but still in vain, he would not take away their parole. Precisely at that moment, as if to try their faith to the utmost, an order arrived from the Minister of War to send all the Midshipmen, under a double escort of gens d'armes, to Verdun. But in spite of this positive order, the Commandant took upon himself to send them upon their parole. And they walked all the day to that place without the least idea of escaping; although all the soldiers in France would scarcely have prevented them from making the attempt.

“ We had now done with the midshipmen. On some occasions they gave us considerable anxiety, as might readily be expected by those who know what young persons of that age are, even under the restriction of a school. They were ready on every occasion to crowd every sail, which the ebullition of animal spirits, and elevated national feeling, and exalted notions of the British navy could give them, without the ballast of matured judgment and experience; when they felt

that their enemies exulted over them, or oppressed the poor fellows. And their interference in behalf of the men was often calculated to do harm instead of good. But I feel it incumbent upon me to give this testimony to the distinguished conduct of these young persons in a point of view, in which they raised the British character in that place ; and that they did what they could, to stir up in the minds of the men that sense of allegiance to their king and country, which time and absence had begun to extinguish.

“The sufferings which some of the midshipmen endured in their successful attempts to return and fight the battles of their country, have in some instances been published ; but in many they might almost seem incredible, if we did not know what high professional feelings may effect, when combined with the ardor and enterprize of youth.

“It would give me exquisite pleasure, if I should hear that any of these young men who dared so much, and bore so much, to regain the opportunity of distinguishing themselves in their country’s cause, are now fighting with equal boldness the good fight of faith in the service of the Kings of Kings. In that case they will not go without their reward.

“I would not forego the hope, that though little notion can be formed on this side of the water of the situation of the prisoners in France ; particularly when their sufferings were embittered by the sense that they were cut off from all opportunities of distinguishing themselves in their country’s service ; many may have received marks of favor, specially on account

of what they had to bear in their captivity. Of this however I am ignorant, as with the exception of a short letter of greeting from Mr. B. some time ago, and one from Mr. H. after his return, I have lost sight of these young men ever since they left the depôt."

CHAPTER IX.

JOURNEY TO TOURS, INCIDENTS ON THE ROAD AND RESIDENCE THERE.

I FEEL that no apology need be made to the readers of this Memoir for the length of the digression which occupied the last Chapter. The history of Sir Jahleel Brenton is identified with the service of his country; and a very inadequate idea would be formed of the perils undergone, and the hardships endured in that service, if the storm and the battle were the only circumstances recounted; and the sickening length of a dreary captivity, embittered by ill treatment, and hardly cheered by hope, was not to be named among the evils that were braved and borne by the navy during the last war.

Had the excellent friend, from whose deeply interesting narrative I have extracted this notice of the state of things at Givet, been spared; I might have calculated with equal confidence on his indulgence, when the character of Sir Jahleel Brenton, and the interests of his family were to be asserted; and it is a source of

satisfaction to myself to be able to draw attention to one of the most touching and affecting memorials of God's mercy to men, which have been recently published.

From causes which it is not easy to explain, the narrative which bears the title of the "British Prisoners in France," never seems to have met with the acceptance which it deserves; for of all the cases where the grace of God has been exhibited in a large and general measure, where it seems to have descended as in showers, none seem to have exceeded this in the simplicity of the means used, and in the extent of the blessing vouchsafed. The depôt which Mr. Wolfe found like a howling wilderness, he left like a garden of the Lord; but few persons can conceive the difficulties with which he had to struggle, or the value of the assistance which he derived from Sir Jahleel Brenton's co-operation.

The object which he had in view was accomplished. His labour was not in vain in the Lord; but it is painful and yet salutary to hear of the way in which these disinterested exertions and self devotion were acknowledged at home. The moral influence which was exercised on the people at Givet prevented desertion, and probably preserved hundreds of valuable seamen for the service of their country. The schools, which were established at the same time for the boys, rescued them from the evils of ignorance, and prepared them to resume their place in the navy, instructed in the theory and practice of navigation. Had this not been done, all the prisoners, both old and young, would have returned from their captivity unfit for employment, and burdens to the

country which received them; and the nation owed to Mr. Wolfe and his companion in labour, a debt which might have justified any mark of public gratitude. An effort was made to obtain for him the amount of a chaplain's pay during the period of his residence at Givet; and after long delay and many applications this was granted. It is happy for those who labour for the public good, to look to a different remuneration than that which man affords. There is one Master who knows what his servants do, and who never allowed the least or lowest effort to go without its reward; and he who labours in faith feels it his privilege to think little of the recompense he may receive from men.

The Memoir may now be continued in Sir Jahleel's own words, and he thus describes the journey to Tours. "On the 31st of October we began our journey, having our route marked out upon my passport, by which we were prohibited from passing through Paris, but ordered to turn off to the left at Meaux, and to proceed by Melun, and Fontainebleau, thence on the right bank of the Loire from Orleans to Tours."

At Melun it appears that Captain Brenton met Lord Elgin, to whose character he gives the following pleasing tribute. "It is but justice to Lord Elgin to mention in this place, that during the whole of his captivity he was most liberal and active in relieving his poor countrymen, as they passed near the places of his residence, and by sending sums of money to Verdun for their use. Whilst he was at Orleans, numbers of seamen on their way from the coast to the interior, passed through; in particular the officers and crew of the

Wolverine, who all spoke in the highest terms of his Lordship's humanity and benevolence."

It was from Lord Elgin at Melun that Captain Brenton had the gratification of receiving confirmed and authentic accounts of the battle of Trafalgar. At Orleans, November, 1805, Sir Jahleel has preserved the following recollections of his journey. "This was one of the finest and most charming days we had experienced; the country gradually improving in fertility, and cultivation, as we approached the Loire, which in its passage by Orleans, with the numerous villas on its banks as far as the eye could reach, formed as fine a picture as can be imagined. At Epernay, the chief *dépôt* for the wine of Champagne, I called upon Mons. Moet, the great proprietor of this wine. We were all most hospitably received and entertained by this gentleman. In conversation at table respecting the use of Champagne in cookery, Madame Moet observed, that she believed there was not a dish in the first course, in which this wine was not an ingredient, that the ham was boiled in it, and every other dish had its portion. At breakfast the following morning I observed that Champagne was not forgotten even in this meal. The Lady replied that she believed it was in every thing but the coffee. This was of course a *Dejeuner a la fourchette*, and a very sumptuous one. By the time breakfast was over, the carriage was at the door for us to resume our journey; but M. Moet requested me to pay a visit to his cellar, before I left Epernay; and the sight amply rewarded me for the detention. It was of immense extent, the wine entirely in bottle, to

the amount I believe of some hundreds of thousands, beautifully arranged in tiers, with marble conductors, leading to reservoirs of the same material, to carry off and receive the wine from the bottles which burst, a circumstance of very frequent recurrence. On returning from the cellar I found the ladies were already in the carriage, and it was with difficulty I could find a place for myself, in consequence of the packages of the very best champagne which M. Moët had caused to be placed there. We left Epernay with a very strong impression of the kindness and hospitality we had received. In the afternoon we reached Meaux, where we were to pass the night ; and on going down to order dinner, my host received me with a broad grin, and the following sentence : “ Ah monsieur, vous venez de nous rosser un peu sur mer, d’après les nouvelles.” Captain—“ Cela se peut bien.” Landlord—“ Oui, mais vous nous avez pris 21 Vaisseaux de ligne.” Captain—“ Bah ! vous voulez dire 21 batimens marchands.” Landlord—“ Non Monsieur. Vingt et un vaisseaux de ligne, bien comptès—mais vous avez perdu Nelson. Il est tué.” This was the first intelligence I had received of the battle of Trafalgar, which however had taken place only on the 21st of October, and this was on the 4th of November. I did not altogether credit mine host’s news, and left Meaux the following morning. On my arriving at Melun, about two o’clock, I met Lord Elgin, who was then residing there as a detenu, who confirmed the news of a great naval victory having been gained, and the report that Lord Nelson had fallen ; “ but,” added his lordship, “ I am in

