

fortification, I would beg the favour of you to inform me what he says of them. In one of his letters he says, he has been over to Candia, and that he has not been idle. A Frenchman seldom is, where any mischief is to be done.

“As to the Cephalonians navigating under the British flag, it cannot be done, but by an authority from His Majesty; but I have written to the Consuls of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, to inform them, that these islands being under the protection of England, it is expected their flag will be respected.

“It would be very convenient for the convoys to assemble there, but I apprehend that the vessels to come from Patrass, would require a convoy to the place of assembling, and Cephalonia being neutral, there must always be a certain force for their protection while assembling, so that two convoys would always be requisite instead of one.

“I am, &c.

“COLLINGWOOD.”

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

Further accounts of the 3rd May from Captain Brenton's notes to his children.

“In the beginning of the year 1810, I was sent to resume my station on the coast of Italy. Naples was now made the principal point of my observation, in consequence of the enemy having increased their little squadron, by the addition of numerous gun boats, and threatening Sicily with invasion by crossing the straits of Messina. As it was of the utmost importance to keep this squadron blockaded up in Naples, I was ordered on this service, and on the 3rd of May, the action took place in which I was wounded; the details of which you will find in their place in my letter book.

There are some however that I could only communicate to those as nearly interested in them, as you are my dear children ; and even to you, perhaps, I should not have mentioned them, but to shew you the efficacy and comfort of a humble trust in God. I know you will be deeply interested in everything I write, and as this book is only intended for your perusal, I shall not risk censure for egotism. In going down to the enemy I put up a short but fervent prayer to the Almighty, that he would receive your beloved mother and yourselves under his holy protection, and bless you, and that he would enable me to do my duty to my country. At no one period of my life do I ever remember to have been more serene and tranquil ; and when my excellent friend Williamson, the surgeon, as he left the deck to go to his station, said in a low voice, as I shook him by the hand, "Now sir, here is victory or Westminster Abbey for you," I experienced a feeling of animation which is not usual with me on common occasions.* As

* My brother has often conversed with us on the subject of courage, and drawn the distinction between moral and physical courage. He felt that his was not natural but acquired. His first trial was at the age of seven, when he first went to sea with his father. A supposed enemy came in sight, and the ship cleared for action. My two brothers (for they were both on board) immediately sought a secure hiding place, but their father discovering their intention, called them, and with a stern voice told them, that if they attempted to run from the enemy's guns, he would immediately shoot them. The threat was believed, though it was totally in opposition to my father's nature, and the greater and immediate danger superseded the one which had been anticipated. My brothers remained by the side of their father on deck : but the threat was never forgotten, and the dread of disgrace soon became stronger with them, than that of death. The next time I heard of my brothers having

I have in this book given you many instances in which your beloved mother derived strength and comfort under trials, by her trust and confidence in God ; I wish to shew you how much in unison our feelings were, on this, as on all other subjects ; and I am most anxious to impress upon your minds, my darling children, a habit of putting your cause into the hands of your Creator, in every event of your lives. He will be a tower of strength to you, and whether you fail in your worldly expectations, or that they are crowned with success, it will equally tend to your ultimate and your eternal happiness.

“ With the action of the 3rd of May, Captain Brenton’s service in the Mediterranean concluded. “ The day after the action,” he adds, “ I received dispatches from Admiral Martin, containing my orders to proceed to the Adriatic, for the purpose of taking the command of the squadron there, but I was no longer in a situation to avail myself of it. On the following day we arrived at Palermo, but were put under quarantine. The Ambassador and the Admiral kindly came off to see me, but could not come on

incurred their father’s displeasure, was, during their residence in France, a very few years later, when he discovered that they had challenged some French boys, to fight with them: He, upon this occasion, thought it necessary to repress their courage, and confined them to the house for the day ; when they wept bitterly, and declared themselves disgraced in not being permitted to fight the promised battle. Sir Jahleel has often told me that in going into action, he had always an anxious feeling till the first shot was fired ; but from that moment he thought of nothing but the cause in which he was engaged.

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board. The Admiral was anxious to know my wishes, and instantly complied with my request, that the Spartan might be sent to England. It appeared to be the only means of giving me a chance of recovery. I was accordingly ordered to Malta to refit, and to take home Mr. Adair, the British minister, from Constantinople. We had a most favourable passage to Malta, to the great comfort and advantage of the wounded. Should it ever be in your power, my dear children, to shew kindness to the family of my excellent friend, Dr. Allen, do not neglect to do it. To his kindness and hospitality I am greatly indebted, under Providence, for my life. I was for some time so extremely exhausted in consequence of my wound, that my recovery was almost despaired of. I seldom felt any great apprehensions myself, with the exception of one day, when from extreme pain and languor, I had reason to suppose my end approaching. I remember with humble gratitude the tranquil and resigned feeling I experienced, and the comfort I enjoyed from a recollection of the indescribable affection which had united your beloved mother and myself. The dangerous symptoms however soon abated. I was carried to my ship, and sailed on the 10th June with a convoy for England."

CHAPTER XIV.

JOINED BY HIS FAMILY. — SLOW RECOVERY FROM HIS WOUND. — FRESH TRIALS FROM THE FAILURE OF HIS AGENTS, AND ACTIONS THREATENED BY NEUTRALS DETAINED. — FRIENDLY INTERFERENCE OF MR. ABBOTT. — APPLIES TO THE ADMIRALTY FOR EMPLOYMENT, AND APPOINTED TO THE STIRLING CASTLE. 1812. — COMPELLED BY THE STATE OF HIS WOUND TO RESIGN THE COMMAND. — MADE BARONET. — APPOINTED NAVAL COMMISSIONER AT MINORCA. — RESIDENCE THERE. — FAILURE OF LADY BRENTON'S HEALTH. — THE ESTABLISHMENT AT MINORCA BROKEN UP ON THE CONCLUSION OF THE WAR. — RETURN TO ENGLAND, AND APPOINTMENT TO THE DORSET YACHT. — MADE NAVAL COMMISSIONER AT THE CAPE.

“THE manner in which the intelligence of my being wounded reached your beloved mother was peculiarly trying to her affectionate heart. That excellent and amiable character, the Earl of Dartmouth, then Lord Lewisham, was at Malta when I was landed there. He paid me frequent visits ; and particularly on the eve of his departure for England, that he might carry the latest intelligence respecting me. Upon his arrival, he hastened to Bath, that he might be himself the bearer of what he considered the most favourable accounts. He accordingly called upon your dear mother, and concluding that she must long have been in possession of the news of the action, proceeded to

tell her that my wound was doing well. This was the first intimation she had received of the event, and it was too much for her agitated feelings. She fainted, and Lord Lewisham was in the greatest distress, at having been the innocent cause of her suffering. Her peculiar strength of mind however soon enabled her to depend upon that power for support which had never deserted her. Lord Lewisham knowing I had written by the same ship in which he had been a passenger, flew to the post office, and did not quit it, till the expected letter was put into his hands, and ran with the utmost eagerness to deliver it. I had taken the precaution of sending home a minute surgical description of the wound, which being shewn to a medical friend at Bath, he pronounced to my dear suffering companion that the wound was not a dangerous one. This tranquillized her, and enabled her to look forward with hope to the period of our meeting. At the latter end of the month my letter from Gibraltar arrived with further encouraging accounts. Your mother with her three darlings flew to Portsmouth, and extraordinary as it may appear, almost at the same moment that she alighted at the inn, I anchored at the Motherbank. As she travelled from Southampton to Portsmouth, the Spartan was running through the Needles, and must have been an attractive object to the dear travellers, who little thought we were so near each other. It is customary for ships from the Mediterranean to be kept in quarantine till the return of the post, which communicates their arrival ; but the Lords of the Admiralty in kind consideration of my state, ordered the ship to be

