

“SPARTAN, TRIESTE, 27th APRIL.

“MY LORD,

“I have the honour to inform your Lordship, that being with the *Amphion* and *Mercury* off the town of Pesaro, on the 23rd instant, I observed a number of vessels lying in the mole, and thought it practicable to take possession of them; for which purpose, the ships were anchored with springs upon their cables, within half a mile of the town. The boats formed in two divisions, the first consisting of launches with carronades, and other boats carrying field pieces, under the orders of Lieutenant Phillott, first of the *Amphion*, took a station to the northward of the town; and the second division consisting of rocket boats, under the orders of lieutenant Baumgardt, second of the *Spartan*; both divisions being commanded by Lieutenant George Willes, first of the *Spartan*. As soon as these arrangements were made, I sent a flag of truce on shore to demand the surrender of all the vessels, adding, that should any resistance be made, the Governor must be answerable for the consequences, and I gave him half an hour to deliberate.

“At half-past eleven, a. m. the officer returned with a message that in half an hour I should receive his answer. I waited thirty-five minutes, from the time the boat came alongside, when observing a flag of truce on shore, but that troops were assembling in considerable numbers in the streets, and on the quays, and that the inhabitants were busily employed in dismantling the vessels; I hauled down the flag of truce, and fired one shot over the town to give warning to the women and children; and shortly after made the signal to commence firing, which was instantly obeyed by the ships and boats. At thirty-two minutes after twelve, observing several flags of truce hung out in the town, I made the signal to cease firing, and Lieutenant Willes pushed into the harbour with the boats, when he was informed that the Commander had made his escape with all the military.

“I considered the place as surrendered at discretion, and gave orders for the boats to be employed in bringing out the vessels, and the marines to be landed to protect them. Lieutenant Willes made the most judicious arrangements to carry this into execution.

The marines were drawn up under Lieutenant Moore, senior Lieutenant of Marines of the *Amphion*; the launches stationed in such a manner as to enfilade the principal streets; and the other boats' crews were employed in rigging the vessels, and laying out warps to haul them off with, as soon as the tide should flow. About two, p. m. I received a letter from the Commandant, dated half-past one, demanding another hour for deliberation. I refused him another moment, and told him that in case of resistance, I should destroy the town. By half-past six thirteen vessels deeply laden as per enclosed list were brought off; several others had been scuttled by the inhabitants, and sunk; some were still aground dismantled, there were besides a few in ballast, and a number of fishing vessels. I should have burned the merchant vessels but for the apprehension of setting fire to the town, and destroying the fishing boats. I therefore directed Lieutenant Willes to blow up the castle at the entrance of the harbour, and to bring off his people; this he did at seven o'clock.

"I am happy to say we did not hear of any lives being lost in the town, although many of the houses were much damaged. One man was killed by the explosion of the castle. After the match had been lighted, and our people had retreated, he approached it; a musket was fired over him to drive him away, but he sought refuge under the castle, and was buried in its ruins. As the enemy made no active resistance, I can only express my admiration at the zeal and promptitude with which Captain Hoste, and the Honourable Henry Duncan executed the orders which they received, and the manner in which they placed their ships. Lieutenant Willes upon this, as upon every other occasion, displayed the greatest energy, skill, and judgment; the arrangements he made for the defence of his party whilst in the harbour, and the expedition in sending out the prizes, do him the highest credit. Lieutenant Phillott and Lieutenant Baumgardt in the command of their respective divisions, and Lieutenant Moore in that of the Marines, were also exemplary.

"I have, &c.

"J. BRENTON."

"TO VICE ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD."

LIST OF VESSELS TAKEN.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-------|---|
| San Nicholas . . . | 38 | tons | Cargo, Oil and Almonds. |
| San Pratico . . . | 90 | " | " Oil. |
| L'azzardo fortunato . | 54 | " | " Oil. |
| Name unknown . . . | 130 | " | " Hides, oil and almonds. |
| Ditto, ditto | 90 | " | " Oil and hemp. |
| San Antonio | 120 | " | " Oil. |
| San Antonio | 100 | " | " Plank and spars |
| San Nio | 56 | " | " Morocco leather, hides, bees' wax, &c. |
| Name unknown . . . | 30 | " | " Oil and hides. |
| Carlotta fortunata . | 56 | " | " Oil. |
| Name unknown . . . | 50 | " | " Oil. |
| Ditto, ditto | 60 | " | " Oil, almonds, figs, candles, &c. |
| Providenza | 30 | " | " Oil. |
| — | | | |
| Total | 904 | tons. | |

As the oil was all sweet oil for Gallipoli, these cargoes were very valuable, and could not be worth less than £10,000, the value put upon them by Sir W. Hoste in his letter to his father.—See Hoste's Memoirs, vol. 1. p. 340.

In consequence of intelligence received from Trieste, and the urgent demands of the Austrian Commander in chief for the co-operation of a frigate, Captain Brenton was under the necessity of detaching the *Amphion* to the gulf of Fiume, a measure that he regretted the necessity for extremely; as he depended much upon the assistance he should receive from such an officer, as Captain Hoste, in his intended operations on the coast of Italy, which he hoped to keep in a perpetual state of alarm, and thus to prevent as much as possible any troops being detached to the army opposed to the Arch-duke John. Captain Duncan was

however still with him, and was also a most valuable coadjutor.

On the 2nd of May, the Spartan and Mercury attacked the port of Cesenatico, as detailed in the following letter.

“SPARTAN, OFF ROVIGNO, 5th MAY, 1809.

“MY LORD,

“On the 2nd instant, the Spartan and Mercury chased two vessels into the port of Cesenatico, the entrance to which is very narrow, and defended by a battery of two guns (twenty-four pounders) and a castle. Observing at the same time several other vessels laying there, I determined to take possession of them if possible. The coast is so shoal that we had only five fathoms, considerably out of gun shot of the town; I was therefore under the necessity of sending the boats a-head, and on each bow, with directions to make a signal when in three fathoms.

“We were by these means enabled to anchor by noon in a quarter three within range of grape of the battery, and very soon silenced it, when Lieutenant Willes, first of the Spartan, pushed in and took possession of it, turning the guns upon the castle and town, which were soon after deserted. We captured in the port twelve vessels, some laden with corn for Venice, and the others being in ballast, we filled them with iron and hemp out of the magazines for these articles, which were upon the quay, and in which the sails and rudders of some of their vessels were concealed. Another large vessel laden with iron, which lay at the entrance of the harbour, scuttled, we burned; and after blowing up the castle and magazine, destroying the battery and spiking the guns, we came off, I am happy to say, without the loss of a man, or any person being wounded, although much exposed to the fire of the battery, as well as musketry; nor was any damage done to the ships.

“The Mercury, from Captain Duncan’s anxiety to place her as near the town as possible, took the ground, but in so favourable a position, as gave the fullest effect to her fire. She was

however, hove off by 5 p. m. without having sustained any damage.

“I never witnessed more zeal and energy than was evinced by Captain Duncan upon this occasion. Lieutenant Willes displayed great gallantry in taking possession of the battery the moment the ships had ceased firing, and in the expedition with which he turned the guns against the place; his exertion also in bringing out the vessels was very great. Much credit is also due to the officers and men of both ships for their activity.

“I have, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“RIGHT HONOURABLE

“VICE ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD.”

Captain Brenton dispatched the Mercury to convey the prizes to Trieste, and on the following day came up with them off Rovigno. But having been joined by the Thames, with orders for the Mercury to be sent to Trieste, and from thence with the British Minister's dispatches to Malta, he was under the necessity of sending the captured vessels into Rovigno, a port on the coast of Istria. The following letter to Lord Collingwood will shew the state of affairs at this time in the upper part of the Adriatic, and of the necessity for every exertion being made by the little squadron.

“SPARTAN, OFF ROVIGNO, 5th MAY, 1809.

“MY LORD,

“The Thames joined us last night, and I shall in consequence dispatch the Mercury immediately to Trieste for Mr. Stuart's dispatches, and direct her Captain to proceed to Malta with them.

“I trust your Lordship will approve of my having kept that ship hitherto, as it was necessary to watch both sides of the Adriatic, as well to prevent the evacuation of Dalmatia by

General Marmont's corps—as to prevent supplies getting into Venice; both of which purposes I hope have in a great measure been effected.

“I have sent the *Amphion* to watch the motions of the French army in Dalmatia, and to co-operate with the Austrians under General Strokowitz. With the *Spartan* and *Mercury* I have been on the coast of Romagna, at the express desire of His Imperial highness the Arch-duke John, in order to cut off the communication between its forts and Venice. I beg leave to refer your Lordship to my letter of this day for a detail of our proceedings on the 2nd instant, and enclose a duplicate of that of the 27th ultimo.

“I have this moment received a letter from General L'Epine, in which is the following passage. ‘General Marmont has given very severe orders to arm the inhabitants of Veglia and Pago, under the direction of some of his troops, which are expected there, in order to oppose the Austrians; the whole population of these islands are very averse to the project, and have the most eager desire to see our troops take possession of their country, therefore I have given orders immediately that a couple of companies should be embarked in the neighbourhood from Fiume to attack these islands, and take possession of them before the arrival of the French. I advise you of that disposition, that you may be in the case to assist our troops in the enterprize, and I have no doubt that you will be disposed to do it.’