hourly expectation of news from Paris, and as you only go as far as Fontainebleau to night ; I will, as soon as I get my letter, ride over, and dine with you ; an offer that I gladly accepted. Accordingly his lordship came by five o'clock, with every particular of the action, at least as far as the French account went, which was surprisingly accurate. It was an account sent by merchants at Cadiz, through Bourdeaux to Paris. A very different statement was soon after concocted for the information of the French nation, in the columns of the *Moniteur*. One of Mr. Moet's best bottles was opened for Lord Elgin upon this occasion, and our spirits felt all the triumph of our country. I copied an account of this battle from the *Journal de Paris* 16 *Frimaire An xiv.* 7 Dec. 1805, which my brother has inserted in his naval history.

“From Fontainebleau we proceeded through Pithivier to Orleans. At this place I was amused at the inscription over the inn where we alighted ;

ICI L'ON DONNE A BOIRE ET A MANGER
AUX ANGES
A PIED ET A CHEVAL,

and it was at this inn that I determined to give up a practice, which every Frenchman, and by far the greater part of the English travellers considered as indispensable ; that of making a bargain with the landlord previous to getting out of the carriage. The instant the question was put to mine host at Pithivier, his manners changed at once, and he sulkily replied, “c'est suivant comme vous voulez etre servis.” A hard

bargain was made accordingly, for the dinner, "la chambre," the beds, the fuel, and the wine. The treaty being concluded, we took possession of our apartments. A fire was made of light brushwood, which was soon consumed, and on application for more, we were told that they had given the stipulated allowance. The dinner was bad, scanty, and ill dressed, the bed rooms were uncomfortable, and the wine of the most indifferent description, but there was no redress. We arrived early on the following day at Orleans, and having no preliminary discussion we were cordially received, had the best accommodation, and fare in abundance, and of the best quality; while the difference in the bill the following morning was only six francs amongst four people.

"We remained here during Sunday, and met some of our fellow prisoners from Verdun, the family of Mr. Aufreze. From this gentleman I procured further details of the battle of Trafalgar, even to a list of the killed and wounded on both sides. The intelligence had been brought from Cadiz, through Madrid and Bayonne, in a mercantile correspondence, but was carefully concealed from the public in general. It is certain that the respectable classes of people in France, by no means took that lively degree of interest in their national successes, or felt that mortification for the unsuccessful results of their engagements with the enemy, which have been ascribed to them at this period; and the reason is, that under so ambitious a leader, they were aware that every victory excited

some new object for achievement, in consequence of which new conscriptions were called out, as well to supply recent losses, as to form additional corps. They consoled themselves under a defeat, in the hope that it might lead to a peace."

Among his recollections of Tours, Captain Brenton says, "we here found an excellent and worthy friend and physician, in Dr. Morgan, who had been our fellow prisoner at Verdun. He with his amiable wife and little boy, had been permitted to reside here. From his skill, and the kindness and attention of his family we derived the greatest comfort and benefit. The illness of our darling boy (he had been taken ill on the road) continued for some days to be very alarming; but was at length permitted by a merciful Providence to give way to the remedies which were administered to him, and he began to shew symptoms of returning health."

In addition to the services of Dr. Morgan, it appears that Captain Brenton had also great advantages in the skill of Dr. now Sir Thomas Grey. "Under his tender care," he says, "I had been while at Verdun, and this gentleman, with his wife and daughter, were amongst the number of the detenus, and whilst at Verdun our families had become much attached to each other. I candidly detailed these circumstances in a letter to the Minister of Marine, expressing how much I should feel gratified, if this family might also be permitted to reside at Tours; as I knew this to be their wish. This request was kindly and readily granted, and in the

course of a few weeks our two families were again united at Tours, and no day passed, without our enjoying each other's society.

“An occasional gloom would sometimes take possession of me, as I considered myself shut out from my profession, for which, ever since my first entrance into it, I had felt an inexpressible ardour. One evening, when walking the room with Dr. Grey, I said, I felt a conviction that I was a prisoner for the remainder of the war, and that my naval career was at an end. He replied, ‘Don't give way to such feelings ; how do you know, but that you may be exchanged, have the command of a fine frigate, and take a prize before another year is over.’ I answered smiling, ‘if that should be the case, Doctor, I promise to give you the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.’ And impossible as it seemed to be at the moment, the Doctor did get that work upon these conditions before the year expired.

“We had procured most comfortable lodgings in the principal street of Tours, and began to enjoy the happiness we had promised ourselves. We had perfect tranquillity, no annoyance from the police, or the department for the controul of prisoners of war. I was only expected to present myself before the General once in three weeks, and had unrestrained access to every part of the province. Another attack, however, similar to what I had experienced at Charni, again filled me with anxiety, and by having recourse to low diet, I became extremely reduced. The mercy and forbearance of God, notwithstanding my ungrateful repining, nevertheless brought me through this illness

also. How often have my apprehensions thus proved vain ; and, in how many instances had perfect happiness been my lot, but for my own groundless fears, which prevented my enjoyment of it. What a lesson for the remainder of my days ! May they at least be devoted unreservedly, and with the most entire and perfect confidence to God, in resignation to the Divine will ; and let us, my darling children, in all our worldly anxieties, remember the following beautiful lines in Young :—

“ What can preserve my life, or what destroy ?
 An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave,
 Legions of angels can't confine me there.”

O, that this blessed, this most inestimable truth, could but be for ever on our minds ! To what state of happiness should we be instantly transported, and upon how sure a foundation it would stand ! We should smile at the worst efforts of the world, and we should weep with delight, as well as grief, at the translation of those dear to us, to a region of everlasting happiness. The measure of human faith is probably seldom suffered to arrive at such a height, lest it should deprive us of all interest in the world, and fill us with impatience for the next.”

On the 16th of January, 1806, Mrs. Brenton gave birth to a daughter, the one who is so constantly addressed in these notes. Of this period the following record is preserved. “ By the blessing of God, my beloved companion's health was soon restored, and the sweet addition to our little family, was a new source of

gratitude, and happiness. How familiar to my recollection are the scenes of that delightful period. My own anxieties were now fast wearing away, or only intruded themselves as the unfavourable symptoms of ill health recurred, which was very seldom. The confirmed health of our darling boy was more apparent every day, and he now became peculiarly engaging, and interesting. Although but three years old, he gave evident signs of great capacity, and we rather checked, than stimulated the inclination towards learning, which he very decidedly possessed even at that early age.