released by telegraph, and I landed the following morning, experiencing in the meeting with all I held dearest to me in the world, sensations of delight which amply repaid me for all the sufferings and fatigue, both of body and mind, to which I had been exposed since my separation from them. It is scarcely possible for me to look back upon this period, which was one of pure, and almost unmixed felicity. Of pain I was no longer sensible, acute as it had been during the passage. My sufferings had indeed been so great till this period, that the latter hours of the day were passed in looking at the movements of my watch, impatiently waiting for the appointed hour, when I was to receive my accustomed dose of laudanum, from which I could expect a temporary suspension of pain. Now I no longer required laudanum ; my spirits were composed and happy, and although incapable of moving, I was insensible of confinement. Fearful of agitating me too much in my weak state, your mother had come into my room alone, but she was soon followed by my sweet cherubs, full of health and joy. We had the comfort of procuring the same house at Alverstoke, near Haslar hospital, where we had formerly lived ; and happy as those early days of our marriage had been, they were not so much so, as the time which we now passed there ; although I was so weak as to be confined to my bed, or my chair, walking a few steps occasionally with my crutches. Whenever I look back upon the past events of my life, this period always starts forward as pre-eminent in happiness. My mind was entirely free from care ; all was peace, and I hope gratitude. I had

received the most flattering testimonies of the approbation of the Admiralty, particularly in that most delightful instance of it, the appointment of my brother to succeed me in the command of the Spartan. The joy and affection which beamed from the eyes of my beloved Isabella, during her unremitting attendance upon me, would in itself have been a source of the most perfect happiness. She felt, as she has since informed me, the deepest anxiety from my dangerous situation, but she never allowed me to perceive it. To her tenderness and care, under the blessing of Providence, I owe my recovery. Her society had before changed captivity into happiness ; she now dispelled all the weariness attendant upon languor and confinement.”*

* Of the accuracy of this little sketch, I can bear witness, for it was my privilege to accompany my husband to Portsmouth, that we might share either in the joys or sorrows of my poor anxious sister. On our way from London my husband met a brother officer, who told him that rumours prevailed at Portsmouth of my brother's death ; he concealed this information from me, and of course suffered doubly himself in consequence. It was however his happy privilege in the course of a few hours, to be the first to welcome our wounded brother on his anchoring at the Motherbank, and to give him the joyful intelligence that his wife and children had arrived at Portsmouth, and only waited his permission to come off, and share in his quarantine. My brother would not allow my husband to come on board, as we should have been deprived of his protection and society till the period of the quarantine had expired. The kind consideration of the First Lord of the Admiralty, however, shortened the period, and rendered it unnecessary for Mrs. Brenton to go on board. We had only time to secure a lodging for our dear invalid, (as near to Haslar hospital as possible, that he might have the full benefit of the medical attendance there) before he was brought on shore. I shall never forget his emaciated appearance as they brought him from the landing place, in an arm chair rigged upon poles by the sailors, who brought him

Captain Brenton remained with his family at Alverstoke till the beginning of October, when having gained sufficient strength to be moved, he proceeded to London, which he reached in two days. He received from the Admiralty an assurance of His Majesty's approbation of his conduct, and a promise that in due time his name should be added to the list of Baronets ; in the mean time a pension was granted him of £300 per annum, his wound being considered by the members of the college of physicians equivalent to the loss of a limb. This proved a very welcome addition to his income, and he considered it a most providential circumstance ; for he had been but a few months in England, when he was informed by his agents that they had failed, with all the prize money belonging to the *Spartan* in their hands. This circumstance was the more unexpected, and the more inexcusable, as Captain Brenton had given them positive orders, when the proceeds of neutral vessels were remitted to them from abroad, to cause the money to be immediately funded, in order to await the result of any appeal that might be made, but this was not done. As

most carefully ; he was himself enveloped in flags, and followed by a crowd of spectators. His sick room seemed to be what he has described, an abode of perfect happiness. His patience and cheerfulness never failed him, and his gratitude to all those who had the privilege of approaching him, and assisting in any way towards his comfort or amusement was unbounded. Very soon after his return to us, he was able to use his pencil, and retraced the events of the 3rd of May. Paintings and engravings have been taken from these sketches, which are now in my possession.

F. B.

misfortunes are said seldom to come alone, so it was on this occasion. The Spartan had taken two American ships in 1807, bound from Sicily to Copenhagen, laden with sulphur ; but captured, actually running into Marseilles ; and one of the Captains confessed that the destination in the papers was a false one. Captain Brenton under these circumstances, and from a conviction that the sulphur was intended to make gunpowder for the fleet at Toulon, did not hesitate to send them for adjudication to Malta ; where they were condemned as the most flagrant breaches of neutrality that had ever come before that court. The proceeds were accordingly remitted, with the positive injunction before mentioned ; but being retained by the agents, were involved in their bankruptcy, and by the same post, which informed him of the failure of his agents, Captain Brenton received information, that the appeal for these ships having at length come on, the sentence was reversed, and that he was called upon to pay the amount, a sum of £3000. This was indeed a heavy blow, and one for which he was not prepared either in mind or purse. He says, "the failure of my agents was the more unexpected, as upon my arrival in England, the agents had immediately written to say, that they had a considerable sum of prize money in their hands ; and actually did pay a share a short time before their failure, which took place in the spring of the year 1811. With respect to the result of the appeal, this was a matter of still greater astonishment to me, considering the nature of the cases, the acknowledgment of the American masters, and the opinion

given by the judge who tried the vessels at Malta. But the Admiralty Court is a political one, and is often governed by expediency, as well as maritime law and usages."

Government was at this time very anxious to ward off a war with America, and in order to conciliate that jealous power as far as possible, many of the sentences of condemnation, even in the strongest cases were set aside, and the vessels returned, to the great injury of the captors; who were as much bound by duty to capture these vessels, as they were to take those of the enemy. It may well be supposed that this severe blow did not tend to accelerate Captain Brenton's recovery. He was at once obliged to give up his comfortable house at Bath; to sell off his furniture, and to remove to the vicinity of London; not only for the purposes of economy, but to attend to the intricate and perplexing business arising from the bankruptcy. The following are his remarks upon this period, in his notes to his children.

"This was one of those events which are peculiarly trying, but are often most salutary in awakening us from a state of dangerous security and worldly mindedness; and which also shew in its true light the value of attachments founded upon virtue, and the inestimable blessing of a mutual, cordial, and sincere affection, enabling us to support the pressure of misfortune. By the failure of my agents, the whole of the little property I had collected during the war, was swept away; and I was, in addition, called upon to refund £3000 for the American sulphur vessels. I now con-

sider these two seeming misfortunes coming together, a most providential circumstance ; as it enabled me to meet all my difficulties at once, and with the blessing of God to subdue them. The distress in which we were involved was great, but a kind Providence supported us under it. Could you have been sensible of the conduct of your beloved mother upon this occasion, you would have pronounced her an angel indeed. She suffered it is true, but not on her own account, or from any undue anxiety on yours ; for she depended upon a bountiful Creator supplying all your wants, as he had ever done. Her affliction was on my account. She knew how deeply I felt the loss of all I had to depend upon for the support of my darling family, particularly at a period when I was precluded from active exertion, by the effects of my wound ; and the almost hopeless prospect of my being able to procure so large a sum as that which was demanded of me. But here my dear children let us pause, and view with gratitude, with fervent and sincere gratitude, the dispensations of a benign Providence in our favour. A few weeks before the event, His Majesty had been pleased to bestow upon me a pension of £300 per annum, in consequence of my wound ; this, with my pay, now became our support ; and a most kind friend (Mr. Henry Abbott) generously stepped forward, and supplied the sum necessary to pay off the claims of the neutrals ; taking his chance of remuneration from the produce of the bankrupts' estates. I hope through life you will preserve a grateful recollection of this friendship. Even here (in a small lodging at Paddington) we passed a cheerful and

tranquil season. It was the piety, and resignation, and sweetness, that beamed from your dear mother's expressive features, which, under the blessing of heaven, shed this felicity over our little society ; and rendered this period of trial one of those, that in the retrospect of my life presents itself also as a period of peculiar happiness.