“This letter was addressed to Captain Hoste, in consequence of my having sent him off Zara; but in order to effect the object of it, I shall proceed instantly off those islands in the *Spartan*, adding our force to that of the *Amphion*, and I shall send the *Thames* to blockade Venice.

“I have, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“VICE ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD.”

A letter of the 29th April had been sent from Mr. Baird, the British Agent at Fiume, to Mr. Jackson,

the Charge' des affaires at Trieste, requesting he would inform the British Commander, by the earliest opportunity, that the Austrians had entered Trau, on the coast of Dalmatia, without finding any French there; that eighteen vessels had gone from Zara to Pago with troops, and that it was believed General Marmont and his staff were with them, and that his intention was probably to get to Ancona.

About the same time, the following letter reached Captain Brenton, from Mr. Bathurst, the British Ambassador, whom he had brought to Trieste in the Spartan, dated Vienna, 27th April, 1809.

“I have been unable from illness to apply to any business whatever since my arrival here, you must therefore not be surprised at my silence.

“The turn which the war has taken upon the Danube is not altogether favourable. The enclosed bulletin will put you *au fait* of the operations of the two armies. The Arch-duke Charles has since been separated from General Hiller, and has fallen back to the frontiers of Bohemia. General Hiller was expected at Brannau yesterday, and will probably retire towards Saltzburg, and the Tyrol. In this situation the Capital is left open, but it is not imagined that the French will risk advancing with an Austrian army on each flank.

“‘The Emperor is still in the vicinity of Enns.’

“‘In every other direction the war has taken a favourable turn, and the dispositions of the different powers of Europe seem favourable to the Austrian cause; even Russia indicates no desire of becoming hostile.’

“The firmness of the government is not shaken, though the first opening of the campaign has not answered their expectation. Pray let me recommend to you the most cordial co-operation with the Austrian army in Italy. It is probable the Arch-duke

John will for the present remain upon the defensive in the Venetian States, your station will therefore become of the greatest importance.

“ Believe me, &c.

“ R. BATHURST.”

On the 7th of May, General L'Epine writes from Trieste as follows :—

“ SIR,

“ Captain Flanagan, who will deliver this letter, is appointed to have the command of the various Austrian armed vessels, which are employed in the blockade of Venice, and is ordered to follow your directions, as long as you intend to remain before that place. I beg therefore you may be so good as to concert with him such dispositions as you may think most proper to attain the intended purpose, which is to prevent the enemy from receiving supplies.

“ By the same opportunity I have the honour to acquaint you that I have received a dispatch from the Arch-duke John, in which he mentions his most earnest desire, that the whole force under your command should go as soon as possible to the coast of Dalmatia, and particularly towards Zara, where he wishes that an attempt might be made by the British men of war, firing against that place, or in any other way, that might draw the attention of the enemy, and operate a diversion, giving at the same time a signal for the insurrection of the inhabitants to break out, who expect nothing else than the occasion; whilst our troops will make a resolute attack against the province on the other side. I lose no time to let you know this intention of the Arch-duke, being persuaded, after the disposition you have been pleased to exert, and which are used to direct your motions, that every exertion will be employed from your part to answer the above proposition.

“ I have the honour, &c.

“ L'EPINE, MAJOR GENERAL.”

“ COMMODORE BRENTON,

COMMANDER OF H. B. M. FORCES, ADRIATIC.”

This letter was accompanied by another,¹ containing a list of the Austrian flotilla, with which Captain Brenton was desired to co-operate, consisting of two brigs of war, and a tartane stationed between Goro and Malamoco, with three gun boats, and five patrolling boats in the neighbourhood of Cortelazzo. The vessels were especially intended to prevent any supplies getting into Venice coastwise. It then added,

“In Venice the enemy have at this time 7800 men: French, Italian, and militia. They have also

In the Lagune 4 gun boats, and 3 floating batteries.

At Malamoco 3 brigs, 3 gun boats, 3 floating batteries.

„ Lido 2 brigs, 2 „

„ Treporte 1 gun boat, 1 gun pirogue.

„ Venice 1 forty gun frigate, loaded with arms and ammunition, not intended to go out,

and fifty-nine gun pirogues disposed in the remainder of the Lagune. The Arch-duke John had got as far as Verona, but will not probably advance further till the Arch-duke Charles shall again take the offensive.

“Signed, L’EPINE,

“MAJOR GENERAL.”

“COMMODORE BRENTON, &c. &c.”

In consequence of the state of things as detailed in the preceding correspondence, Captain Brenton felt much solicitude to comply, as far as his very limited means would enable him, with the wishes of the Arch-duke John, both as regarded the preventing supplies reaching Venice from the coast of Romagna, as well as to give every possible annoyance to the French army in Dalmatia. In order to effect the latter object he had detached the Amphion to cruize between Zara

and Fiume, and the Thames was ordered to proceed off Punto Maestro, to stop all vessels attempting to get into Venice. And as the French had seized a number of fishing boats on the coast of Romagna, which they had laden with provisions, with a view of their not being examined by the British cruizers; Captain Waldegrave was directed to take all vessels of that description, and to destroy all such as were so employed, and to warn all fishermen against such acts of hostility, lest they should forfeit the indulgence they had hitherto received as peaceable industrious people. Captain Waldegrave was also ordered to take the Austrian flotilla off Cortelazzo under his command.

Having made these arrangements, Captain Brenton proceeded in the *Spartan* to the gulf of Fiume, with the intention of protecting the islands on the coast of Croatia, still under the Austrian government, and driving the French out of the others. The following letter to Lord Collingwood will at once give the official detail of his operations to the 12th of May

“ SPARTAN, OFF LUSSIN PICCOLO, 12th MAY, 1809.

“ MY LORD,

“ In my letter of the 6th instant I had the honour to inform your Lordship of my intention to assist the Austrians in getting possession of the islands on the coast of Croatia. On approaching Veglia on the 7th, I was told that it had surrendered the day before, and that the Austrians had gone on to Cherso. I received at the same time information of a French garrison consisting of 200 men, having fortified the Island of Lussin, with a determination to hold out till relieved. I proceeded directly for the port of Cherso, where the imperial troops arrived a few hours before us. I proposed to their Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel

Baron Peharnick, that a detachment should be embarked on board the Spartan, and an attack be immediately made upon Lussin, to which he assented, and came on board with one hundred and eighty men. We sailed from Cherso at daylight, on the 9th, accompanied by three trabacolos for the purpose of landing the troops. At two p.m. we arrived off the port of Lussin, and found the enemy prepared to receive us, having a battery on each side of the entrance of the bay, which is not more than two cables length across. From thence the bay runs to the S. E. about three miles in length, and in no part more than a quarter of a mile over. The shore on both sides high and rocky. At the extremity of the bay, the town is situated, and immediately above it, the citadel, a large stone building defended by eleven pieces of cannon.

“Our dispositions for the attack were immediately made, Baron Peharnick with fifty men in the boats of the Spartan, under the command of Lieutenant Willes, was to land to the southward of the western battery. Lieutenant Fagan commanding the royal marines of this ship, with his own party, and a detachment of Austrians embarked in two of the trabacolos for the purpose of attacking the eastern battery, whilst the ship was to run in and engage both of them.

“This plan was put in execution at three p.m. and both batteries carried after a very short resistance, the enemy retreating to the citadel.

“Baron Peharnick and myself having reconnoitred the town from an eminence, we were of opinion that the place might be taken by an immediate attack. Accordingly the imperial troops which were landed on the peninsula moved forward. Lieutenant Willes in the boats, accompanied by Lieutenant Fagan’s detachment in the trabacolos, ran up the bay accompanied by the ship. Upon approaching the town I sent a flag of truce forward, to summon it to surrender, but it was fired upon from the quay and houses. Lieutenant Willes instantly pushed forward in the most gallant manner with his boats, and found an anchorage for the ship, within pistol shot of the town, of which I availed myself

immediately. One of the trabacolos with the marines and imperialists was at this moment sunk by the fire from the citadel, happily no lives were lost, and the troops landed to the left of the town, from whence they dislodged a party of the enemy that opposed them, the ship opening her fire upon the citadel.

“At twenty-two minutes past five a flag of truce was hoisted at the citadel, and the firing ceased. An officer came off to apologize for the flag of truce being fired at by mistake, and to know what terms we would grant. Our answer was, that the garrison should surrender at discretion, and an hour given for deliberation; at the expiration of which time a peremptory refusal was returned, and the firing recommenced on both sides; the remainder of the troops were landed, and the heights occupied to the right and left of the town. At half-past eight, finding the citadel silenced, I ceased firing, to give the troops an opportunity of advancing to surround it, or to storm it if practicable, and sent a field piece to Lieutenant Willes to cover them. At eleven, a sharp fire of musketry took place between the advance posts and the enemy. I immediately ordered Lieutenant Baumgardt to move forward with a twelve pounder carronade, and place it on an eminence to the right of the citadel. I sent another to Lieutenant Willes on the left, with directions for the troops to fall back upon their guns, that the ship might renew her fire. By three a.m. the batteries were erected within three hundred yards to the right and left of the citadel, and Baron Peharnick sent me word that the troops had retreated into the rear of them. A heavy fire commenced immediately, which was returned from the citadel. At four, a flag of truce came off with proposals to surrender, on condition of the garrison being sent to Italy: this I positively refused, and continued firing till five minutes after six, when they surrendered at discretion.