“Tours lying on the great road from Bordeaux, Passage, and Rochefort, to the depôt of the prisoners, we had frequent detachments of our unfortunate countrymen marching through. Early in the year the officers and crews of H. M. ships the *Calcutta*, and *Ranger*, together with those of the *Belle Packet*, which had been captured by the Rochefort squadron, under Admiral Allemande, arrived at Tours, on their march to the depôt of Verdun and Arras, to which they were destined. They were all confined in the common prison, as they had been indiscriminately marched under the same escort, without any respect being paid to the rank of the officers, however high. The landlord of the principal inn at Tours, called upon me late in the evening, to inform me they had just reached the prison, concluding that I would make an application for the officers to be liberated on their parole. That *mon hôte* was not entirely disinterested, came out, upon our way to the General's house together. “Monsieur,'

said he, "il ne faut pas seulement penser a soi. Il y'a d'autres Aubergistes à Tours, qui voudroient avoir de vos Messieurs chez eux. Je vous prie donc de me consigner *vingt des plus riches*, et que les autres soient partagés parmi mes confrères." The General immediately at my request gave an order to liberate the officers on parole. Joy resounded at once through the prison, nor were the seamen and marines without their share of it, as they were immediately supplied with a hot supper, and had their regular meals during the remainder of their stay at Tours. Although relief could not be officially given, in consequence of the prohibition of the French government, this was done by private contribution, and the expence attending it was subsequently defrayed by the Admiralty ; and the liberality of their country by the remittances made for their relief, enabled us to procure for them many comforts at this dreary season of the year, during a winter that was felt very severely, even in that mild region. This was an additional alleviation to the sense of our captivity."

On the 9th of April, 1806, Captain Brenton and his family removed to a country house near Tours, of which he thus speaks. "This was, indeed a little paradise to us ; a most beautiful situation, on the right bank of the Loire, very near the bridge of Tours. The house was, in fact, an excavation made in the solid rock, upon a considerable elevation, the face and roof only being built with masonry. The approach to it was by a long flight of steps, ascending through four terraces, on each of which was a beautiful garden, and on the uppermost

level, contiguous to the house, a delightful grove of trees, surrounding a spacious saloon distinct from the house. This singular and delightful retreat was called 'Les petits Capucins.' Nothing but the idea of captivity, and that restless anxiety for worldly prosperity, or to speak more plainly, that forgetfulness of the inexhaustible goodness of Divine Providence, and want of confidence in our Heavenly Father, could have prevented my enjoying perfect felicity there. But ungrateful, and impatient as I was, I can now recollect with feelings bordering on delight, the many instances in which I acknowledged my sense of the happiness I enjoyed. We were now most comfortably fixed in our delightful habitation, but our peaceful enjoyment was soon unsettled by the prospect of an exchange of prisoners. The death of Mr. Pitt, which had taken place in January, and the coalition of parties which had been the consequence, now excited in the breast of Buonaparte sanguine hopes of being able to negotiate a peace, through the influence of Mr. Fox. For notwithstanding his rancorous hostility against Great Britain, this had long been his most anxious wish. England was the only enemy he dreaded. In order to conciliate Mr. Fox, such of *his* friends as were prisoners in France, were immediately released, as well as those, whose liberation was thought likely to be agreeable to him. Of this number were Lord Elgin, General Abercrombie, Captain Gower, and some others; and at the same time I received a letter from Captain Jurieu, a French captain in the navy, who had been sent over from England, three years before, in exchange for me,

recommending me to make every possible effort to get this exchange ratified, which he had been unable to do, nor could he procure permission to return to his captivity in England agreeable to the pledge he had given. I of course followed his advice, but without success." On the 11th of June, Captain Coote quitted Tours for England, and "this event," Captain Brenton says, "we considered of very great importance. Captain Coote being a commander, and recently captured, I had every reason to be sanguine, in the hope that my own liberty was at hand." On the 23rd of July, he says, "The fluctuations of hope and fear respecting our liberation from captivity, had now in a great measure subsided. The departure of Captain Coote, for England, who had so recently been made a prisoner, convinced me that the measure was not meant to be general, for had that been the case, priority of capture would have given me the preference." Captain Brenton says, "It was even reported that Buonaparte had declared he would not consent to my exchange, which was probably the case. The people of France were as clamorous for peace as they dared to be, and when the municipality, in grand costume, were parading the streets, with military music, to announce some of the great victories gained in Germany, they would exclaim, 'Eh ! voila une autre victoire, et cela nous donnera une autre conscription.' When the news of Lord Lauderdale's departure from France reached Tours, it was announced in the theatre ; when a person was heard distinctly to say, 'Cette maudite guerre donc ne finira jamais.' Such, I believe, was a very general feeling

amongst the inhabitants of France. An increased degree of economy was manifested by the French Government. The Milan and Berlin decrees were issued for the prohibition of all trade with Great Britain, and bankers were even forbidden to discount the prisoners' bills. Messrs. Peregaux wrote to me with their usual liberality, informing me of this inhuman order; but they added, that although they could no longer discount my bills, yet they begged I would not scruple to draw upon them for whatever money I might require; and that they should be quite satisfied, that their account should be settled at the end of the war. The victory gained by Sir John Duckworth off San Domingo, in which he captured and destroyed the whole of the French squadron, did not at all contribute to allay the irritable feelings of the Emperor.

"I therefore felt convinced, from the selection that had been made of prisoners to be liberated, that Buonaparte had a particular object in view; that he was courting a party, instead of endeavouring to conciliate the British Government. This soon proved to be the case. The negociation was broken off, and the acrimony shewn towards the British prisoners was greater than ever; all communication with England, even the transfer of bills, was positively forbidden." These restrictions do not seem to have extended to the prisoners at Tours, for, on the 6th of September Captain Brenton says, "This day was passed in great delight in rambling over the beautiful grounds of Chanteloup, and visiting the castle of Amboise. Our darling children were in high health, and my own

health in a great measure restored. We were in possession of every thing to make us happy and grateful. The autumn was delightful, and we were under no restraint as prisoners, but permitted to make excursions to every part of the district. Our society was small but friendly. We had an addition to our friends by the arrival of Mr. Forbes (probably brother to the one before mentioned) and Sir H. Titchbourne, with their families, and had established a social intercourse, which was productive of much comfort and cheerfulness. In the beginning of November the approach of winter induced us to change our residence, from the beautiful place we inhabited, to a more commodious house in the city of Tours, where we had made up our minds to pass the winter contentedly. All hopes of an exchange had now subsided; mine were now directed towards a continuance of the indulgence of being allowed to live at a distance from a *depôt*; and from the increased ill humour of Buonaparte towards England, I had serious apprehensions of more vigorous measures being resorted to respecting the prisoners. I was under the influence of these feelings, when one morning returning home I found my beloved Isabella in tears, and much agitated; she told me a *gens d'armes* had been in pursuit of me, requiring my immediate attendance before the General. The visit of a *gens d'armes* rarely boded any thing favourable towards a prisoner. I however endeavoured to preserve my tranquillity, and soothe the anxiety of your dear mother. I hastened to the General expecting some unpleasant communication, but to my great surprize and joy, was received

with great cordiality, and these unexpected words, 'Monsieur, vous n'etes plus prisonnier—Je vous en felicite.' You may easily imagine the effect this information produced upon me. I ran home in an ecstasy of joy, which I concluded would have been equally great on the part of my darling companion. Joy did for a moment glisten in her eyes, for she always shared in my feelings. She felt a gleam of happiness because she saw me happy ; but a moment's reflection shewed her the certainty of our being separated upon our reaching England, by my being employed afloat. She immediately contrasted the felicity she had enjoyed in France, with the probability of a long absence from each other, and all its fertile sources of anxiety and misery. But she was too good and too grateful to our merciful Benefactor to indulge these feelings long. She soon became herself again, and sympathized sincerely in my joy. Of her own feelings on this occasion, the record left by her own pen seems worthy of insertion."