“In the course of the year my wound began to make a visible progress towards recovery, under the kind and skilful care of Mr. Cline. During the period of our stay at Paddington, we had indeed much to be grateful for. My mother's health which had been very precarious, appeared entirely re-established, and she evidently derived much happiness from our being so near her. Your uncle Edward arrived at Portsmouth in June in the Spartan, and I could not resist the inclination to visit my old shipmates. I was accompanied of course by your mother ; our reception was not only gratifying but affecting ; to the expressions of attachment from the officers and ship's company, was added the affectionate kindness of your dear uncle. He caused the colours to be hoisted under which we had fought on the 3rd May, and by every possible arrangement studied to gratify my feelings. This little narrative is intended for you alone my dear children, and you can appreciate my reasons for writing it. Your dear uncle requires no additional claim to your affection, but I know this trait of his character will delight you.”

Soon after this visit to Portsmouth, Jervis, the eldest son, was attacked by scarlet fever ; his recovery oc-

casioned the following reflections recorded by his father. "A kind and merciful Providence soon restored your dear brother to health. These trials which so frequently occur in the course of even the most prosperous life, ought to teach us to repose more upon God, and to indulge less in anxiety, which generally results from a forgetfulness of His divine providence. How often does it happen that when bereft of hope, and abandoned to despair, a sudden change has dispelled the gloom, and restored us to happiness; whilst at others, when we have been indulging in the most flattering prospects, when every thing seemed to smile around us, when to-morrow promised to be in joy, 'as this day, and more abundant;' a blow from an unexpected quarter comes, and lays us prostrate. These circumstances and experiences should teach us temperance in the enjoyment of the blessings of this world, and in the measure of our attachment to them; should teach us to form no long view of such short lived felicity; to receive with gratitude that share which is so abundantly bestowed upon us; and when we are threatened with the loss of what we consider so essential to our happiness, to consider that we are in the hands of Him who has our eternal interests in view, and who knows what is good for us, better than we do ourselves. This is true philosophy, but what is still more, this is true religion."

It has been the wish of the Editor to allow the narrative to proceed with as little interruption as possible from himself, and chiefly in the words supplied by the subject of the memoir himself. The language made

use of being sometimes that of a report of his own actions, and sometimes a comment upon them addressed to his children, sometimes drawn up in the third person, sometimes in the first, has involved a variety of manner which may probably have given offence to readers; but which it still seemed desirable to retain, as conveying the words and expressions of the individual mind, which it is the object of the memoir to present to public observation. Unwilling to do more than was absolutely necessary, and being chiefly anxious that the portrait exhibited might be as true to life as possible, he has risked the consequences of substituting a broken and disjointed narrative, for one more continuous and regular, that he might allow his readers to see for themselves and to judge for themselves, a character which is calculated to be beneficial to all. Instead of assuming the office of biographer, he has wished that the subject of the memoir should be made to tell his own story; and he has chiefly limited his own endeavours to pointing out traits of character brought to light by the circumstances in which the man was placed, and which it was desirable that his readers should notice. From time to time he has ventured to do this, and in gratifying his own feelings by thus dwelling on the features of a friend whom he never recollects without admiration, he hopes that he may have been useful in directing the attention of others to qualities which might have escaped observation, from the simplicity of mind with which the trials that draw them forth are related. On this account he must trespass for a moment on the patience of his readers,

and call their attention to the peculiar trial which awaited Sir Jahleel Brenton at this period of his career.

His character as an officer was now completely established. The prejudice entertained against him by Lord Collingwood had been overcome, and converted into confidence and regard. His services in the Mediterranean had secured the admiration of the navy ; and the brilliant valour and good conduct exhibited in the action off Naples, had placed him on a pinnacle of glory, which few perhaps can at present appreciate, who do not remember the enthusiastic spirit of that period of the war, and the excitement which pervaded every rank of society on the subject of naval successes.

At that period, and under those circumstances ; with the consciousness of having served his country with a fidelity and earnestness beyond what is due to any human tie ; with the shouts and triumphs of a Mediterranean population still ringing in his ears, and with a spirit raised above the excruciating torture of his wound by a sense of the glory he had won ; this intoxicating dream is dissipated by the intelligence of pecuniary losses, which threaten destitution to his family, and by the notice of a prosecution on the part of the neutrals, whom he had felt it his duty to detain ; which might have consigned him to a debtor's prison for the rest of his days.

Life, if considered as a state of discipline, must be a state of trial. Character is to be developed by circumstances ; and God is to be glorified by the evidence thus given by his servants of their adoption and renewal. Under this conviction we acquiesce in the

assertion that, "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth;" and can see the purpose for which the affliction is sent in the character which is gradually evolved; but the fulness of this assurance does not invalidate the severity of the trial, and we must feel for man while he is in the crucible, though we may be confident as to the effect that it will finally produce.

I feel it, therefore, due to the character of Sir Jahleel Brenton, to dwell on this point of his story, because it includes circumstances of trial which cannot be generally appreciated, and because it involves that species of trial which has been commonly found the hardest to endure. Oppression, we are told, maketh a wise man mad. Ingratitude, man's ingratitude is continually named as the bitterness of life. The great men of heathen times are found quitting their country in the decline of life, disgusted at the treatment they met with; and we cannot wonder if self-love on one side was dissatisfied with that return, which self-love expected or self-love offered on the other.

The shock which was inflicted on Sir Jahleel Brenton by this sudden change of circumstances must have been most severe. To have a triumph succeeded by poverty; the glory of successful command by the prospect of a jail; and to feel that his country's courts crushed him, for having done what his country's interests required, and his country's voice had commanded; and that thus having risked life and incurred sufferings in its service, he was now to be made a victim of political expediency, and to be sacrificed to the jealousy of a hostile state; this was, to say the

least a sharp trial for man to bear, and a trial which few have borne with so much calmness. In truth if heroism is to be tested by what a man bears rather than by what a man does, and a very brief consideration may lead us to adopt this view, we may venture to say that Sir Jahleel Brenton may be contemplated with more admiration while reconciling himself to poverty and sufferings, in the testimony of a good conscience and in submission to the will of God ; than while directing the movements of his frigate through the fleet which enveloped him, while Murat and his court were watching the defeat of their little armada by the energies of his single ship.

Let the reader of these pages then dwell most on that which most deserves consideration. He may learn from the narrative, what vicissitudes of trial life may include ; and he may distrust the exultation inseparable from moments of success by calling to mind its uncertain tenure, and the reverse that may be immediately at hand. But above all let him remember, that he who labours for man, must be prepared to meet with ingratitude, or at least neglect ; and that from the very nature of society, the sacrifices that are made for the public good can seldom be properly appreciated, or justly recompensed by the public, for whom they are performed. A higher principle must be infused into the heart of him who wishes to serve his country, than was found among the heroes of antiquity ; or self-devotion and patriotism will be doomed to experience the same melancholy disappointment that they did in their cases. God must be honoured ; his favour, his blessing

must be the objects of pursuit ; if man wishes to be certain of obtaining a just recompense of reward ; and sad and bitter will be the result of dangers braved and labours borne, if the favour of a fickle world has been the object of ambition, and the only return looked for has been that which men can give.