“I feel particularly grateful to Lieutenant Colonel Baron Peharnick for his active and cordial co-operation; the ability with which he posted his troops during the night, and his unwearied exertions do him the greatest honour. He speaks in high terms of the officers and men belonging to H. M. S. under

my command. It is with much satisfaction I corroborate his testimony, and add mine to the good conduct of the Imperial officers and troops. The Chasseurs particularly distinguished themselves.

“I have had frequent opportunities to observe the merit of Lieutenant Willes first of the Spartan, and I do assure your Lordship, that in every part of his duty it is truly conspicuous. I am at a loss which to admire most, his intrepidity, zeal, or judgment.

“The conduct of Lieutenant Baumgardt, second lieutenant, is equally meritorious upon this occasion; both these officers had very considerable difficulties to encounter in getting their guns upon the height, and the activity with which this service was performed was a subject of admiration to our allies, and of surprise to our enemies, who deemed it impracticable.

“From Mr. Slinner, the master, I experienced the greatest assistance, as well in working and placing the ship, as in directing the guns, having given him the command of the main deck in the absence of the other officers.

“The Royal Marines under Lieutenants Fagan and Fottrell distinguished themselves so much by their steadiness and gallantry, that Baron Peharnick gave them the advanced post during the night within pistol shot of the enemy. It is but just to the petty officers and ship’s company to say, that their coolness and cheerful exertions during such a variety of service, entitle them to my warmest approbation. They seemed to vie with each other in supporting the honour of their country, and fully succeeded.

“I am happy to say that we have lost no one, only two Imperialists and one English wounded. The ship has suffered very little, having taken such a position as to be below the range of the enemy’s guns, while the citadel was exposed to our fire, and nearly destroyed. The enemy had two killed and one wounded.

“A number of merchant vessels were found in the port, but as it did not appear that they had ever navigated under the enemy’s flag, and are in general the property of the inhabitants, we have given them up; two only, being Italians, were made prize of.

“The prisoners are to proceed to Fiume, under the escort of the Imperial troops, excepting the officers, who are on board the Spartan to be landed at Trieste.

“I have the honour to enclose a list of the garrison, guns, &c. and of the killed and wounded.

“I have, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“TO VICE-ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD.”

List of Garrison, guns, military stores, &c. found in the Citadel and Batteries of Lussin, 10th May, 1809.

| <i>Infantry.</i> | <i>Rifle Corps.</i> | <i>Artillery.</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Captain | 1 Captain | 1 Captain |
| 1 Lieutenant | 1 2nd Lieutenant | 1 Serjeant Major |
| 1 2nd ditto | 2 Serjeants | 1 Serjeant |
| 5 Serjeants | 2 Corporals | 1 Bombardier |
| 7 Corporals | 41 Rank and File | 1 Corporal |
| 2 Drummers | | 14 Artillery men |
| 90 Rank and File | | Total—173. |
| | | |
| Iron Guns 24 pounders 6 | Muskets..... 568 | |
| 6 " 7 | Blunderbusses 3 | |
| 4 " 2 | Powder 30 barrels. | |
| 2 " 1 | A quantity of shot of every descrip- | |
| Brass Guns 4 " 2 | tion. | |
| | Forge for heating shot apparatus | |
| Total 18 | complete. | |
| | Provisions for garrison for 3 months. | |
| | | |
| Killed and wounded— | French killed— | |
| British wounded 2 | 2 Rank and File. | |
| Austrian 1 | 1 Ditto Wounded. | |
| | “J. BRENTON.” | |

The nature and variety of the service in getting possession of Lussin, and the imperative duty of giving due credit to the Austrians for the share they had in the affair, unavoidably extended this letter to a great length.

It may now, in justice to the officers and men engaged in the expeditions, which followed each other with so much rapidity between the 23rd of April and the 9th of May, be considered excusable to lay before the reader, Lord Collingwood's letter acknowledging the official communication.

“VILLE DE PARIS, OFF TOULON, 10th JUNE, 1809.

“SIR,

“I have received your letter of the 27th April, and two of the 5th May. The first informing me of an attack made by the Spartan, Amphion, and Mercury, upon the town of Pesaro, on the 23rd April, and the capture of all the vessels in that port; the latter describing your operations which were equally successful at the port of Cesenatico on the 2nd May.

“The dexterity and skill with which these two important services were performed, are exceedingly satisfactory to me; and the success with which they were attended, is an ample proof of the judicious arrangements made, and the ability with which the whole was conducted, and terminated without injury to the assailants. In Captains Hoste and Duncan you had able assistants, and the judicious conduct of Lieutenant Willes deserves the highest commendation.

“I recommend you to have made a number of small iron wedges, about three inches long, for the purpose of bursting guns which you wish to destroy. Those spiked are soon restored to service again; the wedge seldom fails to disable them entirely. The gun must be fired with a bit of slow match, to give time to remove out of the reach of explosion.

“I am, &c.

“Signed,

“COLLINGWOOD.”

On the 4th of July his Lordship gives the following answer to the official account of the capture of Lussin.

“VILLE DE PARIS, OFF TOULON, 4th JULY, 1809.

“SIR,

“I have received your letter of the 12th May, informing me of your having attacked and taken the citadel and defences of the Island of Lussin, in which service Lieutenant Colonel Baron Peharnick and one hundred and eighty Austrians had co-operated.

“The testimony you give of the zeal, enterprize, and good judgment of Lieutenant Willes on the occasion, and the meritorious exertions of the other officers and men of the Spartan employed on this service, is exceedingly gratifying to me.

“Could anything add to the satisfaction at the annoyance which you have given to the enemy, and the credit which has attached to His Majesty’s arms, in the present instance, it would be the assurance you give of the active and cordial co-operation afforded by the Commander and troops of His Imperial Majesty.

“I am, &c.

“COLLINGWOOD.”

In a letter from his Lordship to Lord Mulgrave, then First Lord of the Admiralty, he thus adverts to this affair. “I cannot say too much to your Lordship of the zeal and talent of Captain Brenton; of these he gives proof whenever he is employed, and he seems to be everywhere. At Lussin he undertook and accomplished a service which would have established a reputation, had he never had another opportunity; and now at Cerigo his conduct has not been less distinguished.”*

From Lussino the Spartan being joined by the Amphion, Captain Brenton pushed for Trieste, and on his reaching the bay, received intelligence that the French army having crossed the Lizonzo, on the 13th, were in

* Correspondence and Memoirs of Lord Collingwood, p. 554.

possession of the heights of Optehina, commanding Trieste; and while off Peran, on the 18th, they had the mortification to see them enter Trieste. The prizes which the little squadron had taken at Pesaro, were all in that port, about six of the most valuable were seen coming out, and by the greatest exertion of the young midshipmen who had the charge of them, succeeded in getting under the guns of their own ships; the others of course fell into the hands of the French, as did all those which had been taken at Cesenatico, and had been sent into Rovigno. As the vessels which escaped were not in a state to be sent to Malta, the two captains with the consent of their officers and people chartered two Greek polacre ships, on board of which they shipped their cargoes, and sent them to Malta; whilst they remained on the coast of Istria in readiness to act in any manner in which they could best afford assistance to the Austrian towns, now rapidly falling into the hands of the French. The following letter to Captain Brisbane, off Corfu, contains a detail of affairs at the time in the Adriatic.

“ SPARTAN, OFF PERAN, 19th MAY, 1809.

“ SIR,

“ A corps of the French army, under General Miolis, passed the Lizonzo on the 13th; and on the 17th, occupied the heights of Optehina, when a skirmish took place between the advanced posts and the Austrians.

“ It was reported that the enemy were prevented from entering Trieste by the vicinity of the Austrian General Giulai, who was at Laybach with 15,000 men, whilst General Zach, with a detachment was in possession of the pass of Prevolt. Yesterday, however, the enemy entered Trieste at ten a. m. from which circumstance I fear they are no longer under apprehensions of

being attacked by the Austrian army, and that they will form their junction with General Marmont in Dalmatia. They have also sent another corps to take possession of Fiume.

“I think it of the highest importance that this intelligence should reach you as soon as possible, that you may forward it to Malta; and at the same time stop any vessels that may be on their way to Trieste or Fiume. I cannot spare a ship, having only the *Amphion* with me. I therefore send this by a *trabacolo*.

“The *Thames* is off Venice, I have sent a vessel to recall her, and upon her joining, I trust we shall be able to prevent the Russians* from going to Ancona, which (in the event of the French having only taken possession of this country for the purpose of pillage, and with the intention of falling back again) I think it likely they may be obliged to attempt.

“If there are only the two French frigates at Corfu, and you have received no further information, since your last by the *Thames*, you will immediately send what sloops of war you may have under your orders to join me between Lussino and Ancona.

“The Island of Lussin, captured by His Majesty’s ship under my command, and two companies of Imperial troops, on the 10th instant, proves to be at this moment a most valuable acquisition. Thither all the vessels and merchants from Istria have repaired, and it affords a port for the Austrian flotilla. Should there be no hopes of the Austrians regaining possession of the coast, they will all proceed to Malta, or Sicily, for which purpose I am particularly anxious to have some disposable vessels of war.