" Monday, 25th December, 1806, Morlaix. Left Tours after a truly happy residence of twelve months. In the course of that time I had the satisfaction to observe the restoration of the health of two of the objects dearest to me in the world, and we have been surrounded with every comfort and blessing but liberty. I failed not to offer up my thanks to Almighty God daily, for the mercies he so bountifully bestowed upon me ; and now, O heavenly Father, Thou hast called forth my gratitude on a new subject, by thy merciful goodness, for all good belongeth unto Thee alone. We

have at length obtained the object we so much wished for. Our captivity has ceased, and through Thy mercy and protection, we have been enabled to perform a journey of upwards of two hundred miles, without the smallest accident or delay. My beloved husband and children have arrived in perfect health, and for myself I can truly say, that I never enjoyed a greater share. Now, then, O great and merciful Father, I implore again Thy protection, in the voyage we are about to take at the present season of the year. Great must be the perils and dangers, but under Thy Almighty care, I humbly hope and trust we shall be preserved from them all, and be enabled to reach our own country in health and safety, and once more enjoy the blessing of finding our friends in health and happiness. This I beg through Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen." To this memorandum, Sir Jahleel Brenton subjoins, "Here my beloved children, is an example of pious gratitude and firm confidence in the protection of the same Almighty Being, who had always watched over us. To a common mind the idea of crossing the channel under all the circumstances in which she was placed, would have been full of terror, a few weeks only before your birth my dear Charles, in the depth of winter, and in a small French vessel of only eighty tons. But your mother never forgot in whose care she was placed. We had a most favourable journey from Tours to Morlaix, a constant succession of fine weather, and every comfort in our own possession to make up for the inconveniences on the road, which were sometimes very great. On our arrival at

Morlaix we hired a small French brig for sixty louis d'ors to take us over. Many delays and difficulties occurred before we could embark, and when this point was gained, and we had reached the mouth of the Port, six miles from Morlaix, a foul wind was likely to detain us. But what seemed to promise an additional vexation, was a French privateer lying in readiness to take advantage of the first change; and had she sailed, we should not have been permitted to follow for the next twenty-four hours, lest we might convey intelligence respecting her. This circumstance gave me much anxiety, which I now feel to have been inexcusable considering the blessings I enjoyed. It kept me frequently on deck during the night; the wind having suddenly changed, we weighed at dawn of day, and were at sea before the privateer made any movement. I then considered myself out of captivity, and I humbly hope I felt the gratitude I so deeply owed to the Almighty, for His merciful protection of me and mine, during that part of my life, particularly when I was a prisoner; 'Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered them out of the hands of the enemy.' Ps. cvii. I felt it worthy of recollection in every subsequent year, that this delightful Psalm should have been the first which I was called upon to read to my ship's company, a very few weeks after my release, on the first Sunday after my appointment to the Spartan."

Further particulars of the journey to Morlaix from Captain Brenton's notes may here be added.

"Dr. and Mrs. Grey, and their daughter, were in-

cluded with my own family in my passport (see the annexed letter from M. Decrés).* This most peculiar instance of kind attention and good feeling, was procured through the indulgence of the Minister of Marine: through whose kindness Dr. Grey's family had been permitted to join us at Tours. Messrs. Peregaux also availed themselves of this opportunity, to shew that the kindness and liberality which had been so strikingly evinced at the early part of my captivity, were unabated. With my passport came a letter from those gentlemen, containing their warmest congratulations; and stating that in order to prevent any possibility of delay, they had sent me one hundred pounds for the expences of my journey, and wishing me all happiness and success.

"On the 20th December our two happy and united families left Tours for Morlaix, which we reached on the 27th, passing through La Fleche, Rennes, Lamballe and St. Brieux. At Lamballe, which we reached late in the evening, I was informed that a detachment

" PARIS LE 10. xbre. 1806.

* "Je vous annonce avec plaisir Monsieur que vous venez d'obtenir votre échange contre Le Capitaine Infirmet cidevant Commandant le Vaisseau de sa Majesté L'Intrepide.

"Votre passeport pour vous, votre famille et le Docteur Grés vous sera remis par Mr. Le General Commandant la 22 Division militaire, et je donne des ordres à Morlaix pour que vous soyez autorisé à y freter un Parlementaire qui vous conduira dans votre Patrie.

"Je sais le plaisir que cette nouvelle vous causera, et il m'est agreable d'avoir à vous l'annoncer.

"Recevez Monsieur L'assurance de ma consideration distinguée.

"DECRES.

"M. BRENTON, CAP^{ne} DE VAISSEAU A TOURS."

of English prisoners had arrived, and were in the prison, and that I might see them, if I went early in the morning, when they were to resume their march for the interior. At the dawn of day, I was at the prison door, and as the sailor was opening it, called out in the professional phrase, 'Yo ho! shipmates.' No sooner was the well known expression heard, than one of the unfortunate inmates exclaimed, 'If I did not dream I was just drinking a pot of porter!' This of course he considered prophetic of his obtaining some relief; nor was he disappointed, for the hundred pounds sent by the kind M. Peregaux enabled me to give to each a sum which might have been a source of comfort for some days; but it is probable, that it was soon swallowed up by extortion and excess. The money was of course given on government account.

"On leaving Lamballe, on the road to St. Brioux, I had got out of the carriage for the purpose of walking up a very steep hill, and on reaching the top I had lost sight of the carriage, owing to the winding of the road; I here saw another detachment of unfortunate blue jackets, under the escort of gens d'armes marching for Lamballe. I hailed them, and having ascertained to what ship they belonged, I gave to each man the sum of money I thought I could spare; the escort all this time preserved rather an unaccountable silence, but when the distribution was over, accosted me with, 'A present Monsieur, il faut savoir qui vous etes; ou est votre passport?' This had soon occurred to me, and I recollected that it was not about me, but in the carriage, which now appeared on the summit of the hill.

This however set all to rights, and the poor sailors gave three cheers to their countrymen, and pursued their melancholy journey.

“In the course of a few hours, as we approached St. Brioux, we had from the top of a very high hill, a view of the deep blue sea, of the English channel. The effect of this sight upon persons in our situation may be easier conceived than described; after being shut up for three years and a half in the interior of France, a far longer period than I had ever before been separated from my favourite element. Cheers from each denoted the general joy of the little party at again beholding what we all regarded as our country’s own domain. On our arrival at St. Brioux, we met another detachment of English prisoners, but they were officers on parole. The two parties, the one on their way home, the other beginning captivity, met together at the table d’hôte; and notwithstanding these adverse circumstances on the one side, the meeting was gratifying to both. I was again enabled through Messrs. Peregaux to supply each officer with the means of performing his long journey with comparative comfort.