“ A haughty spirit,” it is said, “ goeth before a fall.” Had such been the spirit of Sir Jahleel Brenton, it is easy to imagine how it would have been inflated and increased by the admiration and excitement occasioned by his victory ; and it is as easy to conceive, that on a mind in such a state, the sudden shock of adversity would have come with an overwhelming force. Happily for him, he had long before learned in a better school than that of the world, the nature of the things by which he was surrounded. He knew what he was justified in seeking, but he also knew the limits under which it was to be sought. Thankful for what God had been pleased to give, he was ready to resign what God was pleased to recall ; and while the hand of God was seen in everything, he saw no injustice in the treatment he was exposed to, no public ingratitude in the circumstances which marred his prospects ; but only behold another trial in a change of condition ; and

tolerable facility with two sticks. I therefore began to look forward once more to active service. Your dear mother used all the arguments which tenderness and affection could suggest to dissuade me from it ; but the same feeling towards her, and my beloved children, stimulated me to exertion, and would have deprived me of my own approbation and peace of mind, had I remained in a state of inactivity longer than was absolutely necessary. I accordingly applied for a ship. Mr. Yorke, then first Lord of the Admiralty, in the most friendly and earnest terms, requested me not to run the risk of a relapse, by going again to sea ; having however persisted in my application, he appointed me to the Stirling Castle, a new ship of seventy-four guns, then at Chatham, intended at my own request to be sent to the Mediterranean. In the middle of March 1812, I took command of this ship, and removed with my family to Brompton, near Chatham, and here another period of happiness occurs, which will frequently present itself to my recollection, unsolicited from the association with my professional duties. My profession had ever been my delight from the very early period of my life at which I entered it, and no circumstance, however happy, had as yet possessed the power to tranquillize my mind on shore, whilst I considered myself capable of active service."

As Captain Brenton had reason to suppose that his ship would at least for some time be attached to the channel fleet, he removed his family to Plymouth, and took this opportunity of initiating his eldest son into the profession, which it was at that time supposed he

would have chosen. He says, "As our dear boy had from his infancy expressed a wish to follow my profession, and had appeared confirmed in the resolution, upon my return home in the *Spartan*, your mother and myself considering the advantages which might attend from his constitution being early inured to the profession, decided upon his going with me. It was rather intended at the same time, as giving him an opportunity of judging for himself, whether under all circumstances, his preference for the navy might continue, and as I was informed of the appointment of an exemplary clergyman to the ship, who had been head usher at Hertford school, and who was to superintend the education of the youngsters on board, we had less hesitation in taking your brother from the school at which he had been nearly a year, (Dr. Crombie's, at Greenwich.) Our kind friend Mr. Williamson, whom I was again happy in having with me as surgeon, kindly went for him in a tender, which I sent for the purpose.

"June 6th, we arrived in Cawsand Bay; the weather in the preceding night had become thick and squally, but we reached our port with great ease by noon."

Thursday the 11th, Mrs. Brenton mentions having passed a delightful day on board the *Stirling Castle*. Captain Brenton adds, "This was I believe the last visit your mother ever paid to the *Stirling Castle*, where from the sweetness of her disposition, and the kindness of her manner, she had gained the regard of all on board. On this occasion we were accompanied by one of my best and earliest friends. Mr. Tucker

and myself became acquainted in the year 1792, when he was purser of the Assistance, and when I commanded the Trepassey on the Newfoundland station, in the year 1799. He had, after progressive elevation, acquired through his own conduct and talents, become Secretary to the Earl of St. Vincent, with whom I had recently served as Lieutenant, and who had promoted me to the command of the Speedy. Mr. Tucker and myself then renewed our former intimacy, he had power to shew the strength of his regard, and exerted it to the utmost. I had little in my power but the expressions of gratitude, and the feelings of friendship. Whenever an opportunity offered of forwarding my interests, he never lost sight of it, and proved himself a most steady friend. It is to his active zeal we are indebted for much of the comfort our family received after the death of my father. Lord St. Vincent was under Providence the instrument of their welfare ; Mr. Tucker, the kind and judicious friend, who pointed out the most effectual means of serving them. Upon all the subsequent trials and events which have befallen me, he has been invariably the same, always identifying himself with my interests, and those of all my family ; and I feel delighted in having it in my power to record such instances of disinterested attachment, as an object for your future gratitude and regard. Lose no opportunity, my dearest children, in shewing your sense of his kindness to me, whenever it may be in your power, either towards himself or any of his family.”*

* Mr. Tucker became, successively, Private Secretary to the Earl of

Referring to a memorandum written on the 23rd of September, 1812, Captain Brenton says, "I had some time before this period experienced an attack of inflammation in the wound, but I had now recovered from it, and it remained in the same state as when I came to sea. As the winter approached, I felt this inconvenience of being lame more sensibly, as it increased my anxiety respecting the duty of the ship, from a conviction that I could not use the same activity I had formerly possessed; and I began to feel the conviction that some employment on shore, was better suited to the actual state of my health.

"I thought seriously of endeavouring to gain some appointment on shore. I had in the Spring been offered the Commissionership of Bombay, but declined from preference to active service. I therefore wrote to Lord Melville (then First Lord of the Admiralty,) and told him the state of my health, requesting to be remembered in the event of a vacancy happening; this he promised to do, and conceiving I wished immediately to come on shore, he appointed Captain Brine to succeed me in the Stirling Castle. Those alone whose minds are ardently devoted to the sea service, can enter into my feelings after dispatching my letter to Lord Melville. It appeared to me as soon as it was gone beyond recall, that the sacrifice was unnecessary, that the pain and inflammation of the wound

St. Vincent, when he was First Lord of the Admiralty; Commissioner of the Navy; and Deputy Surveyor General of the Duchy of Cornwall. He died at his estate, Trematon Castle.

F. B.

had ceased, and that with a little patience I might have weathered the winter, and have had another summer before me, in which I might have recruited. I felt my attachment to the ship, and everything connected with active service increase, as I was on the point of being removed from it. These, however, were but temporary feelings; the wound soon resumed a very serious character, and I had no sooner joined my family at Plymouth on the 26th of October, than I felt I had much reason to rejoice in my decision. As soon as I was superseded by Captain Brine, I proceeded to my favourite residence at Bath. Here I had the advantage of one of the most skilful surgeons, the late Mr. Grant. I had several very severe attacks of inflammation, attended by exfoliation, which must have rendered it impossible for me to have remained afloat. I was, however, evidently regaining my health, and having my mind at ease from the conviction that I had not willingly relinquished employment afloat."

Early in November Captain Brenton received an official communication from the Admiralty, notifying his having been created a Baronet. In the year 1813, Sir Jahleel writes, "It was in this year that my darling Jervis formed that choice of a profession, to which it was ever our wish he should be devoted, but which we did not press upon him, lest we should put a restraint upon his inclinations. He had from his infancy expressed a wish for the navy, and the preference was natural, and likely to strengthen with his years. It was therefore encouraged; and I considered him so decided in his choice, that I should have taken him with me in

the Stirling Castle. Whilst instructing him in the rudiments of astronomy and navigation, I took every opportunity of associating in his mind the truths of revealed religion, with the wonders of creation. His mind was sufficiently enlarged to admit and combine them with facility, even at this early age ; though he had not completed his tenth year, when we were at sea together. His memory was very retentive, our conversation frequently turned upon Religion, and the duty of its ministers ; and I endeavoured to describe to him, the character and conduct requisite for the sacred office, as well as the influence each would have upon the happiness, not only of this life, but of the next. These delightful conversations (for such they were to this dear boy, as well as to myself, for he frequently began them) insensibly gave a change to his ideas, and induced him to prefer the tranquillity and retirement of a clerical life, to the more brilliant prospects which the navy might have hold out to him. What a claim for the most fervent gratitude has this circumstance upon my heart at this moment, and what a source of comfort and consolation under the loss of such a child. I have now the blessed and well founded hope, that he is in the enjoyment of everlasting felicity.