“I am, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“TO CAPTAIN BRISBANE,

“(Or the Captain of any of H.M.S. off Corfu.)”

Captain Brenton was fully aware of his very great responsibility in thus continuing in the Adriatic, notwithstanding the order he had received from Lord Col-

* Three Russian line of battle ships which had been long at Trieste.

lingwood, to leave that station ; and he also well knew how rigid his Lordship was in exacting the most implicit obedience to his commands. He felt however that an imperative duty called upon him to give all the aid in his power to the Austrians, with whose precise situation the Admiral could not be acquainted. He therefore wrote the following letter to account for his conduct.

“SPARTAN, OFF LUSSIN, 26th MAY, 1809.

“MY LORD,

“The Redwing has just joined me with your Lordship’s orders of the 18th April, which I should have put into immediate execution, but from the important and unexpected events which have taken place in the vicinity, since they were written.

“The success of the Arch-duke Charles on the 21st ult. was followed by a reverse ; the left wing of the Austrian army being defeated. The Arch-duke was in consequence obliged to retreat towards Vienna, and the Arch-duke John, who had advanced as far as Verona, was under the necessity of falling back first to Cornegliano, and afterwards to Villach. The French under General Miolis, taking advantage of this movement, passed the Lizonzo on the 13th with the intention of taking possession of Trieste, which occasioned a general panic in that city, and induced many of the merchants and inhabitants to fly with their property on board of such vessels as they could procure in the port.

“The capture made by H. M. S. under my command, assisted by two companies of Croatian troops, on the 10th instant, off the Island of Lussin, (a detail of which I have the honour to enclose for your Lordship’s information) has become of much importance in affording them a safe harbour.

“The Spartan and Amphion arrived off Trieste on the 16th, and found the heights of Optshina occupied by the enemy. The Austrian flotilla consisting of two brigs, and nine gun boats under

sail in the bay, and a number of vessels of every description in a state of utmost distress and confusion from the precipitate departure.

“The Russian squadron was at the same time ready for sea. The Imperial vessels anchored on the 17th in the bay of Peran in order to complete their equipment. The French marched into Trieste on the same day. On the 18th the Spartan and Amphion anchored in Peran. I had dispatched the Imperial brig to recall the Thames, which arrived on the 19th. The Imperial convoy sailed on the 20th for Lussin, and on the 21st His Majesty’s ships left the bay.

“Under the idea that a junction might be formed between the Russian squadron, and that of the French in Ancona, it was my intention to have endeavoured to burn the latter with rockets, and accordingly directed our course towards the latter place, but calms prevented our getting further than Rimini before last night, when anxious lest H. M. ships might be wanted on the coast of Dalmatia, and the wind coming to the southward, I pushed for the place where we have just arrived, the convoy having anchored only a few hours before us.

“The latest accounts we can procure are as follow, that the French still occupy Trieste, and that they are hourly expected at Fiume, which the Austrian troops and gun vessels have quitted and gone to Segna: that General Meydick is still successful in Dalmatia, and that General Marmont is shut up in Zara, from whence it is probable he will, (if not relieved by the army from Istria,) endeavour to make his escape. Colonel Meydick commanding the Imperial flotilla at Segna, is very urgent for the co-operation of the British frigates.

“The vessels which have taken refuge in Lussin, as well as the island itself, are in great distress from the want of provisions, &c. and from the state in which we left them, the batteries are very defenceless.

“Having seriously considered all these circumstances, and the effect which might at such a moment be produced upon the mind of the inhabitants by that force being weakened, which they are

so accustomed to look up to for protection; I trust I shall only anticipate your Lordship's wishes by remaining on the coast, until the senior officer off Corfu can be informed of the situation of affairs.

"I wrote to Captain Brisbane on the subject, on the 19th, by an Austrian brig, but am informed that she has only sailed for Corfu this morning. I shall therefore dispatch the Redwing with this, and with the Amphion and Thames use our utmost efforts in assisting the Austrian army in fortifying the island, and facilitating (if necessary) the evacuation of Fiume and Segna.

"Several reports corresponding in general with each other, particularly as to dates, have lately reached us of a battle having taken place near Schoenbrun, and that the Imperialists had beaten the French, but little confidence is placed in them. The pass of Prevalt is however believed to be still in possession of General Giulai with 15,000 Croats, which accounts for the French not having advanced more rapidly in that quarter.

"I have, &c.

"J. BRENTON."

"TO VICE-ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD."

On the 28th May, while off Lussin with the Spartan and Amphion, Captain Brenton fell in with a squadron of line of battle ships under Captain Hargood, consisting of the Northumberland, Excellent, and Montagu; and no sooner had the Commander received Captain Brenton's report of the state of Trieste, than he decided upon making an immediate attack upon the Russian squadron in that port, and made all sail for it, sending the Spartan and Amphion a-head. The squadron got into the bay at day-light on the 29th, and had the wind continued, would undoubtedly have succeeded in their object without much loss; but the line of battle ships were first becalmed on the south shore, and after-

wards involved in one of those extraordinary currents so common in the Adriatic, that although apparently having sufficient way for steerage, yet with every sail full, neither helm or sails had any power over the ships, which were to use the common phrase among seamen, completely in irons; whilst at the same time, the Spartan and Amphion, not a league to the northward, were perfectly free.

This most mortifying detention continued until five o'clock in the evening, when the sea breeze set in, and the influence of the current was no longer felt; but the Russians and the French had made good use of their time. They had from four o'clock in the morning a conviction that an attack was intended; and the Russian ships were hauled close into shore, and moored head and stern with their broadsides commanding the entrance of the harbour. Their inside guns were landed, and batteries made with them all along the Eastern, and Northern shores of the bay, manned with French troops; they had also forges for heating shot, and every preparation for a vigorous defence, which fourteen hours could give them, assisted as they were by several thousands of French troops. These preparations passed under the immediate notice of Captain Brenton and Captain Hoste, who were together the whole day, and could see all the operations of the enemy through their spy-glasses, frequently going together on board the Commodore to make their report during the day. Both agreed that in the early part of the day, success to the British Squadron might be considered as certain; but they were also both of opinion that as the day declined,

the prospect was clouded over ; and long before six o'clock they had expressed their conviction to the Commodore that an attack would be hopeless. At this hour when the sea breeze set in, the Commodore taking Captain Brenton into his cabin, requested he would give a decided official opinion as to the expediency of making an attempt upon the Russian ships. To which Captain Brenton answered, " Were I in your place commanding this squadron, I certainly would not make the attempt ; the enemy are now too strong, and the hazard to the British squadron would be too great." The Commodore requested the first Lieutenant might be sent for to hear this opinion, when Captain Brenton said, " If you will turn the hands up on the quarter deck, I will repeat what I have said, before the whole ship's company." This was deemed conclusive, and the signal was made immediately for the squadron to haul their wind. Some dissatisfaction was manifested at this decision, and expressed to the great annoyance of the Commodore ; but a moment's consideration would have convinced the most ardent and intrepid officer in the navy, that not only all chance of success was out of the question, but that the retreat of the British Squadron from the port would have been very doubtful, if possible. The sea breeze had set in fresh at six o'clock, and would, in all probability, have lasted till midnight. Under such circumstances how was a crippled ship to have made her retreat ? and what must have been the situation of the squadron, exposed to the fire of three line of battle ships, converted into floating batteries, their guns from the side next the shore all landed and become heavy

batteries, manned with French troops, and at least 5000 of these occupying Trieste? Captain Brenton and Captain Hoste never ceased to congratulate themselves as having been the means of saving the squadron from the most severe loss, if not from destruction.

The Squadron now proceeded to the coast of Romagna, and another attack was made upon the town of Pesaro. Captains Brenton and Hoste landed in the command of the Marines, but troops arriving from all parts, the Commodore found it expedient to call off the attacking party. (Note in the Life of Sir Wm. Hoste, Vol. 1. p. 341.)

On the 5th of June the Spartan was ordered to proceed to Malta to refit, and complete her stores and provisions, and from thence to go to Messina, and form a part of Rear Admiral Martin's squadron for the defence of Sicily. In the latter end of June she left Malta; proceeded to Messina, and was from thence ordered off Naples to join the Squadron employed under Rear Admiral Martin, in co-operating with the British forces under Major General Stuart, which had taken possession of the Islands of Ischia and Procida.

Captain Brenton shortly after received the following letter from Lord Collingwood, dated,—

“VILLE DE PARIS, OFF TOULON, 30th JULY, 1809.

“SIR,

“I have received your letter of the 26th May, stating to me your reasons for remaining in the Adriatic, after the receipt of my order of the 18th of April, and detailing your proceedings. Under the circumstances you have represented, I fully approve of your having continued in that sea, until Captain Har-

wood joined, and I feel much satisfaction, Sir, in this opportunity of signifying the high sense I entertain of your judicious measures, and active services, both in aid of the Austrians, and for the annoyance of the enemy, while you were in the Adriatic sea; but there were more ships in that quarter, than the state of the fleet would admit of, which obliged me to recall the Spartan.

“ I am, Sir, &c.

“ COLLINGWOOD.”