“As we left the land the wind freshened, and a heavy sea got up. The French sailors who had been very earnest in offering their services to the ladies, and had even given their respective names, that they might be called upon when wanted, were the first to be prostrated by sea sickness, the whole eleven men without exception. The Captain alone was unaffected by the motion of his vessel; and on my suggesting to him the necessity of the topsail being reefed, as the wind

increased, he shrugged his shoulders with the usual phrase of 'impossible.' He however admitted the necessity of something being done, and having requested me to take the helm, he managed to lower the topsails on the cap, and as the wind was well aft, the vessel was able to bear it, and we two shared the helm between us for that day. In the middle of the ensuing night we had got over under the Start point, and the wind having got more to the westward, we found shelter there until daylight; when a beautiful day broke upon us, and enabled us to reach Dartmouth by eight o'clock in the morning. Thus ended our captivity on the 29th of December, 1806, having commenced on the 3rd July, 1803.

“ The retrospect gave me much thankfulness in every point of view. It was a singular circumstance, that on my journey from Bath to Portsmouth, in June, 1803, one of my companions on the coach was the late Sir Matthew Blakiston, who mentioned a report (an unfounded one) that the Hazard Sloop of war, commanded by Captain Neave, had been taken, and carried into a French Port. I immediately expressed my opinion, that I could hardly conceive a greater misfortune befalling a professional man; and that it would be one of the most difficult to support. In less than a month from that time, I was actually in the very dreaded situation; and lost by it the command of one of the finest frigates in the Navy, with all the bright prospects attendant upon such a position, at the first breaking out of a war, when the ocean is covered by the enemy's vessels, and few Captains with such com-

mands fail in making fortunes. But the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb—the blow to me was, indeed, a severe one, but I was enabled to support it; and I have since been led to reflect upon the merciful dispensation which attended the event. It is very possible, that the effect of the concussion of the brain, which I had so recently received in the *Minerve* previously to her capture, might have disabled me, for the arduous duty attending on the command of a cruising frigate; and as I had already been indulged by having two acting Captains appointed to my ship, I could not have expected that a third would have been allowed; and had I been obliged then to retire on half pay, with the little interest I possessed, and the deeds of the new war, throwing into shade the achievements of the last; it is very probable that I might never have succeeded in getting a ship; but must have remained, like many of my brother officers, on half pay for the remainder of my days. I landed as a prisoner in France with the comforting recollection that no honour had been lost with my ship; that it was one of the unavoidable occurrences to which all are exposed in the profession of arms. With these feelings, and gratitude for my protection, under a fire of such duration, and of so complicated a nature, my mind was kept in perfect peace.”

At this point of the narrative it may not be irrelevant to introduce some remarks, which occur in the private memoir, on the state of the British prisoners in France; in order to place, in its proper point of view, the general situation of the prisoners, and to consider how far the

charges against the French Government for neglect and cruelty are made out. "It is an accusation which has been frequently made, and as I have often given my opinion, not only in conversation, but officially upon the subject, and as the latter stands upon record, it may be right in this place to give the sentiments, which I have frequently and deliberately expressed. But to do complete justice to this subject, and indeed to the French nation, it is necessary to distinguish between the conduct of individuals, and the official measures of the French government. In doing this—under the first head we have a most gratifying task, so numerous are the instances of benevolence, kindness, and the best of feelings, manifested towards our suffering countrymen.

I have already adverted to the singularly generous conduct of M. Dubois at Cherbourg, of Messrs Perre-gaux, the bankers, to the benevolence of Monsieur Parmentier, the Mayor of Phalsbourg, and the kindness and ready assistance of the French military authorities, at the different depôts; and I am decidedly of opinion, that had such conduct been sanctioned and encouraged by the Government itself, there is little doubt but the situation of the prisoners would have been very different from what they experienced during the greater part of the war. It will hence be seen that the French people as a people, were by no means implicated in the sufferings of our countrymen; but on the contrary, there are very many instances in which they shewed the kindest feelings towards them; received them into their houses, when found lame or sick on the road, and incapable of continuing their march; and when

they informed the nearest brigade of gens d'armes of the circumstance, at once to vindicate themselves from the charge of harbouring deserters, and to procure permission for the sufferer to remain undisturbed, until able to continue his journey. This is the bright side of the picture. The other is of a very different description. It will be seen that the government allowance for the support of a prisoner was quite inadequate to the purpose—and that when administered as it was to them individually in prison, with no means of purchasing food, but through the abominable suttler, famine and disease were the unavoidable consequences. Then again, the arrangement made by the minister of war for the supply of clothes, shoes, and bedding, were tardy, neglectful, and insufficient; and but for the exertions of their own officers, many of the prisoners would undoubtedly have perished in the course of the winter. The places also allotted for their confinement, were, as has been shewn, quite unfit for the purpose; often without roofs, containing mud and pools of water, where their straw was to be deposited for their beds; and with additional abuse attending the straw, which instead of being delivered fresh from the sheaf, was in some instances only fit for the dunghill.

“The manner in which prisoners were also marched from the most distant parts, such as Toulon, and Bourdeaux, and even in many instances from Genoa, and the ports of the Adriatic, was highly reprehensible in the government of a civilized country. It is known that the whole of France, during the late wars, and I believe its dependencies in Europe, were divided into

squares about two leagues each way ; and at the intersection of all the lines forming these squares, or as nearly as possible, a brigade of gens d' armes was stationed. If a small detachment of prisoners, not exceeding eight or ten, were to be sent from Toulon for instance, to Givet in the Ardennes, they were put under escort of two mounted gens d' armes ; were generally handcuffed in pairs, and sometimes in addition were made fast to each other by a rope, and conducted to the nearest brigade, in the line of the destined march ; and by this forwarded to the next, in the same manner. At whatever town or village they were to pass the night, they were generally locked up in the common prison ; from whence they continued the route with the next brigade the following morning. Left solely to the gens d' armes, it may naturally be supposed, that the treatment was not always the most humane ; although as has been shewn in the course of these pages, there were many instances of real kindness and feeling, evinced by these men. But it was too often the case, that the prisoners being without shoes became so lame as to be incapable of marching ; they were then for some time driven on at the point of the sabre ; sometimes dragged along by being attached to the horse ; and at length, when utterly incapable of proceeding, they were deposited in the next prison until able to march. These instances, unhappily, were but too numerous, as the straggling parties of a few individuals were, from time to time, passed on from the coast to the interior. One consisting of a Captain in the navy, an officer of marines, and a private gentleman, who had been taken, coming home

passengers from America, is too remarkable to be passed over. Their names are, Captain Lyall of the navy, Major Stanser of the marines, and Mr. Palmer, a private gentleman of Bermuda. They were landed at one of the ports of the western coast of France; and notwithstanding their rank in life, were marched in the same manner as common seamen, from brigade to brigade, and like them confined in the common prison of the place, where they halted for the night; and upon one occasion, after being placed in the Cachot, and shewn the straw upon which they had to pass the night, a fierce mastiff was brought into the place, and the prisoners were told that if they lay perfectly quiet during the night they would not be molested; but if they attempted to get up the dog would seize them; and as a proof of this not being only mentioned to alarm them, whenever they rustled the straw, the dog began to growl. The situation of the prisoners, during the long night, may be imagined. Complaint was made of this treatment by these gentlemen on their arrival at Verdun, but no redress was granted them.

“No sooner had the prisoners in general been deprived of the assistance and countenance of their officers, than the old system of suttlers and wretchedness was renewed, and this state of things, aggravated by hopelessness, was the lot of the increasing numbers added to the depôts by successive captures, from 1805 to the end of the war in 1814.”