“ At the close of this year, Lord Melville, who had been long anxious to serve me, but unable from the want of a vacancy, at last found the means by the establishment of a resident Commissioner at Minorca. He made me the offer of the appointment. I accepted it with alacrity, and prepared for our immediate departure I was at the time of receiving it, confined to my

bed, by the opening of my wound ; but was soon in a situation to travel, and by the unremitting care and energy of my affectionate companion, every fatigue and exertion was spared me. We left our delightful abode at Bath on the 10th January, and embarked on board the *Blenheim* for Minorca on the 20th. We had been exposed during the greater part of our voyage, till we reached Cape St. Vincent, to a continual gale from the S.W., but at this period the weather was remarkably fine, and you may easily imagine the interest with which your mother viewed the theatre of the great action, fought by our noble friend, and the first in which I had been engaged.

“As we proceeded, every point we passed excited some recollection of strong interest, but particularly Gibraltar Bay. These feelings I hope were not unaccompanied, by sincere and ardent gratitude to the Almighty, for the merciful preservation which I had so often experienced. On the 3rd of February we passed along the coasts of Andalusia and Grenada, mountains covered with snow, with the town of Malaga below them. Our voyage was at this period delightful, and had all the appearance of being a very short one. We were most happily situated with the best and kindest friend in the Captain of the ship, Captain Samuel Warren, with every attention and accommodation we could possibly desire, but a voyage to passengers must ever be tedious. The wind now changed and blew constantly from the eastward, making our passage longer between Ivica and Minorca, than from England to Ivica. On the 19th, Majorca was in view, the

weather extremely cold, and the hills covered with snow. Nothing could be more wretched than the sight which Cabrera offered to us through our glasses : we could see hundreds of naked and starving French prisoners, crawling about the rocks, without any other habitation, than the caverns they found amongst them, and we heard they were almost without food. When however, the wanton atrocities committed by the French in Spain are taken into consideration, we cannot wonder at the conduct of the Spaniards in this instance, however inexcuseable it may seem. We reached Port Mahon on the 25th of February, and had some difficulty in procuring lodgings. Many wretched habitations were offered to us, but we were soon provided with an excellent house, in a delightful situation, though it afterwards proved damp, from having been recently built. For some time my health was in an alarming state, whilst that of my beloved Isabella appeared to be perfectly restored, with the exception of a little hoarseness, which then gave us no uneasiness, as I only considered it as the continuation of a cold, caught in England ; but which was disease silently working on the lungs. The climate, although very changeable, appeared to agree remarkably well with every one of the family except myself ; and my own health experienced a rapid improvement with the return of the warm weather. We began to enjoy happiness, and to be reconciled to the Island, forming plans for a long residence on it. At this time we had the gratification of having the Duchess of Orleans, mother of Louis Phillippe, as our occasional guest.

She was dining with us on the day that the first report reached Minorca, that the white flag had been hoisted in France. The news was not credited at first, but I was convinced in my own mind that it was true, and therefore communicated it to my royal guest, who was quite overwhelmed with the intelligence. The following morning I had the pleasure of carrying the confirmation of this joyful intelligence to the Duchess. This excellent Lady soon resumed her place at Paris, at the head of a splendid establishment, and was unremitting in her efforts to testify her gratitude to every English person who approached her ; for the hospitality she acknowledged to have received from their country. In the course of the month of May your beloved mother's cough had increased, and in June she broke a blood vessel. We were advised to try country air, and M. Mercudel, a Minorquine gentleman, had the goodness to lend us his house at Bingot, pleasantly situated on the road to Alegero. The air of this place appeared for some time to have the most salutary effect ; thus the summer passed away with no other occurrence than my having been brought into intimate communication and friendship with that best of sea officers, Sir Benjamin Hallowell, afterwards Carew, who was left in command of the squadron in the Mediterranean, and who took his station at Minorca, in order to superintend the disposal of the stores, &c. The peace taking place early in Autumn, the fleet was ordered home, and consequently there no longer existed the necessity for a dockyard at Mahon. I was directed to send all the stores to England, and to return home ;

Lord Melville in the mean time having most kindly appointed me to the Dorset Yacht. Your mother's health was so precarious, that it became necessary for us to accept the kind offer of my friend, Captain Bathurst,* to take home my family in the *Fame*, and to his care I consigned them, under the protection of that benign Providence which never forsook us. I was unable to accompany them from the remaining duties I had to perform. They embarked on the 7th of August. A few days after they had sailed, I left Minorca in the *Castor*, for Marseilles, and from thence proceeded to Paris. There I enjoyed the kind hospitality of the Duchess of Orleans for a few days, returning to England early in October. Your mother and yourselves had arrived a few days before me.

“ Before I left Minorca I received a second letter from Lord Melville, informing me of my appointment as Commissioner at the Cape of Good Hope, the former Commissioner being just dead ; an appointment which was very agreeable to me. On my return to England, I found your dear mother apparently much recovered, but the fatal cough still continued. This was the only alloy to my happiness, but still I fondly cherished the hope that it was in some measure subdued, and that the climate of the Cape of Good Hope would entirely restore her. How easily can we flatter ourselves with prospects of happiness. How earnestly do we cling to remote possibilities for comfort ; and most merciful is the dispensation which affords us this relief. How

* Captain Bathurst was killed at the battle of Navarino when commanding the *Genoa*.

gloomy and dismal would many parts of our lives otherwise be. Our dear boys were now of an age when it became necessary that every effort should be made to give them a substantial education, and for this purpose we decided upon leaving them at Winchester, under the care and protection of their uncles. This was the greatest trial we had to experience ; but what must the pang of separation have been to your mother, who although she concealed as much as possible her real state from us, must have felt the most serious apprehension, that she was no more to meet these darling children in this world. With what exemplary fortitude did she conduct herself under circumstances so agonizing ! On the 1st day of January, 1815, we sailed for the Cape of Good Hope, on board H.M.S. Niger, commanded by Captain Rainier. We had much to be grateful for, to our all merciful Protector, for the comfort we enjoyed throughout this voyage, which ended by our arrival in Simon's Bay on the 12th of March. Your mother felt much weakness and indisposition in crossing the tropical latitudes, owing to the great heats, but she was nevertheless invariably cheerful, and apparently happy."

CHAPTER XV.

RESIDENCE AT THE CAPE.—REMARKS ON THE ADVANTAGES OF SIMON'S BAY AS A NAVAL STATION.—PLANS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIBERATED NEGROES.—RAPID FAILURE OF LADY BRENTON'S HEALTH AND HER DEATH.—REFLECTIONS ON IT EXTRACTED FROM HIS PRIVATE JOURNAL.

THREE years had elapsed after the last capture of the Cape of Good Hope, before it was considered necessary to have a resident Commissioner there. Captain Shield was selected for this purpose, and a fitter, or more efficient man could not have been found. With a sound judgment, and the utmost integrity, and undeviating correctness; he possessed an activity of mind, and indefatigable perseverance that never perhaps was exceeded. His official correspondence, which Sir Jahleel Brenton found in the office, was invaluable to him, and rendered his way clear under all the complexity in which he was involved by the transactions, which in the ultimate establishment of the dock-yard he was engaged in with the military and civil branches of the Government.

The Dutch, while masters of the Cape, aware of the insecurity of Table Bay during the winter months, when it is exposed to the fury of the whole Southern

Atlantic, had been in the habit of sending their ships for shelter to Saldahna Bay ; overlooking, or perhaps purposely concealing the value of Simon's Bay ; lest it might afford to an enemy the facility of landing and attacking the colony. Commissioner Shield viewed this bay with a seaman's eye, and at once pronounced it to be the only place on the coast for a Naval Arsenal, and gave this opinion to the Navy Board, as soon after his arrival as he could obtain the means of forming it.

The Dutch had a few storehouses there for the use of their Batavia ships, but everything was upon the smallest scale, and the Admiralty on being convinced by the representation of Commissioner Shield of the fitness of Simon's Bay for the establishment of a dock-yard, directed the Naval Establishment to be removed there, which was accordingly done in 1814 ; a Naval Hospital being previously built, and plans agreed upon for the extension of other Naval buildings.