“ CAPTAIN BRENTON,

“ H.M.S. SPARTAN.”

Captain Brenton's mind was completely set at rest by this letter, which not only conveyed approbation of the responsibility he had incurred, but expressed high commendation for his conduct, and even as it were apologized for recalling him from the Adriatic, which to those who know Lord Collingwood, will appear as a very strong testimony of his approval. This testimony was subsequently confirmed by the following letter.

“ VILLE DE PARIS, AT SEA, 5th Nov. 1809.

“ SIR,

“ Having transmitted to the Secretary of the Admiralty your letter describing the particulars of the attack made on the fort, and defences of the Island of Lussin, and of the surrounding Islands, I am commanded by their Lordships to convey their sentiments of admiration at the intrepidity, zeal, and judgment so eminently displayed on that occasion, and I beg you will please to communicate the same to the officers, seamen, and marines, employed under your orders on that service.

“ I am, &c.

“ COLLINGWOOD.”

“ CAPTAIN BRENTON,

“ H.M.S. SPARTAN.”

CHAPTER XIII.

RETURN TO MALTA TO REFIT.—SUDDEN OFFER OF JOINING THE EXPEDITION AGAINST THE IONIAN ISLANDS AS SUDDENLY ACCEPTED.—CAPTURE OF ZANTE, CEPHALONIA, AND CERIGO.—APPROBATION OF LORD COLLINGWOOD.—CRUIZE ON THE COAST OF ITALY.—ACTION OFF NAPLES, VICTORY, AND SEVERE WOUND; CARRIED TO PALERMO AND MALTA.—LETTERS ON THE SUBJECT, AND EXTRACT FROM HIS PERSONAL MEMORANDA.—SAILS FOR ENGLAND.

AFTER the evacuation of these Islands, the Spartan was sent to convey the Sicilian troops to Palermo, and from thence was ordered to Messina. It was at this time that her Captain first heard, in a conversation with the Commander of the Forces, Sir John Stuart, and Captain Spranger, the senior Captain of that Port, of an intended attack upon the Ionian Islands, when Captain Spranger mentioned that the Spartan was to be one of the squadron for that expedition. The ship however having been ordered subsequently to Malta to refit, was sent from thence to Palermo; but having met with bad weather off Pantellaria, and received much injury in the foremast, they were under the necessity of bearing up again for Malta, and the ship was hauled under the shear for the purpose of having the mast taken out. Whilst undergoing this

repair in the latter end of September, Captain Brenton was dining with Sir Alexander Ball, the Port Admiral at Sant Antonio, and after dinner Sir Alexander took him aside, and communicated to him a letter which he had just received from Captain Spranger at Messina, informing him that the expedition against the Ionian Islands was on the point of sailing, but no mention was made of the Spartan, as that ship was considered as detached, or on other service. Captain Brenton repeated to Sir Alexander the conversation above alluded to with Captain Spranger respecting the expedition; and requested, as the service upon which he had been recently employed, was not of very great importance, that he might be dispatched to Zante, the first Island to be attacked, where he might yet be in time. Sir Alexander expressed his apprehension that from the state in which the Spartan then was, she could not be ready for some days, and that it would be consequently too late. Captain Brenton urged that he might be permitted to make the trial; and having received the sanction of his kind friend, immediately set off for Valletta. By the time he could get on board the ship at the dock yard it was nearly nine o'clock, and the people were all in their hammocks; but the hands were at once turned up, and no sooner was the cause known, than all was joy and alacrity. The foremast had been got in that evening, but the rigging was on shore. The keys of the dock-yard, with the attendance of the officers was forthwith procured; the spars for making the topsail yards were got upon the quarter-deck, and the carpenters of the ship employed in making them. Before daylight

great progress was made in rigging the ship. The artificers of the dock-yard now came on board, and caulking and other repairs went on rapidly. By five o'clock in the evening the ship began to warp down to the entrance of the harbour, and as no powder could be received on board while in the dockyard, the launch was sent to receive it at the magazine ; and to wait in Bizzy Bay for the ship. At six o'clock the artificers were put into their boats, leaving much of their work undone, and even the caulking stages hanging over the side. The ship made sail with a fair wind out of the harbour, and picking up the launch, ran clear of the port, when the powder was taken on board, the boats hoisted in, and all sail made for Zante, where they arrived on the morning of the 8th, but no ships were seen there. Captain Brenton immediately proceeded to make his observations as to the batteries and landing, with whatever other remarks which might be useful in making the attack ; and having passed the day in this service, the next morning when running round the N.E. end of the Island, he had the pleasure of seeing the Warrior, Belle Poule, Philomel, and transports. He was on board the Warrior at seven, to the great surprize of Captain Spranger, who was much gratified by the information Captain Brenton had brought him, and on which the General (Oswald) and the Commander immediately began to form the plan of attack. The troops landed the following morning under cover of the Spartan and Belle Poule's guns, and after a very little resistance a flag of truce was hung out from the fortress, and in the course of the evening the Island surrendered.

On the 10th the Commodore proceeded next to attack Cephalonia, the Commandant of which surrendered without resistance, on the squadron entering the bay ; and as soon as it was taken possession of, Captain Spranger detached Captain Brenton in the Spartan, with two companies of the 35th regiment to attack Cerigo ; permitting him to call on his way off Zante, and to take one of the prizes captured there with the Island, a beautiful brigantine, which he was to man from the Spartan, and with a portion of the 35th to accompany him in attacking Cerigo. The Spartan arrived off Cerigo, and as Captain Spranger's orders were positive as to running no risk of losing men, in the event of the enemy being found in force, and as a large body of troops were seen in the castle of Capsali, a very strong fortress, and a detachment at the port in the Bay of Capsali ; some doubt was entertained by Captain Brenton and Major Clarke commanding the detachment of the 35th, as to the propriety of making the attack. Captain Brenton quoted Lord Nelson's sentiments upon such a case. "Whenever there is a doubt," said the hero, "always fight ; the public will bear you out, whatever may be the consequences ;" and this at once decided the question.—The following letter gives the particulars of the result of this conclusion.

" SPARTAN, OFF THE ISLAND OF CERIGO,
13th OCTOBER, 1809.

" SIR,

" In my last from Zante I expressed a hope that we might be able to reduce the Island of Cerigo, without any further reinforcement ; this idea was strengthened by papers found upon the Governor of the Island, made prisoner at Zante.

“Major Clarke and myself decided upon making the first attack upon the forts and harbour of Arlemmino, in order to prevent the escape of any vessels which might be there. The forts are those of San Nicholas and San Joaquim. The first is a stone building mounting nine guns, the latter an embrasure battery of four guns. At four p.m. on the 9th, we ran into the bay, the forts opened upon us, but were both silenced in a few minutes by the ship and tender, whilst the troops under Major Clarke landing, made several prisoners; the enemy had one killed and one wounded upon this occasion; one man of the 35th was wounded on our side.

“At day-light on the 10th, we weighed with the intention of immediately attacking the castle of Capsali, in the bay of Cerigo; but variable winds prevented our getting round.

“At two p.m. the troops and marines were landed in a small cove in the bay of San Nicholas, and marched forward towards the castle, one watch of the Spartan following with three field pieces.

“I landed with the troops that I might be enabled to command the resources of the ship by signal, without the delay of sending messages; foreseeing that she could not be brought to act against the castle, while the wind continued southerly.

“The nature of the country rendered our approach to the castle extremely difficult, particularly for the guns which did not arrive till ten o'clock on the 11th instant, at the position which the troops occupied; a height on a level with the castle and within four hundred yards of it. A fire commenced on both sides with guns and musketry, which continued the greater part of the day. In the evening some rockets were landed from the ship, and in the course of the night some of them were thrown at the citadel. At daylight I ordered two twelve pounders to be landed from the ship, but before they could be got on shore, a flag of truce came out, with an offer of surrendering, provided the garrison were allowed to retire to Corfu. This was refused, and after some deliberation, the Commandant surrendered on the same terms as were granted to Zante and Cephalonia.

“At ten o'clock our troops took possession of the castle.

“It is to the zeal and ability of Major Clarke, and the judicious arrangements he made of the force under his command, that the speedy reduction of this strong fort is to be attributed. The enemy were cut off from any prospect of relief or escape, and were convinced that our means of offence were hourly increasing.

“I cannot speak too highly of the officers and men of both services, as well in respect to their cheerful perseverance under fatigue, as to their gallantry when opposed to the enemy.

“I am happy to say that our loss has been much less than might have been expected; one bombardier of the Royal Artillery killed, two privates of the 35th wounded.

“I cannot in justice to Lieutenant Willes, first of the Spartan, close this letter without saying, that fort San Joaquin of two eighteen, and two nine pounders, was completely silenced by the gallant manner in which he attacked it in the tender, with a party of the 35th Regiment on board.

“The inhabitants of the island received us with demonstrations of joy. I have sent Lieutenant Willes in the tender with the dispatches, and I shall remain off this place till I receive your further directions.

“I enclose for your information the articles of capitulation, together with a list of artillery, &c. &c. found on the island.

“I have, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“CAPTAIN SPRANGER, &c. &c.