In committing this record to paper, Captain Brenton states that he considered he was in the performance of an imperative duty; and, whilst he expressed the grateful

sense of the many acts of kindness, received from individuals, he felt called upon to substantiate the statement he has already made, respecting the sufferings of the prisoners, from the inadequacy of the supplies granted, and the measures adopted by the French government for the maintenance of those whom the fate of war had thrown into their hands. It is also much to be wished, that if there were any just causes of complaint with regard to the treatment experienced by the French prisoners in England, the charges should be brought forward in a tangible shape, that they also might be enquired into, and a remedy applied when necessary. But these must not be such wretched garbled statements as those of General Pillet, to whose own countrymen an appeal might be safely made, with the most perfect assurance of their pronouncing the whole work to be totally untrue. I have endeavoured to view the question in such a manner, that a judgment might be formed, as to all its bearings, and I now leave it, in the sanguine hope that many, many years may elapse, before the two nations are again placed in relations of hostility against each other ; and that should such an event unhappily recur, they both may have a watchful eye over their prisoners, considering their honour as well as their conscience pledged to protect those who can have no other protection.

Captain Brenton, as to the particular cause of his own unexpected release from captivity, gives in his private memoranda the following account. " A nephew of Marshal Massena, Captain L'Infernet, had been taken in the battle of Trafalgar, in the command of the French

ship of the line, *L'Intrepide*. Massena had been making great efforts to procure his exchange; but the Admiralty, whilst they expressed their readiness to accede to this exchange, stated their determination to accept of no other officer but myself, whom they considered from the priority of my capture, to be unjustifiably detained in France, whilst other officers had been liberated, and that without any reason having been assigned for it. Buonaparte having no reason to believe that our government would relax from this determination, ordered my passport to be sent to me. It soon appeared by letters from France, that I had had a very narrow escape of being detained even at Morlaix. A small package containing copies of official correspondence, which I had with me in the carriage, and which was kept uppermost in order to prevent any suspicion, that they were intended to be concealed; was by accident either dropped from the carriage, or left at some inn on the road. It was found and forwarded to the Capital of the Department; where the principal authority, as a provisional measure, sent off an express to Morlaix to detain me; whilst the papers were forwarded to the Bureau de la guerre at Paris, where the order for detention was confirmed. We had however got beyond the Castle of Morlaix before the order arrived, and had no sooner passed it, than we felt ourselves safe within the limits of the British Empire."

This period of the narrative then which includes his captivity in France is thus closed, and if some details which seem irrelevant, and some particulars which seem

trivial have been introduced, the Editor still feels that their insertion is justified by the degree in which they exhibit the character of the subject of the memoir, or unfold the process by which that character was formed. There can be no doubt, that both to mind and body, this period of detention was eminently useful ; and this recollection may have a tendency to reconcile others, who, in the course of war, may be exposed to a similar calamity, to the present privations of their lot, by considering its general consequences, and its final effects. In the case of Sir Jahleel Brenton it is but too probable, that if this long interval of forced repose had not occurred, his constitution would never have recovered from the effects of the accident he suffered, while fitting out the *Minerve* ; and that the excitement of active service would have destroyed a system so shattered as his was. It is still more probable, that active employment in his profession, whether successful or unsuccessful, would have prevented much of that moral improvement, that growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus, which we have seen going on silently and gradually in the retirement of his captivity.

That he would have been under other circumstances, a man whom the world would have admired, a noble minded, liberal, benevolent and gallant officer, is certain ; but that he would have grown into the reality of the Christian character, that he would have learnt the state of his own heart, and his need of a Saviour ; that he would have felt the real value of the Gospel, and known it to be the power of God unto salvation in them that believe, is more than questionable. We

may therefore admit, that God in mercy withdrew him from labours for which he was unfit, and from delusions which could not have been resisted ; and placed him for a time in a situation, where body and mind were to regain their healthy tone ; and where the means for more extensive usefulness were to be acquired.

But captivity is a bitter trial to an ardent and ambitious spirit ; and we cannot doubt that there were moments, when the iron entered into his soul, and the necessity of submitting to a lot which extinguished all his hopes, was a severe burden to a faith as yet but imperfectly developed. In many instances likewise we have seen that the bitterness of captivity was aggravated by the treatment the prisoners were exposed to, and the oppression they suffered ; and each of these cases must have provoked the indignant feelings of officers, who were conscious of deserving the respect even of their enemies.

There were however bright exceptions, and these exceptions deserve the more notice as they occurred in decided opposition to the spirit of the government, and probably would have provoked the displeasure of the Emperor, if he had become acquainted with them ; and his displeasure generally found prompt and ample means for exhibiting itself.

Among the individuals to be named with respect on this account is M. Decrés, the Minister of Marine. Intimately associated as he was with the government, he always seems to have attended to the representations made by Captain Brenton, and to have made every exertion in his favour that could have been

expected. M. Decrés at the moment probably yielded to the sympathy which one brave man has for another, and gladly alleviated, according to his opportunities, the sufferings of an officer whose gallantry entitled him to respect ; but he did not foresee that the kindness he shewed to a British officer, was to be the occasion of multiplied kindnesses to his own countrymen ; and that many a French heart was to be gladdened by the consolations he procured for a single English one.

The Editor therefore feels great pleasure in inserting here extracts from some familiar letters written at a later period, which shew how the circumstances of this captivity were remembered, and the way in which the courtesies of M. Decrés were requited.

“ SPARTAN, OFF TOULON, NOV. 3, 1807.

“ You may remember how determined I was to wreak my vengeance upon the whole nation. At Malta I was senior officer, and I found a number of French prisoners. I did not exactly order them to the Appel twice a day, as used to be the case with us at Verdun. A colonel had been taken with all his family a few days before, and had lost his wife at sea, leaving him with three dear little infants. You may stare, but I gave him leave to return to France with his family and his physician. This I meant as a small token of remembrance to M. Decrés, but firmly resolved that all the others should remain until all our friends at Verdun were liberated ; but like other good resolutions this was not a lasting one. A deputation of captive ladies waited upon me. ‘ Messieurs les Anglais, sont des gens pleins d’honneur, qui ne font jamais la guerre aux femmes ni aux enfans.’ ‘ Eh de grace, Mesdames retournez dans votre patrie, je ne vous empêche pas.’ ‘ Helas, mon Commandant, sans mon Mari ? Le deserterai je dans le malheur ? Que deviendrai ? je, s’il succombe sous le poids

de l'adversité? Sa Santé est chancelante, et Monsieur n'ignore pas la douceur d'être dans le sein de sa famille.' 'Madame, je me rends, a vos raisons, partez vous et votre mari.' 'Et le mien aussi Monsieur? Vite, vite; allez, allez!' In this manner I was coaxed out of a dozen; they all set out vowing eternal gratitude," &c.

"SPARTAN, OFF TOULON, AUGUST 8.

" On Friday we had one of the prettiest sporting days I ever remember. A frigate came out of Toulon with a convoy, and we gave chase to her. She ran between the Hieres Islands, round Cape Taillet, and into the gulf of Grimaud, where she anchored under the citadel of St. Tropez, and escaped. We however cut off two of her convoy, and were very near getting hold of a man of war brig, but the breezes failed us. I landed all my prisoners with their property, charmed as they said, 'De l'honnêteté de M. le Commandant de la fregate, et qu'ils ne manquoient pas d'en faire une mention honorable au préfet maritime de l'arrondissement.' I told them they might thank M. Décrés for it, for his attention to me, and I hope he will hear of it, as I shall never forget his kindness."