Commissioner Shield being called to the Navy Board in 1813, was succeeded by Commissioner Dundas, from Bombay, who retained the situation but a short time, as he died at Simon's Town in August, 1814.

Sir Jahleel Brenton, on inspecting the two bays, Table Bay and Simon's Bay, entirely concurred with Commissioner Shield upon the expediency of giving up the former altogether ; but recommended, that on surrendering the buildings there to the Colonial Government it should be with the understanding, that if required at any future period of war, they should be again restored to the Naval Department.

Whilst the dock-yard was in Table Bay, no ship could venture to strip her lower masts, or heave down, from the uncertainty of the weather and the rapidity with which a gale succeeds a calm, and the glassy surface is changed into a tremendous sea rolling in upon a dead lee shore. The loss of the Sceptre there in 1795, and of several large merchant vessels in the course of the seven years which Sir Jahleel Brenton passed there, are evident proofs of the dangers incurred almost at all seasons of the year in this bay ; whereas in Simon's Bay, scarcely an instance occurred during the whole of that time of a vessel driving from her anchors. Indeed the one only case was that of the Revolutionaire, parting a cable that had rotted in India, and falling on board the Zebra, carrying her adrift, with the wind immediately off one part of the bay, and driving on shore on the opposite side in a sandy cove under the block house, from whence they were both got off, the Revolutionaire much damaged from having passed over a ledge of rocks. But soon after the moorings were laid down for two ships of the line, and as many frigates, and no accidents afterwards occurred. It was found, however, that these were inconvenient, as they occupied too large a portion of the bay, which is not very extensive, and on that account they have since been removed.

When it was decided that the only Naval Establishment at the Cape should be in Simon's Bay, the new buildings were carried on with great energy, and it soon became a place of considerable importance. A jetty was formed in the dock-yard : a spacious mast

house erected, with a working sail loft over it, and a very ornamental range of houses for the officers of the yard constructed upon a terrace overlooking the bay, and the whole yard enclosed with a wall, forming a remarkably neat and compact arsenal.

Soon after the arrival of Sir Jahleel Brenton as Commissioner of the dock-yard at the Cape of Good Hope, a vessel arrived with the account of Buonaparte having escaped from Elba, and of war being revived in Europe. The consequences of this short war had a very material influence upon the colony of the Cape, as the transfer of the great prisoner to St. Helena caused a great demand upon the Cape for supplies of all descriptions, and excited amongst the wine growers and farmers a degree of energy quite foreign to the habits of the Dutch colonists, and to which nothing but English capital, and English example could probably ever have stimulated them.

St. Helena, of course, became the head quarters of the squadron, from whence they were sent in succession to Simon's Bay to refit, and complete their stores. Large contracts were entered into for wine and flour, as well as for bread, cattle, and hay, &c. The cattle hitherto killed for the Cape market were of the most inferior description. They had been driven from the great cattle farms, in the eastern districts of the colony, through a long sandy desert, where little was to be found for their support but the acrid Hottentot fig and other similar plants ; and after a journey of nearly a week, sometimes much more, they were, upon their arrival either in Cape Town or Simon's Town, im-

mediately sent to the slaughter house. The meat, as may be expected, was of the worst kind ; and of the cattle embarked in the wretched state we have described, but few could be expected to reach St. Helena.

To remedy this, a Cattle yard was constructed in Simon's Bay, where they were kept and dry fed for several weeks, and then shipped on board the transports ; and the wind being almost always fair, and the water smooth, they continued to improve even on the passage, and arrived at St. Helena in high condition. Sheep were still more improved, and the quick demand for all the articles of supply, gave great animation to the boors ; while it rendered the Naval Establishment at the Cape of very great importance, and shewed particularly how sound was the judgment which had induced Commissioner Shield to remove it from Table Bay to Simon's Bay, as there was scarcely an instance during the period of nearly seven years that Sir Jahleel Brenton was there, in which a cargo might not have been shipped on board the men of war, and transports. Indeed in a very heavy gale, blowing directly into the bay, an anchor for a very large frigate was sent off with very little difficulty ; whilst in Table Bay all communication with the ships is cut off for many days together, and much longer in the winter months.

More than thirty vessels, some of them of great value were lost in Table Bay during this period, and only one in Simon's Bay ; and this, for want of a good look out, running on shore in the night under Musenburg with all sails set.

The Revolutionaire and Zebra it is true had been driven on shore, but it was in a species of hurricane off the land, as has been already observed, and owing entirely to the Revolutionaire's cable being defective.

Upon this occasion, or rather in consequence of it, when the Revolutionaire was heaving down to be repaired, Sir Jahleel Brenton had a most providential escape from losing his life. The ship was keel out (and it is well known with what difficulty the long legged French built ships are hove down.) The Commissioner was in the boat examining the damages the ship had received, and not four feet from the keel of the Revolutionaire, when the purchase gave way, and she righted with the greatest violence, throwing the greatest part of the people who were on the decks overboard, killing one shipwright, and wounding the master builder of the yard seriously. The column of water between the ship's bottom and the Commissioner's boat was sufficient to act as a fender, and prevent her being struck by the ship ; she was thrown off with great violence by the broken water, but without shipping any. The boats crew, all black fellows, seeing the confusion with which they were surrounded, immediately jumped overboard, and dived to be out of the way of mischief, and the first that rose finding that order was not quite restored, again sought for safety at the bottom. They were soon however all in the boat again, but evidently thought their conduct too natural to require either explanation or excuse ; for they gave neither to the Commissioner, whom they had thus left

alone in the boat, and who was too much amused at their resource to be angry with them.

In the course of this year, Rear Admiral Sir George Cockburne having seen his important prisoner settled at St. Helena, was succeeded in his command by Rear Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm, who arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, which he was desirous of visiting previous to his taking up his residence at St. Helena ; and having brought Lady Malcolm with him, the circumstance was the cause of much gratification to the Commissioner's family, and to Sir Jahleel Brenton particularly ; as it enabled him to act in concert with the Commander in chief, in laying down plans for the regular supply of St. Helena, and in making the necessary contracts for that purpose. Sir Pulteney was also enabled to judge for himself of the capabilities of the Cape, and the character of its farmers, which rendered the subsequent correspondence between the Admiral and the Commissioner a very easy one ; both were acquainted with each other's objects and measures, and the greatest cordiality in consequence subsisted between them.

With regard to some of the Commissioner's plans, it is fit that his own language should be quoted.

“One of the most important subjects that engaged my attention, after my arrival in the colony, was the situation of the negro labourers in the dock-yard. These people had been with hundreds of others of their countrymen captured by His Majesty's ships, in vessels carrying on that abominable traffic, after it had been

rendered illegal by the laws of the countries to which these vessels belonged. Some of these negroes, as many as were required, were assigned to the government departments, colonial, military, and naval, as labourers ; and others were distributed among the inhabitants of the colony as servants or agricultural labourers. Those, whose unhappy fate it was to be of the latter class, were indeed much to be pitied. The tender mercies of the original Dutch Boor in this colony are but too well known, and the unfortunate black, not called a slave but an apprentice, lost all the benefit which he would have derived from being a slave, when being a marketable commodity, his health was taken care of, and like other animals belonging to the farm he was well fed, and kept in good condition that he might fetch the better price, if it seemed expedient to sell him. But the Boor having only a life interest, (for such indeed it became in many instances where the negro did not outlive his apprenticeship) tasked him to the utmost ; and as he had been in the habit of acting towards the unhappy Hottentot, the more the man's health was impaired, made the greater efforts to get work out of him, before he died. That this is in no way exaggerated will be evident to those who read the statements made by Dr. Philip, in the course of his struggles in favour of the Aboriginal people of the colony.

“Those who were employed in the public departments, as well as such as fell into the hands of respectable individuals were of course much less to be pitied. Some apprenticeship, however, was necessary,

especially to the new negro, who would for some years be incapable of earning his own living.