“WARRIOR.”

| <i>Prisoners.</i> | <i>Guns taken.</i> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Officers 9 | Twenty-four pounders 1 |
| Non-commissioned ditto 6 | Eighteen ditto 3 |
| Rank and file 89 | Fifteen ditto 1 |
| — | Fourteen ditto 4 |
| 104 | Nine ditto 21 |
| — | Six ditto 4 |
| | Two ditto 2 |
| | One ditto 1 |
| | Eighteen ditto Carronades 2 |
| | — |
| | 39 |
| | — |

It is stated in the official letter respecting the capture of Cerigo, that the Governor of this Island was made a prisoner on the taking of Zante, and that papers containing much useful information had been found upon him. Amongst others, was the copy of a letter from him to the Governor of Corfu, stating that some Mainotes (natives of the Morea) having landed on the Island of Cerigo, he had endeavoured in vain to drive them off again, but not succeeding by his arguments—he added,—“*Enfin je me suis avise de leur fair empoisonner les eaux, et par ce moyen quelques uns de ces miserables ont peri, et les autres s'enfuirent.*” Appalling as such an acknowledgment may be, and evidently given to the Governor of Corfu as a happy stratagem, for which the abominable perpetrator took credit, it had quite escaped the recollection of Captain Brenton ; and his whole party might have become the victims of this unheard of system of treachery, but for the advice of a Greek Priest, who came to the British officers in the night, whilst on their march to attack the Castle of Capsali, and recommended that they should immediately place sentinels on the stream from which they took their water, and accurately examine it, if possible, to its source. He then repeated the story of poisoning the Mainotes, and explained how it had been done. A vast quantity of arsenic had been put into the body of a dead hog, and placed in the stream, above the spot where these people had encamped, and the water filtering through it became a deadly poison. On taking possession of the castle, Captain Brenton asked the Governor's housekeeper whether the story was true ;

her answer was quite in character with the establishment to which she belonged, "E vero," said she, "ma non cattivo."

After the capture of the Ionian Islands, the squadron under Captain Spranger with the troops returned to Sicily, and Captain Brenton was left to cruize off the Islands, in order to be in readiness to give any assistance that might be required.

The following are Captain Brenton's own reflections at this period of his life.

"After the capture of Cerigo all active service ceased for the remainder of the year. I had the gratifying experience of having entirely gained the good opinion and confidence of the Commander in Chief. You will not fail, my darling children, to observe, and I hope with sincere gratitude, the blessings bestowed upon your father by a kind providence, which made the most untoward and unpromising circumstances turn out to his advantage ; which preserved his life from the violence of the enemy, and the danger of the seas ; and strengthened his health under every trial. 'O! that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and the wonders that he doth to the children of men.' This delightful verse ought never to be absent from our minds, when we contemplate the numerous blessings we have received."

While thus employed, he was naturally anxious to become acquainted with the resources of these Islands, and to learn the dispositions of the inhabitants towards their new allies ; for in that light only could the English be considered ; as they had, on hauling down the French

flag, not hoisted their own, but that of the Septinsular Republic. The following letter to Lord Collingwood, will give in a condensed form, the substance of the information he had obtained.

“ SPARTAN, HARBOUR OF ARGOSTOLI, CEPHALONIA,
17th NOVEMBER, 1809.

“ MY LORD,

“ I beg leave to enclose for your Lordship’s information a statistical account of this Island which Colonel Lowe* of the Corsican Rangers, Commandant of the Island, has had the goodness to procure for me, with the addition of his own remarks. I also enclose a table of the exports as well as the imports of the years 1793, 1800, and 1808.

“ I selected these periods in order to ascertain the comparative state of commerce under the Venetians, Russians, and French. I send also a list of the shipping belonging to Cephalonia for this year. I am under great obligations to Colonel Lowe for obtaining every part of this information for me.

“ The inhabitants seem very solicitous to enter into commercial speculations, but appear at the same time to be restrained by timidity, and want of confidence in themselves, from prosecuting them to any great extent. This I conclude will soon wear off.

“ They have applied for permission to navigate under the British flag, but as that could not be granted, they have requested to be allowed a convoy to Malta. I have assured them of your Lordship’s wish to promote as much as possible the prosperity of the Island, and have directed them to get their vessels in readiness for any convoy that might offer. Several have already arrived here from Zante in consequence.

“ The Spider has arrived here from Messina with two transports, and with orders to take back five others to that place, which are required for the service of the army in Sicily: she will at the same time escort the prisoners taken at Cerigo. I shall

* The late Lieutenant General Sir Hudson Lowe.

direct her commander to give protection to such Septinsular vessels, as their owners may think proper to send, and having seen the transports safe into Messina, to convoy the trade to Malta, to which place he is directed to return by his original orders.

“Should your Lordship think proper to allow this port to be a rendezvous for the convoy hitherto sent to Patras, it is admirably situated for the purpose; and by this island becoming a depot for British manufactures and colonial produce, it would insure not only to Cephalaria, but to Zante also, abundant supplies of corn and cattle by the vessels coming from the Morea, and the Islands of the Archipelago. The want of corn begins to be already felt, so much so that speculations are talked of, for procuring it even from Malta.

“From what I can judge of the island, by the little I have had an opportunity of seeing, it appears to me, that by industry and confidence, its produce in most instances would be greatly augmented in a very short time. The soil is excellent, and scarcely a tenth part of the island is cultivated.

“I went a few miles inland with Colonel Lowe, in order to examine the nature of the forest, but was prevented by the weather from effecting my intentions. From all I can learn, many valuable spars may be procured here, and some timber at a cheap rate. The woods are all in the hands of the government, which would gladly enter into a contract to bring the timber to the water side. Colonel Lowe is endeavouring to procure an exact description of the trees, and the price they would probably fetch when ready for embarkation, which I shall forward to your Lordship by the earliest conveyance. I enclose also a survey of this harbour taken by Mr. Glen, the master of the Warrior.

“I have, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“VICE ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD.”

Captain Brenton soon after received the following gratifying letter from the Commander in chief upon the subject of the attack upon Cerigo.

“VILLE DE PARIS, AT SEA, 1st NOV. 1809.

“SIR,

“I have received from Rear Admiral Martin your letter of the 13th ult. with its enclosures directed to Captain Spranger of the *Warrior*, detailing your proceedings in the *Spartan* with a detachment of troops in the reduction of the island of Cerigo.

“It affords me great satisfaction in having again to express my warmest approbation of that zeal and ability, which have so eminently distinguished your services, particularly within the last six months, to the great annoyance of the enemy. And the speedy reduction of so strong a fort as Cerigo, with so small a loss, bespeaks that judicious management which commands success.

“Your report of the gallantry and good conduct of Lieutenant Willes is highly creditable to that officer, and I have not failed to point out his merits in this and former cases to the Lords of the Admiralty.

“I am, &c.

“COLLINGWOOD.”

“TO CAPTAIN BRENTON,
“H.M.S. SPARTAN.”

This letter was followed by another in the month of January, 1810.

“VILLE DE PARIS, AT SEA, 16th JAN. 1810.

“SIR,

“Having communicated to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your proceedings at Cerigo when that island was reduced, I have great pleasure in informing you, Sir, that their Lordships have been pleased to express their great satisfaction at the ability with which you conducted that service, and the spirit with which it was executed by the officers and ship’s company of the *Spartan*.

“I am, Sir, &c.

“COLLINGWOOD.”

“CAPTAIN BRENTON, SPARTAN.”

Early in December the Spartan was ordered to proceed to Malta and refit, and in the beginning of January she sailed for Messina, and resumed her station under the command of Rear Admiral Martin, by whom Captain Brenton was sent off to Naples, in order to watch the movements of Murat, and his army intended for the invasion of Sicily. During the month of March he remained by the Rear Admiral's directions in the port of Messina, to direct the movements of the frigates and small vessels under the Rear Admiral's command, and to render all the assistance in his power to the British army charged with the defence of Sicily. Early in April he sailed for Naples, and continued cruising between that place, and the Island of Sicily, but without any material circumstance occurring until the 25th; when on that morning, being off Terracina with the *Success* and *Espoir* in company, several vessels were observed coming along shore, to which the British squadron immediately gave chase. The enemy ran for Terracina, and anchored in a small bay near the town, defended by two batteries, the following is Captain Brenton's official letter to Rear Admiral Martin.

“ SPARTAN, GULF OF GAETA, 25th APRIL, 1810.

“ SIR,

“ This morning, at nine a. m. we observed several sail of merchant vessels between Monte Circello and Terracina, and immediately gave chase to them in company with the *Success* and *Espoir*. The enemy reached Terracina, and anchored in a small bay within pistol shot of the town, under the protection of two batteries and a number of troops which occupied an extensive

range of buildings. The crews of the vessels,¹ one of which had guns, remaining on board for the purpose of defending them; the vessels were moored to the shore. I made the signal to prepare for anchoring, directing the *Espoir* to stand in and sound. She found twelve fathoms within half a mile of the batteries, a position which the *Spartan* and *Success* immediately occupied, and opened their fire upon the batteries; the armed boats of the two frigates covered by the *Espoir* then pushed in, boarded the ships (as per margin) and brought them out under an incessant fire of musketry from the store houses; the batteries being nearly silenced by the ships and sloop. Four or five small vessels had taken refuge under the town, but were hauled so near the shore, that I would not run the risk of exposing the people to a destructive fire, for an object of no importance, and made the signal to weigh.