War no doubt is a great evil, but when war is carried on in this spirit it loses something of its sufferings, and much of its horrors; and one may be forgiven for dwelling with pleasure on those gleams of light which kindness of heart and liberality cast across the dark and melancholy period of those protracted hostilities.

CHAPTER X.

ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND, AND APPLICATION TO THE ADMIRALTY.—KINDNESS OF THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY, MR. GRENVILLE.—COURT MARTIAL, ACQUITTAL, AND APPOINTMENT TO THE SPARTAN.—SAILS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN.—ESCAPE FROM CAPTURE.—BOAT ACTION WITH ITS UNFORTUNATE RESULT, AND COURT OF ENQUIRY ORDERED BY LORD COLLINGWOOD.

“THE day after our arrival at Dartmouth, as my beloved Isabella required repose, after the fatigue and anxiety she had so long been exposed to, I left her at Upton, near Brixham, with our kind and hospitable friend, Mrs. Cutler;* and proceeded to London, in order to make my appearance at the Admiralty as soon as possible. Mr. Thomas Grenville, then first Lord, received me in the most cordial manner, and asked me under existing circumstances how the Admiralty could best shew their sympathy for my misfortunes, and their approbation of my conduct. I replied that I was not aware of any thing their Lordships could do, until my court martial for the loss of the *Minerve*, should have taken place. Mr. Grenville replied, this had also been his apprehension, but he was at a loss to know how the court martial

* One of Mrs. Cutler's sons had been taken in the *Minerve* as a Midshipman.

could be held, since the officers being all prisoners in France, no adequate witnesses could be found. I observed, that I knew many of the seamen and marines had made their escape, and might probably be found serving in some of His Majesty's ships. A doubt still remained, whether the evidence of these men without that of any officer, would be deemed sufficient. Mr. Grenville however placed me in the hands of the clerk of the Record office, desiring I should have access to any documents I might wish to examine. After travelling through many folios, I discovered the case of Captain Craycroft, who in the preceding war had been captured by the French, and whose witnesses upon his court martial were, the surgeon and a midshipman I immediately communicated this, by a message, to Mr. Grenville. His answer was, 'Good, try again : ' and soon after, the case of Captain Brey, of the Hound, on whose trial a midshipman and a boatswain's mate only appeared, was deemed conclusive by Mr. Grenville. An order was immediately issued by the Admiralty to all the commanders in chief on the home stations for an enquiry to be made in the ships under their respective commands, for any men who had been captured in the *Minerve*, and might have made their escape from France; and that in the event of any such being found, they should be immediately sent to the flag ship, at Portsmouth, and their names be reported to the Admiralty. In the course of a few days, six were reported, two boatswain's mates, and four seamen, and marines." The order was immediately issued for the court martial on Captain Brenton, to be held on board the *Gladiator*,

in Portsmouth Harbour; and it is hardly necessary to add, that the sentence of the court was the honourable acquittal of the Captain of the *Minerve*.

Immediately after the conclusion of the court martial, Captain Brenton having obtained a copy of the sentence, proceeded forthwith to London, and waited upon Mr. Grenville, who most kindly said, "We have been quite prepared for the nature of the sentence, and I have been only waiting to receive it officially, before I should attend to rather an extraordinary request, made by a brother officer of yours, who has begged that he may be permitted to resign the command of a fine frigate, just built and fitted out, and full manned. I can now grant his request, and make you the offer of becoming his successor." Captain Brenton's joy may be imagined at this most gratifying instance of the First Lord's approbation. He certainly did look forward to employment, at no very distant period; but the utmost he could expect was to have a frigate to fit out. Here was one of a superior description, all ready for immediate service. He lost no time in taking command, having joined her on the 10th February; the *Spartan* being then under orders to sail the moment the wind would permit, with the East India convoy.

In his private journal he says, "I left my beloved *Isabella* only five days before your birth, my dear Charles. I should most gladly have waited till that anxious period was over; but my ship was under sailing orders, and I left your mother under the care of the merciful Providence of Him, who never deserted her while on earth, and to whom we may now humbly

and firmly hope she has gone. I had soon the happiness of knowing she was well, and thankful for this additional blessing bestowed upon us, I sailed to the Mediterranean, without one legitimate subject of anxiety; on the contrary, nothing but happiness in the retrospect, and the most cheerful prospects before me." He adds; "A few days after I joined the Spartan, my convoy was transferred to the charge of another Captain; and the Commissioner's yacht came alongside my ship with £700,000 in cash; and orders for me to take it immediately to Malta. Here was another act of kindness on the part of Mr. Grenville. He found in this commission an opportunity of indemnifying me for my losses and expenses in France, of which he immediately availed himself. For some time all payments to the Captains of ships of war for carrying cash had been discontinued, but it was thought proper to resume it at this period; and the Admiralty recommended to the Treasurer, this as a fit occasion. The sum of half per cent. was in consequence allowed for the future, and this gave me £1100."

Contrary winds detained Captain Brenton at Spithead till the 2nd of March, when he sailed with a strong N. E. wind, in company with Sir Thomas Lavie, in the *Blanche*. The latter, being under orders to cruize on the coast of France, kept close in with the French shore, and was unfortunately wrecked the same night in the bight of Abervrach. Sir Thomas was a member of Captain Brenton's court martial, and little thought at that time, how soon it would be his turn to succeed him as a prisoner in France. The Spartan

necessarily keeping the channel course, was not exposed to this danger. She was off Lisbon on the 7th day, having orders to call off that place, but having carried away her main yard in a heavy squall, off the bar, bore up for Lisbon, sending the *Lively*, Captain Mackinlay, who was cruising off the coast of Portugal, to communicate with the British Minister. The *Spartan* had under convoy one transport laden with arms and ammunition for Sicily ; the master of which, notwithstanding the most positive orders not to part company with the *Spartan*, bore up in the night, whilst they were laying to, waiting for daylight, off the mouth of the Tagus, and on the following night ran on shore off San Lucar, near Cadiz, although having a fair wind for Gibraltar, which was the place of rendezvous, in case of parting company by accident. The ship was soon taken possession of by the Spaniards ; but before they could get even a small portion of her cargo out of her, she was boarded by the boats of the *Malta*, commanded by Captain Buller, and burnt. The *Spartan* arrived in two days after at Gibraltar, and having got a new main yard, and taken on board a small additional sum of money for *Malta*, proceeded to *Messina*, where she arrived about the middle of *March*. From thence she proceeded to *Malta* to deliver the money destined for that place, but did not go into the harbour, remaining off only a few hours, and then made sail for *Palermo*. At the very moment of her departure an awful event occurred at *Malta*. A corps, which had been raised in the *Morea*, and generally called the *Spartan* corps (the coincidence was much remarked