“ Commissioner Shield had in 1810, with that humanity and judgment for which he was remarkable, suggested to the Navy Board, that the negroes employed in the dock-yard should be put on the same footing as landsmen on board His Majesty’s ships, having the same allowance of provision, and the same pay ; the latter amounting to £14 per annum, the balance of which after the deduction made for their clothes (as in the case of seamen) should be carried to their credit, and kept until they were out of their time, as a means of future provision. After the departure of Commissioner Shield this salutary arrangement had been lost sight of, in consequence of which Sir Jahleel Brenton wrote the following letter to the Navy Board ; which as it describes the useful services of these men, and led to advantageous results in their behalf, it may not be amiss to introduce.

“ SIMON’S BAY, 31st MAY, 1816.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ I beg leave to lay before you an account of the black men now belonging to this establishment, with a few observations respecting them.

“ By your letter to Commissioner Shield, 13th September, 1810, you were pleased to approve of his suggestions of these black people being borne as landsmen, and those who had acquired the ability to work as caulkers being allowed such further encouragement as he thought proper. Accordingly the men then in the yard were so regulated ; but those who arrived subsequently to that period have only been put upon the footing of boys of the third class, and continued as such till the time of my arrival here.

Upon enquiry I have found that the labour of this latter description is equally valuable and hard with that of the former, and I in consequence directed them to be put on the same footing, and submit to you the propriety of their being allowed the arrears of pay which would have been their due, had they received the benefit of your order on their first arrival.

“It was I believe the intention of Commissioner Shield to have given them that advantage, had they arrived from Plettenburg Bay, previous to his departure from this country; they were all grown men upon their first arrival.

“Several of the most intelligent of the black men have been placed under the direction of the different artificers, and some by assiduity and good conduct have acquired such a degree of skill in their craft, as to enable His Majesty’s service to derive a considerable benefit from their work.

“I have thought it my duty to extend to these the indulgence granted by Commissioner Shield to the caulkers, viz. ordinary seamen’s pay, which I hope you will approve of, as it will be a spur to their companions.

* * * * *

“By their assistance the buildings (in the dock-yard, &c.) will be erected at much less expense than by any other mode of procuring labourers. They have the benefit of the school, and I am sanguine in the hope of their deriving great benefit from it.

“As I am upon the subject of the negroes, I must request your indulgence to a few remarks which a daily observation of their situation, docility and general usefulness, constantly suggests to me.

“These unfortunate people at the period of their arrival in the colony are in general from twenty to thirty years of age, many of them older, and by the present regulations of Government, they are to serve fourteen years, before they can obtain their freedom.

“The negroes seldom attain an advanced age, the generality of them are past their strength at a much earlier period than the white people, and consequently at the end of their servitude, may have no other prospect than a helpless old age before them, at

a time when they must depend upon their own labour for their support.

“I am aware that their servitude can only be shortened by the interference of His Majesty’s ministers; but my object in addressing you upon the subject is, that you would be pleased to take the case into consideration, and to allow such as are really valuable to Government in different branches, to receive an allowance bearing some proportion to their earnings. I should say, half-a-crown a day, including their provisions.

“I should not allow this indulgence to be extended to them without long and ample experience of its being duly earned, to be certified by the respective officers. By these means a provision might be laid up for them, and so much energy exerted as to produce the most salutary results.

“Many of the blacks have made a considerable progress in learning, but those landed from the ships are only beginning.

* * * * *

“I have, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“To NAVY BOARD.”

As the subject of these letters may be useful in directing the public attention to the means of employing a portion of the immense population placed under the control of this country, it is hoped that no other excuse need be assigned for the introduction of one or two more letters respecting the negroes. The next letter is dated, Simon’s Bay, 2nd July, 1815.

“GENTLEMEN,

“In my letter of the 31st May, I took the liberty of offering a few remarks upon the situation of the black labourers, and requested permission to extend the indulgence to the deserving as occasion might require. The experience of every day teaches me that much good may result to His Majesty’s service,

as well as to these people by a constant attention to putting them forward in such branches as they may be best calculated for.

“I have already given my opinion on the encouragement which appears due to those, who have become useful as artificers. I have since found that many of them are likely to become expert seamen, from the activity and intelligence they evince in boats employed on various services, and I am anxious to encourage them, by an addition to their pay, and making them leading men. Sixpence a day will I think be ample in the present instance to four of them, and this may stimulate the others to obtain the same advantage.

“As there are two seamen allowed on the establishment of the yard, and none borne on the list, which would have been absolutely necessary but for the exertions of these black men; I propose forming a fund for their encouragement, from the amount of the seamen’s wages, by which the estimate for the expense of the yard will not be exceeded. I hope to obtain your sanction to the measure.

“I have, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“NAVY BOARD.”

The Navy Board approved of all the suggestions contained in these letters, with the exception of paying the arrears to those blacks who had not received the advantage of being rated according to these orders; a measure bearing very hard upon these people, and for which no adequate reason is assigned.

Some months afterwards, when the black men from the squadron were discharged into the dock-yard, previous to its departure for England, the Commissioner on mustering them found to his great surprise, that some of these people had been long at sea, serving as part of the complement of His Majesty’s ships, and doing

all the duty of seamen. That these people should after such service be consigned again to slavery, (mitigated it is true, but nevertheless, as the labour was compulsory, it was still slavery for the time it was to last) seemed a hardship not to be permitted. It was true he felt that it might be said, that in the dock-yard they had the pay and allowances of seamen. This was admitted ; but it was the principle against which he felt it his duty to contend. On the mere supposition that the dock-yard establishment was complete, and that in consequence these negroes had been like other apprentices distributed among the Boors, the consequence would have been obvious and most painful, and it would have involved a flagrant act of injustice towards the helpless blacks, thus reduced without any fault of their own, from the condition of seamen, serving in His Majesty's navy, to that of prædial slaves in a colony, noted for the severity with which such slaves are treated. Sir Jahleel Brenton in consequence wrote to the Navy Board upon the subject, and the following is an extract from his letter of the 13th Feb., 1816, immediately bearing upon this subject.

“ I feel it incumbent upon me to state the cases of three of these men, (*viz.*) Frank, Tom, and Robin, who appear to me to be entitled to their liberty, in consequence of their having been in England. They went home in H.M.S. *Thais*, and returned in H.M.S. *Curacoa*, since which period they have served either in the dockyard, or in the squadron.

“ Frank has acquired some knowledge as a mason, and might be employed as such, at an inferior rate of pay, in the dock-yard. The others are only labourers, and probably would have no

objection to remain; but as I understand so many decisions have lately taken place respecting the freedom of slaves being established, by their having been either in England, or in the Colonies where slavery does not exist, that I consider it my duty to make this claim in their favour.

“ I have, &c.

“ J. BRENTON.”

“ NAVY BOARD.”

The Navy Board having laid the above letter before their solicitor, transmitted to the Commissioner the opinion of this law officer, but without any comment or direction of their own, leaving the responsibility of any measure Sir Jahleel Brenton might in consequence adopt, entirely upon himself. The opinion was as follows :—

“ I am humbly of opinion, that if these men have been received on board His Majesty’s ships to serve as seamen in the navy, they cannot be now legally detained as slaves; but this right which, as against the crown, I think they have to their freedom from slavery, will not annul any contract or engagement, by which they may have bound themselves to serve the king or any other master, for any specific period, either in the navy, or in any other manner; and if no such engagement exist, they are entitled to their discharge, if they require it, in the same manner as any seaman in the navy, or workman in the yard may be entitled to it.

“ Signed by the COMMISSIONERS OF THE NAVY.”

“ COMMISSIONER SIR J. BRENTON, BART, K.C.B.”