“The firing began at thirty-six minutes past twelve, and continued till twenty minutes past one. I am happy to say we had a very small loss. I feel much indebted to Captain Ayscough of the *Success*, for the assistance received from him, and particularly to Captain Milford of the *Espoir*. From the light draught of water of the brig, I directed her to cover the boats, which was done in a most gallant and judicious manner, running close in shore and annoying the enemy with grape.

“The armed boats were under the command of Lieutenant Baumgardt, second of the *Spartan*, and the manner in which he led them to the attack was such, as to gain the admiration of all who witnessed it. He speaks in high terms of Lieutenant Sartorius, commanding the boats of the *Success*. Lieutenant Willes, first of the *Spartan*, of whose gallant conduct, I have had such frequent occasion to speak, was prevented by illness from taking this service upon himself as usual, but gave every possible assistance on board.

“Captain George Hoste of the Royal Engineers, accompanied me on this cruize, for the purpose of reconnoitring the enemy's batteries on the coast; his exertions were extremely useful in supplying the place of the absent officers at the guns.

"I never witnessed more zeal and good conduct than was displayed by all classes upon this occasion.

LIST OF VESSELS TAKEN.

| | | | | |
|---|---------------|--------|----------|--------------------|
| 1 | Santa Rosalia | ship | six guns | wine, lead and ore |
| 2 | Name unknown | barque | " | lead ore |
| 3 | " | " | " | lead ore |
| 4 | " | " | " | lead ore |

"I have the honour to be, &c.

" J. BRENTON."

'REAR ADMIRAL MARTIN, &c. &c. &c.'

The little squadron continued cruising off the bay of Naples until the 30th of April, when the *Espoir* was detached with the usual report of the enemy's vessels to the Rear Admiral.

In the midst of this trying, stirring, anxious life, it may be well to introduce an extract from a letter written home at this period, which shews that the energy and firmness of professional character were not incompatible with those softer feelings which form the happiness of domestic life ; but that one principle suggested and supplied the elements of each.

" SPARTAN, OFF TREPANI, 12th APRIL, 1810.

" Four years from this time, if my memory is correct, we had just taken up our residence at that earthly paradise, the *Petits Capucins* ; and how little did we then think, that in the course of such a period as has elapsed, so many events would have occurred ; that I should have had my liberty, and have passed three years on a foreign station.

" I know not what at this moment gave rise to these reflections ; but this I know, that the retrospect excites gratitude, and that I

feel the fullest confidence for the future. From the same causes, perhaps at the end of the next four years, we may all be assembled, and offering up together our thanks for the innumerable blessings we have received. ——— will perhaps say I am psalm-singing again; but be it so; I take peculiar pleasure in recurring to the past, and often think there are very few who have had so much prosperity with so little ground to hope for it.

“Many have been more fortunate, but multitudes less so; and as to my captivity; I would not part with the remembrance of it for five thousand pounds. It was the happiest part of my life, and is always present to my recollection. The test of real happiness is to be sensible of it at the time; and that I recollect was my case, particularly when walking in the little avenue above the alcove. A fine moonlight evening, and having nothing to do, have turned my thoughts that way, and I felt inclined to put them on paper for your benefit.”

On the 1st of May, the *Spartan* and *Success* having been a little to the northward of *Ischia*, Captain Brenton on re-entering the bay of *Naples* in the afternoon of that day, was not a little surprised to find the enemy's squadron so far out in the bay, as to give him a very reasonable prospect of bringing them to action, before they could regain the mole; and every sail was instantly set, and every effort made by both ships for this purpose; but the unsteadiness of the wind favoured them, and they were under shelter of the guns of *Naples*, before the two frigates could get within gun shot. This was felt by every one as a severe disappointment, and particularly by Captain Brenton, to whom this appeared as a golden opportunity snatched from him. The two frigates remained in the bay all the following day, the weather being squally, and the wind all round

the compass. Captain Brenton having given up all hopes that the enemy would venture out, as long as the *Success* was in company, made the signal for her Captain, and gave him orders to proceed ten leagues S.W. of the Island of Capri, thinking it probable that if only one frigate were in sight of the signal posts in the morning, the enemy would not hesitate with their superior force, consisting of a frigate of forty guns, a corvette of twenty-eight, a cutter of ten, and eight heavy gun boats, to attack her; especially should she be near their own batteries, under which they might retreat in case of being crippled.

In this he was not disappointed, for at six o'clock in the morning the whole squadron was seen coming out of the mole, and steering directly for the *Spartan*. The following is the official account of this, the last action in which Captain Brenton was engaged; as the wound received upon this occasion prevented his serving afloat for any length of time.

“*SPARTAN, OFF THE BAY OF NAPLES, 3rd MAY, 1810.*

“SIR,

“On the 1st instant, His Majesty's ships *Spartan* and *Success* chased the French squadron, consisting of one frigate of forty-two guns and three hundred and fifty men, one corvette of twenty-eight guns and two hundred and sixty men, one brig of eight guns and ninety-eight men, one cutter of ten guns and eighty men. They succeeded in getting into the mole of Naples, favoured by light and partial breezes.

“As I was sensible they would never leave that place of refuge, while two British frigates were in the bay, I directed Captain Ayscough to remain in the *Success* on my rendezvous, from five

to ten leagues S.W. of the island of Capri, continuing with the Spartan in the bay of Naples.

“ At day-light this morning we had the pleasure of seeing the enemy’s squadron as before mentioned, reinforced by eight gun boats, standing towards us in close line. The action began at fifty-six minutes after seven, exchanging broadsides when within pistol shot, passing along their line, and cutting off the cutter and gun boats. The enemy were under the necessity of wearing to renew their junction with them ; but were prevented by the Spartan taking her station on their weather beam. A close and obstinate contest ensued ; light and variable winds led us near the batteries of Baia, the enemy’s frigate making all sail, to take advantage of their shelter. The crippled state of the Spartan not allowing her to follow, we bore up raking the frigate and corvette as we passed them, and succeeded in cutting off the brig. The corvette having lost her foretopmast effected her escape with the assistance of the gun boats. The latter had during the action galled us excessively, by laying on our quarter, and the severity of our loss, ten killed and twenty wounded, may in some measure be attributed to this circumstance.

“ I was wounded myself about the middle of the action, which lasted two hours, but my place was most ably supplied by Mr. Willes, the first Lieutenant, whose merit becomes more brilliant by every opportunity he has of shewing it. He is without exception one of the best and most gallant officers I ever met with. To Lieutenants Baumgardt and Bourne I feel equally indebted for their exemplary conduct and gallantry.

“ Captain Hoste, of the Royal Engineers, had been sent with me for the purpose of reconnoitring the enemy’s position on the coast. Upon this occasion I requested him to take the command of the quarter deck guns, foreseeing that the whole attention of the first Lieutenant and myself would be required in manœuvring the ship, during the variety of service we were likely to expect. His conduct was truly worthy of the relationship he bears to my distinguished friend Captain Hoste of the Amphion.

“ The intrepidity and zeal of Mr. Slenner, the master, was

very conspicuous ; nor must I forget Mr. Dunn, the purser, who took charge of a division of guns on the main deck in place of their officer, absent in a prize with eighteen men, (which reduced our number to two hundred and fifty eight at the commencement of the action) he displayed the greatest gallantry. Much praise is also due to Lieutenants Fegan and Fotherell, of the Royal Marines, whose conduct was truly deserving of admiration.

“The Warrant, petty officers, and ship’s company evinced a degree of enthusiasm that assured me of success at the earliest period of the action.

“To the light and fluctuating winds, to the enemy’s being so near their own shores which are lined with batteries, they are indebted for the safety of their whole squadron, which at a greater distance from the shore, I do not hesitate to say, must have fallen into our hands.

“Among the killed we have to regret the loss of Mr. Robson, the master’s mate, a young man of great promise.

“I enclose a list of killed and wounded, with the damage we have otherwise sustained.

“I have, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“REAR ADMIRAL MARTIN.”

LIST OF THE ENEMY’S SHIPS, &c. ENGAGED.

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Ceres, frigate | 42 guns | 350 men, severely crippled, escaped under the batteries |
| Fama, corvette | 28 guns | 260 men, lost her fore-topmast, do. do. |
| Sparviere, brig | 8 guns | 98 men taken |
| Hannibal, cutter | 10 guns | 80 men, escaped |
| Eight gun boats | 1 twenty-four pounder each | 40 men each, escaped. |

Total, 96 guns, and 1108 men.

“J. B.”

In addition to these, it was afterwards known that Murat had in the morning embarked four hundred

Swiss troops in the different vessels, in order to make sure of carrying the Spartan by boarding. They were dressed in red like English marines, and extended the whole length of the vessels in which they were embarked, with their muskets ; a dreadful carnage must have been made amongst them.

Captain Brenton was wounded whilst standing on the capstan, the only place from whence he could see his numerous opponents. It was by a grape shot striking him on the left hip bone. As he did not at first feel the blow to be very severe, he concluded it to have been given by some of the ropes, which were falling in great numbers from aloft, as cut away by the shot. He jumped from the capstan, and came down on his right leg, but the left could not support him, and he fell ; and then blood was seen to issue from his back. He instantly thought of Lord Nelson's wound in the spine, and concluded from the little pain experienced, that his must have been the same. He was carried below, and on cutting out the shot, the surgeon discovered that the wound was not mortal.