upon as very singular) mutinied; and having got possession of the Fort Ricasoli, determined upon resistance, until such time as what they called their grievances were redressed. These were that they should be allowed to retain the lower part of their Greek dress, instead of wearing the tight trowsers so abhorrent to a Greek. They had no objection to the jacket, but they could not endure the labour of cleaning their arms, or pipe-claying their belts, &c. A Greek will be as active as any one while on actual duty, but when that is over, he considers the time his own, and is more disposed to pass it sleeping in the sun than in any other manner. These men, having seized the Fort Ricasoli, were not only determined to defend themselves, but became the assailants, and turning the mortars of the fortress towards La Valette, began throwing shells into it. Providentially having no knowledge themselves of this branch of warfare, they were obliged to compel some artillery officers whom they had made prisoners in the fortress to direct the bombardment; and these officers under the pretence of intimidation, gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of throwing the shells over the city into the quarantine harbour, which from the knowledge of the scale of the fortifications they were enabled to do with great accuracy. The shells consequently fell harmless. When the mutineers saw that such measures were taken by the General, as must insure the reduction of the fortress in a few hours, they came to the desperate resolution of drawing lots who should blow up the magazine, and who should stand at the entrance, to convey the last signal

of the explosion, both of whom must necessarily perish. Those who drew the lots took their stations accordingly, and the remainder of the Greeks having taken such measures as they deemed best to enable them to get over the wall; the signal was given, and a most tremendous explosion took place, doing considerable damage to the dockyard, and parts adjacent. In the confusion occasioned by this unexpected event, nearly the whole of the mutineers succeeded in getting out of the fortress, and dispersed themselves over the island, in the hope of being able to procure boats and to escape; but precautions had been too effectually taken to allow of this; every point was guarded, and in the course of a few hours every man was taken. A court martial was instantly assembled, and a great number were condemned to death; many were executed, and the remainder sent back to the Morea. It is much to be lamented that the national feelings of these people had been so unnecessarily outraged. They maintained to the last that they enlisted under the express condition, that their costume should not be interfered with, and that they should not be obliged to clean and polish accoutrements. When however the usual manœuvres of a recruiting serjeant are taken into consideration, it is not improbable that even greater exemptions than these might have been promised; but a Greek is not a man to be tampered with any more than a Malay.

The Spartan found a squadron lying at Palermo, consisting of the Windsor Castle, and four other ships of the line, which had been sent there at the request of the king of Sicily, and were under the command of Captain,

afterwards Rear Admiral Boyle. A gale of wind of most extraordinary violence came on, whilst the Spartan was with them. The wind was from the southward, and therefore directly off the land, from which the squadron were not a mile distant. In consequence of this, the sea had no space to get up in; but notwithstanding that a dense spray was lifted up from the water, called by seamen, "a spoon drift," which lay along the surface as even as though it were a sheet of snow. Whilst walking the deck Captain Brenton was surprised by a sharp sound like a mast going, and looking forward, saw the jib fly up the stay like lightning, and immediately shiver to atoms. By some accident the down haul had not been made fast in the forecastle, and the wind getting into the head of the jib, carried it up like lightning. No other damage however was done, although the Eagle was for some time in danger, having been close under Monte Pelegrino. The gale was of short duration, and in a few hours was succeeded by fine weather.

On the 16th of April the Spartan sailed for Toulon, where she was ordered to watch the motions of the French fleet; and the wind being from the westward Captain Brenton ran along the coast of Italy. When just between the east coast of Corsica and the Italian shore, he fell in with an American ship, the *Urania*, Hector Coffin, master, and Greene of Rhode Island supercargo. Captain Brenton, on sending a boat to examine this neutral ship, gave particular directions to the lieutenant charged with this duty, to pay every possible attention to the feelings of the people, and to avoid

giving offence to the master or crew. The search took place, and as there was some deviation from the regulations laid down for the conduct of Neutrals by his Majesty's orders in council, Captain Brenton sent for the master on board the *Spartan*, requesting he would bring his log book with him. On his coming on board Captain Brenton explained to him the necessity of this measure; with which the master and supercargo expressed themselves perfectly satisfied, as well as with the kindness and delicacy with which they had been treated by the visiting officer. It was at this time nearly calm, so that no detention took place; and when the breeze sprang up, the American voluntarily steered for some time the same course with the *Spartan*. This was on the 27th of April.

On the 8th of May the *Spartan* again fell in with the same ship, between Sardinia and the Island of Ponza; and her being so near the spot where she had been eleven days before having excited surprise, she was again examined; and on looking over her log book to ascertain the cause of her having made so little progress, being hardly forty leagues from where she had been first seen, Captain Brenton was surprised to find a detail of her having been boarded, on the 27th of April, by the *Spartan*, worked up to the most rancorous pitch of exaggeration; stating that on that day they were boarded by the English frigate *Spartan*, had been forced out of their course, that the master was dragged on board with his papers, and that the hatches were broken open, &c. On Captain Brenton remonstrating

with the master and supercargo, upon the unmanliness of inserting such falsehoods in the ship's book, for no other purpose than that of exciting enmity between the two countries, whose mutual interests led them to the cultivation of peace; and reminding them of the declaration they had both made in the cabin of the Spartan on the day alluded to, as to the kindness and civility with which they had been treated by the lieutenant of that ship, who had boarded them; they both appeared overwhelmed with confusion, acknowledged the justice of Captain Brenton's observation, laid the blame upon the mate, whom they charged with having inserted the offensive passage without their knowledge, and promised that it should not be made public in America. It is not likely that a Neutral trading amongst belligerents should pay so little attention to a document of such vital importance as the log; and that neither master nor supercargo should inspect it. This affair was the subject of an official communication from Captain Brenton to his senior officer, and of another to the Secretary of Lloyd's Coffee house.

On the 23rd of April the Spartan captured a small French xebec, on the coast of Italy. The year had not expired since the conversation which has been related took place between Captain Brenton and Dr. Grey, at Tours. Dr. Grey had been appointed surgeon of the Spartan, at Captain Brenton's request, and he received in consequence the promised Encyclopedia. Captain Brenton says, "Shortly after this I was again preserved from captivity by a merciful Providence, which rescued

us from the enemy's squadron, when every hope of success seemed to have left us." The particulars of this escape are contained in the following letter.

"SPARTAN, OFF TOULON, MAY, 1807.

"SIR,

"I have the honour to inform you, that at noon on the 27th ultimo, the westward end of Elba, bearing N.E. we made sail in chase of four vessels to the southward, which at half-past five we observed to be ships of war, and made the private signal, which was not answered; and wishing to ascertain exactly what they were, I continued standing towards them until half-past six, when they bore up by signal in chase of us. We could at this time see their hulls from the deck, and perceived one to be of the line, two frigates, and a corvette. We tacked, and stood from them, but they gained fast upon us, as they had a fresh breeze from the westward: at eight, it fell nearly calm, and continued so all night. At day-break we saw the enemy bearing W. by N. about six miles, The south end of Capraia being at the same time W.S.W. about four miles. Upon a light breeze, springing up from the eastward, I made sail to the northward, in the hope of being able to escape round the island, which the frigates and corvette endeavoured to prevent, by running to leeward of Capraia, whilst the ship of the line hauled round the south end in chase of us. We had light and partial breezes until noon, when one frigate and the corvette bore west, about two miles from us, with a fresh breeze from the southward; the other frigate further off in the S.W. and the line of battle ship off the south end of Capraia, bringing up the rear. She had a very light air from the southward, but I saw the necessity of making every effort to get to the westward, as the only chance of escaping, and hauled immediately athwart the headmost frigate: upon our near approach the breeze appeared to fail her.

"At twenty minutes after twelve she opened her fire, and continued it for an hour and ten minutes. As I observed that the light breeze she had was destroyed by her firing, we did not return a