In consequence of receiving this opinion, and so authenticated by the Board, Sir Jahleel Brenton immediately decided upon giving these three men their

freedom, should they wish it, and having put the question to them, they earnestly requested their liberty. They had each a considerable sum due to them, amounting to some hundreds of rix dollars to each man, which the Commissioner recommended them to leave, or at least a portion of it, in the hands of the storekeeper, from whom they might draw it as they wanted ; a precaution very necessary to prevent their being robbed of it. But the temptation to get the whole into their own hands was too powerful to be resisted. Amongst other arguments used by the Commissioner to induce them to adopt this prudent precaution, he stated their ignorance of the value of the notes ; all money at the Cape at this time being in paper ; and holding up a fifty dollar note to one of them, asked him its value, to which the man unhesitatingly answered, "ten," and another of five being shewn, the answer was, "twenty." But even this proof failed to persuade them. They took their money and in a few days came to the Commissioner lamenting that it was all gone. This circumstance convinced the latter, that unless some precautionary measures were adopted with regard to the poor blacks, no fund that could be laid up for them would be available, and under this impression he wrote to the Navy Board again.

In order to dispose of the question relative to the black labourers, one more letter from the Commissioner upon the subject to the Navy Board may be introduced, in the confidence that the plan suggested in it, will appear at once economical and practical, and that if steadily followed up, it must have been effectual for

their provision and future comfort, and the probable result that of making these men a valuable portion of the population.

“SIMON'S BAY, 24th SEPT. 1817.

“GENTLEMEN,

“As the works of this yard are now nearly completed, I beg leave to offer a few observations which have occurred to me, upon the subject of the black labourers belonging to the establishment. Many of these people have been in His Majesty's service since 1808; and consequently have, according to the present arrangement for recaptured slaves, only five years to serve; but from the opinion given by your solicitor, transmitted in your letter of the 28th May, 1816, they are even at this time susceptible of liberation.

“It becomes a matter of serious importance to provide for these people the means of obtaining an honest livelihood, and of making them useful members of society, when they shall be no longer under control. And it appears to me that so desirable an end may be effected, without putting His Majesty's government to any expense, by the means which I take the liberty of submitting for your consideration.

“We find from experience, that the lower classes of all descriptions of men who have been long accustomed to restraint and dependence, no sooner find themselves their own masters, and in possession of a considerable sum of money, arising perhaps from a long course of industry, than they are involved in great danger, and generally become entangled in difficulties, for want of some decided line of conduct to pursue. The blacks would be particularly liable to this exposure, unless care be taken to prepare them for liberty by a superintendence of their concerns, and by introducing them to it gradually.

“There are amongst our labourers several who have become good masons, brickmakers, blacksmiths, excellent caulkers, tolerable carpenters, and expert boatmen, and who consequently, if kept in industrious habits, are well calculated to provide for themselves.

“There are belonging to the Naval department, by right of purchase, and totally independent of the Colonial Government, pieces of ground, not required for any purposes connected with the dockyard, nor likely to be required however extensive that establishment may become, from their situation; a part lying behind the Commissioner’s garden, and part beyond the Naval Hospital at the south of the town.

“I should propose that a part of this ground should be laid out in small lots, say twenty feet by sixty, contiguous to each other, and appropriated to as many individuals as the Board might contemplate the discharge of. Upon each lot a small house should be built by the black artificers themselves, to whom two days in the week should be given up for that purpose. The stone and the clay are on the spot; the roofing would be the only expensive part, which being furnished out of the refuse wood in the yard, useless for any other purpose, might be paid for by the smallest annual sum by the occupant, say one rix dollar* per month.

“As soon as six of these houses are finished, as many of the most deserving men should be put into possession of them; not discharged altogether from the service, but bound to work in the yard whenever called upon; and of the expediency of this the Commissioner should be the judge. The Commissioner would make this of course dependent entirely upon their good conduct, in their new situation. When he found them persevering and industrious, he would naturally leave them in the uninterrupted exercise of their employment; those on the contrary who were disposed to be idle, he would call more frequently to the task work in the yard, and to such as proved incorrigible, he would revoke the indulgence altogether, putting the more deserving into their room.

“The days on which they were permitted to work for themselves they would of course receive neither pay nor provisions from the yard. Thus by degrees a most useful and industrious body of men may be comfortably settled beyond the reach of

* About two shillings sterling.

want, in the exercise of habits of industry, immediately under the protection as well as the control of their officers. The ground-rent of these buildings would be a retaining fee, by which their services could be called for upon any emergency, such as a fire, or ships driving on shore, and for which they might receive a stipulated sum. They would continue to receive the same religious instruction from the chaplain of the yard, and from the the schoolmaster, as when actually belonging to His Majesty's service.

I have, &c.

“J. BRENTON.”

“NAVY BOARD.”

The Navy Board expressed their approbation of the plan above proposed in the following letter, dated 10th January, 1818.

“SIR,

“In reply to your letter of the 24th September we acquaint you that we entirely concur with you in the propriety and importance of giving to the black labourers of your establishment, at the expiration of their apprenticeship or legal servitude, all the assistance in our power towards obtaining an honest livelihood, and at the same time keeping them within reach of the moral and religious instruction of the chaplain of the yard, and we are glad to hear the men are so well qualified in their respective trades, as to obtain work when set free.

“We have therefore no hesitation in assenting to your proposition of appropriating ground to them for erecting dwellings upon in the way you have mentioned; if upon further consideration you are fully satisfied that such an indulgence to the black people, will not afford any just ground of dissatisfaction and complaint to the European artificers; and provided an absolute power is reserved to the Commissioner for the time being, to deprive the people of their houses and grounds in case of misbehaviour, or if required for the public convenience; giving them in either case such

reasonable compensation for their labour and expenses as he may think equitable ; and no man to have more than a life interest in the property ; but as deaths occur, you will in giving the houses to others, make it a condition that the family of the deceased shall have some small sum paid by the new occupant.

“ Signed, H. B. MARTIN
 H. LEGGE
 R. G. MIDDLETON.”

“ COMMISSIONER SIR J. BRENTON.”

About the year 1819 the Commissioner proceeded to carry this plan into effect, having selected four of the most meritorious blacks, and giving them in the first instance one day in the week to prepare the ground, and to collect materials for their buildings, at the same time laying out their gardens. When the houses were so far in progress for laying on the roofs, the materials were given to them from the dock-yard ; which from being unfit for any important purposes, were valued at a very insignificant price ; and in the course of the following year, four very respectable cottages were completed, and put into the hands of the blacks, who immediately began working for the public in their respective trades, and when there was no pressure of work in the dock-yard, and employment was offered to them by the inhabitants of Simon's Town, they were allowed to take it without any interruption. But if out of work, they were always received and paid by the dock-yard, whether absolutely required or not. They were thus secure of employment, and conducted themselves so much to the satisfaction of the Commissioner and officers of the yard, as fully to answer the

hopes which had been formed of the efficacy of the plan. Had the establishment of the dock-yard remained a few years longer, there is little doubt but that the great majority of these negroes would have been effectually provided for. There were, it is true, among these as well as in every other class of human beings, incorrigible characters, whom no system or measure could reform; and these, but these only, would have become the burden of the colony: but then, even in this case, it must be remembered that the colony or the mother country had had the benefit of their labours during their best days.

Upon the breaking up of the dock-yard establishment at the Cape of Good Hope in 1821, the greater part of the blacks were discharged, and set at liberty; but no previous arrangement being made, it is to be feared that the large sums due to them were soon dissipated, and they were ultimately obliged to place themselves in voluntary bondage—not the less galling or binding from being voluntary. For by the laws of the colony, the servant, if in debt to his master, must continue to work for him until the debt is paid; and how easy it is for the master to bring his black labourer into debt to him, and how difficult for the poor black to avoid or free himself from that debt, need not be adverted to.

The description of this plan of the Commissioner's for the benefit of the negroes, has been given at greater length, as the question of providing for the great mass of their emancipated brethren in the West Indies, is not, nor is likely to be soon settled; and some