When the action was over, the brig that had been captured was taken in tow, and proved to be Murat's royal yacht, sent out for the purpose of strengthening the squadron. On the sea breeze setting in, Mr. Willes, the first Lieutenant, who had also been wounded, paraded the prize before the mole of Naples, and then made sail out of the bay. On the following morning the Success and Espoir joined, and their surgeons were found most welcome assistants to the surgeon of the Spartan, who had none of his own.

His conduct indeed was most meritorious, and for the first week he was continually, night and day, passing from the sick bay to the Captain's cabin, hardly known to take either rest or food.

The Spartan proceeded to Palermo, on her way to Malta ; and the prize under Lieutenant Baumgardt was sent to Messina, in order to take Captain Hoste to head quarters, and from thence to proceed to Malta.

On the arrival of the Spartan at Palermo, an extraordinary order had been given that all vessels, from whatever place, should be put under quarantine, until liberated by order of the prime minister. This was the first instance since the Spartan had been upon the station. No sooner was the Admiral informed of the circumstance, than he sent off an express to the court, then at some distance in the country.

In the mean time Lord Amherst, the British Ambassador, embarked with the Admiral in his barge, and came off to the Spartan ; and as they were prevented by the quarantine laws from coming on board, they both mounted the stern ladders as high as the cabin windows, where Captain Brenton having ordered his cot to be hung near them, had an opportunity of conversing with his kind friends. Such an instance as an Ambassador and an Admiral suspended on two rope ladders, hanging over the stern of a ship, was probably never seen before, nor is it likely to recur. It is only mentioned here, to shew their kind solicitude to afford comfort to their suffering countrymen, for this was their object ; and as soon as they knew what means were the most likely to supply this, they returned on

shore, and boats were sent off, not only with fresh meat, fruit, and vegetables, but with every delicacy from the Ambassador's splendid table, for the use of the wounded. No pratique having been obtained that evening, Captain Brenton directed the first Lieutenant to weigh before day-light the following morning, and on the 10th they reached Malta, and were received in the most enthusiastic manner by all classes of persons, who seemed to vie with each other in testifying every possible act of kindness.

Captain Brenton was immediately taken on shore, to the house of his kind friend, Dr. Allen, the surgeon of the naval hospital, from whom, and his amiable family, he received the most unwearied attention. But as the situation of Dr. Allen's house had not the advantage of air and space which the Admiralty house possessed, the Commander in chief of the forces, Sir Hildebrand Oakes, in whose charge the house then was, requested Captain Brenton might be carried thither, and here he remained whilst his ship was refitting, with every possible advantage that the island or climate could offer. The wounded of the ship having of course been sent to the naval hospital; Mr. Williamson, the surgeon of the Spartan, most kindly and most affectionately devoted himself to his Captain, whom he seldom quitted but to procure accounts from his wounded shipmates, or to obtain for him some luxury which he thought might be acceptable. Of these there was no want, for the General, and indeed almost all the principal families were continually send-

ing whatever they thought might afford nutriment in the feeble state of the patient.

Soon after his arrival at Malta, Captain Brenton received the following letter from his excellent friend the Rear Admiral.

“CANOPUS, PALERMO, 10th MAY, 1810.

“SIR,

“I have great pleasure in sending to you the order of St. Ferdinand and of Merit, which I have this day received from His Majesty the King of the two Sicilies for that purpose, together with a copy of the letter that accompanied it.

“You are already, Sir, so fully acquainted with my sentiments, both public and private as far as relate to you, that I have only to say, that I hope you will soon be in a situation to serve your country with the same zeal, gallantry and judgment, which have marked your conduct.

“I have, &c.

“GEORGE MARTIN,

“REAR ADMIRAL.”

“CAPTAIN BRENTON,

“H.M.S. SPARTAN.”

Copy of a letter from Marquis Circello, inclosed in the above to Admiral Martin.

“PALERMO, 10th MAY, 1810.

“MONSIEUR L'AMIRAL,

“Le Roi mon auguste maitre vous a exprimé de vive voix, ses sensible regrets sur la situation du brave Capitaine Brenton, qui dans une des actions les plus glorieuses á la marine de la Grande Bretagne a été si dangereusement blessé. Mais sa Majesté toujours occupé de ce brave homme m'ordonne de vous parler encore, et de vous dire combien elle est affecté de la circonstance, et d'attribuer á une ordre generale existante et à l'

absence de sa Majesté de Palermo, qui a retardé l'ordre d'admettre sans délai à la pratique la fregate le Spartan. Que sa Majesté aime à se flatter, que le Capitaine Brenton guerira de sa blessure ; qu'un tel héros sera conservé à la marine anglaise, et à la bonne cause ; et que sa Majesté aura la satisfaction de le voir décoré de la croix de Commandeur de son Ordre de Mérite, que J'ai l'honneur de vous envoyer jointe à cette lettre, avec prière de la faire passer à ce brave Capitaine avec la plus grande promptitude ; vu qu'il tarde à sa Majesté qu'il reçoive ce témoignage des sentimens, que lui inspire son incomparable conduite ; et que le public y voit l'empressement de sa Majesté à reconnoître le mérite des braves officiers de son auguste et fidèle allié, qui exposent si courageusement leurs vies pour les intérêts communs, autant que pour ceux qui sont personnels à sa Majesté.

“ Le Roi ne doute pas, qu'en envoyant l'ordre au Capitaine Brenton, vous lui donnerez connaissance de cette lettre. Ainsi il ne me reste Mons. L'Amiral, que de vous reiterer l'assurance de la haute consideration avec laquelle J'ai l'honneur d'être.

“ MONS. L'AMIRAL, &c. &c. &c.

“ MARQUIS DE CIRCELLO.”

“ A SON EXCELLENCE

“ L'AMIRAL MARTIN.”

The Rear Admiral had, indeed, as he observes in his letter, most fully expressed his sentiments, public and private, as far as related to Captain Brenton, in his interview with him at the cabin windows of the Spartan, and they were of the most flattering, the most gratifying, and the most affectionate description. He said upon that occasion, “ My dear Brenton, this is a bad climate for wounds, I am anxious you should be at home. If you wish it, I will take the responsibility upon myself, and order the Spartan to England. I am sure the Commander in chief will approve of my doing

so. A frigate will be required to take Mr. Arbuthnot, our minister, from Constantinople to England, and I will appoint the Spartan for that purpose. He may be expected at Malta every day." This Captain Brenton joyfully accepted, as he felt that a long time must elapse before he could again be fit for active service; and his only wish now was to be restored as soon as possible to his family, where he knew happiness awaited him, if any where in this world.

His friend, for well he might call him so, Lord Collingwood, was now no more, having sunk under the disease, against which he had long struggled. For the last year of his life his feeling and his regard for Captain Brenton had become very warm, as may be seen by his official letters; and he undoubtedly left a strong recommendation of him to his successor, as one of the first acts of Sir Charles Cotton was to appoint Captain Brenton to the command of the squadron in the Adriatic, a situation which had long been the object of his wishes. It now however came when he could no longer avail himself of it. It reached him the day after he was wounded.

The last letter he received from Lord Collingwood was one so peculiarly his own, and so comprehensive in a short space, that it may not be amiss to insert it.

"VILLE DE PARIS, JANUARY 30th, 1810.

"SIR,

"I have received your letter of November, and am very much obliged to you for the statistical account of Cephalaria, and other returns shewing the strength and ability of that Island, and the plans of the excellent ports in it.

“The population of the country is not great, but by the adoption of wise measures it may rapidly increase. The republican spirits in Corfu may seek a refuge there from the oppression they suffer under the French. One, and perhaps the first object of the government ought to be, to increase the means of subsistence of the inhabitants, and attend to foreign commerce no further, than, as it is necessary to take off those articles which are exceeding the consumption of the Island; but I fear that foreign commerce will be too attractive not to engage them more deeply in it, than its profits will maintain protection for; and although it may enrich individuals, it will confine wealth to a few, and will prevent the increase of population; so that upon this principle I would not encourage them in the beginning of their independence to send many ships to sea, but rather to cultivate the land, and to prepare at home a commerce for foreigners who will come to them.

“The woods may become of considerable importance. They were represented to me two years since to contain much fine timber, both fir and oak, which the French cut down, and shipped at an anchorage on the S.E. point of the island.

“I have ordered that convoys shall occasionally be sent for the protection of the trade from Argostoli, but it cannot be done at regular stated periods, as General Oswald requests; nor is the trade of that extent that would make it necessary.

“I have received from Malta the copy of a letter, which you wrote to Sir Alexander Ball from Cerigo, in which is related the circumstance of the former Governor of that place, having removed his apprehensions of some people who passed over from the continent, by poisoning the waters where they inhabited, and by that means putting many of them to death. In that letter there are extracts from two of the Frenchman's letters, but his name is not mentioned. I would be glad if you would furnish me with copies of these two letters, with the address they bore, (*viz.*) that which informs his chief of the Albanians coming to the island, and that which relates to the means by which he got rid of them.

“If any of his letters give any account of Crete, the port, or