

MEMOIR

OF

VICE ADMIRAL SIR JAHLEEL BRENTON, K. C. B.
BARONET.

IT may appear presumptuous in one not connected with the naval service, to attempt the biography of an officer so distinguished as Sir Jahleel Brenton ; and it may appear a graver, a less excusable offence, that one belonging to another profession, and that a profession, which requires the devotion of the whole mind to its own peculiar objects, should be undertaking an office so foreign from his usual employment and proper duties. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying, that if Sir Jahleel Brenton had merely been the man, whom the world knew through the medium of gazettes, and the record of public services, and looked up to as a gallant and distinguished officer ; whatever might have been my feelings towards him as a personal friend, whatever my admiration of him as a public character, I never should have undertaken the office, which I am now attempting to discharge.

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I must also add, that under other circumstances I must have shrunk from the duty, as involving enquiries which I had neither leisure nor means to prosecute ; if its labours had not been so far anticipated by documents drawn up by his own hand, and left to his family ; that little more seemed left to his biographer, than to arrange that which was already written ; and to select out of a memorial designed for the benefit and instruction of his own children, those parts which might be offered to the public, without trespassing on the sacredness of a private, a domestic record.

I must again mention, that I was aware that even this portion of my duty was anticipated, and would be performed in my behalf by one, who, with a single exception, might be regarded as most identified in feelings, views, and mind, with the subject of the memoir.

The delicate and difficult task of selecting from a long and confidential memoir, written with all the fulness of a father's heart, and intended to be perused as a sort of sacred record by his children ; oftentimes too minute or too particular for publication ; and still exhibiting in general so much of the character that it was desired to pourtray, that it was difficult to know how to resist insertion ; this task was, I say, undertaken by another, who has discharged it with as much fidelity as discretion ; and who left nothing to me, but to peruse and confirm that, which had been thus arranged and prepared for the press.

But even these advantages ; assisted and increased as they are by the affectionate recollections of the

members of his own family ; while they promised to render the labour of the undertaking easy, would have been insufficient to determine me to attempt a work for which I was so incompetent, if I had proposed to offer to the public a memoir of the professional life, and of the naval achievements of the man whom it was impossible to know without honouring or loving him. But this seemed unnecessary to be done, and certainly was not to be done by me. His public services, both as a seaman and an officer, have been long known and fully appreciated by the public, and thus have had their appropriate record in the naval histories of the last war. His professional character still lives in the recollection of the service. It therefore is not necessary that naval events should be narrated here, which have been better told in other places ; nor that exploits should be dwelt upon, which though they never can be heard without emotion, it may be sufficient for all present purposes to refer to, rather than to repeat.

I would, therefore, beg leave to state at once, that the only aim I venture to propose to myself, is one which differs essentially from that, which has been generally followed by the writers of similar memoirs.

I am not anxious to describe the subject of my narrative, in the form in which he was known and honoured by the world ; but in that in which he was known to those who lived with him, and served with him ; to his family and his friends ; to the men who shared his hardships and dangers, as well as his successes and triumphs. I am not attempting to represent him as the man of courage, enterprise and

decision, formed for the hour of peril and contest, fitted to lead and direct the energies of his service, and carrying every heart with him, from the enthusiasm which his example inspired ; but I am desirous to shew that those qualities, for which the world would easily give him credit, were united with elements of which the world knew little, and perhaps thought less ; but which had their effect in forming the general character of the man, and made him what he was in the different relations of life. I feel it due to him, and still more to those who may be profited by his example, to trace the peculiar qualities of his character to their source, and to shew the principles from which they flowed ; so that if there be in his life any thing lovely and of good report ; and this there is no one who ever knew him that can doubt ; it may be referred to its proper cause, and be ascribed to that, which he himself knew, and felt to be the origin.

It will be my aim, therefore, in these pages, chiefly to dwell on those features of mind, which though seen by few and observed by few, gave to his whole character its peculiar dignity and grace. I shall endeavour to shew, that the courage and enterprise, the firmness and self-resource which rendered him while he lived the ornament of his profession, were accompanied by qualities, not generally found in combination with these, but which enhanced their value, and contributed to their excellence ; with patience, with meekness, with the tenderest consideration for others, and the most unbounded benevolence. I wish to shew, that the brilliancy of his public life was equalled by the purity

and correctness of his private life : that he was as amiable in every domestic relation, as he was admirable in all official duties : and still knew how to keep the warmth of his affections, in such subordination, that the call which summoned him from that home, where all his happiness was centered, was obeyed without a question or a doubt, whenever the interests of his country and the service required it. Above all, I wish to shew, that the secret, but the only cause of this unusual combination of qualities, not often found in his profession, and sometimes considered as incompatible with it ; was that instinctive subjection of the heart to God, which growing as he grew, and gaining strength and expansion by the trials of his life, raised him from the state of a conscientious and upright man, to that of a mature and confirmed Christian ; which sustained him under the various difficulties and burdens of his lot, by teaching him to look to God in all emergencies, and to cast himself on His mercy under every doubt ; which finally regulated the enquiries which it prompted, and realizing the divine promises, "that the meek shall He guide in judgment," "that God giveth grace to the humble," brought him through all the conflict of religious opinions, to that simple child-like faith, which formed the substance of his happiness in life, as well as of his hope in decay.

The description of a character such as this, together with a narrative of the events under which it was formed and perfected, may, under God's blessing, be made profitable to many ; and as the circumstances of his story are such as must interest every reader, it is

to be hoped that the memoir of such a man may be offered without presumption to the world at large, as including much that may be generally useful as well as amusing. But there is one class of readers to whose attention it may be more particularly recommended, and to whose improvement and welfare it is specifically dedicated. I mean the young aspirants to honour and distinction in the navy, the rising members of that profession, of which Sir Jahleel was so fine a specimen ; and for whom he always felt and expressed so strong and so paternal an interest. I could wish, that they who are taught to emulate his character as an officer, and who are animated by hearing of the gallantry of his actions, should know more of the man whom they are led to admire, than can be learnt from gazettes or naval histories ; and that they should be made acquainted with the real secret of the excellence which is held up to them as a model for imitation. I wish that they should know from his example, that the most brilliant courage, the greatest firmness in action, and the most perfect self-possession in the moment of danger, are not only compatible with deep religious impressions, and personal piety ; but that they never can be looked for with so much confidence, nor will ever be found so largely developed, as when combined with these as the habitual principles of the life. And as example is generally more conclusive than theory, it seems expedient that they should above all others be reminded, that the man, who in his day, was the model of all we wish to imagine in a British officer, and a British seaman ; the man whose daring courage made him

at one time the chosen associate and friend of Sir Sidney Smith ; who was afterwards selected by that acute and discriminating judge of character, Lord St. Vincent, out of the number of eminent and gallant officers around him ; and appointed to situations which required all the combination of naval skill and firmness ; was, and avowed himself to be, in the full sense of the word, a Christian ; confessed Christ and His words in every situation, and under every circumstance with uncompromising firmness ; and still maintained his profession of religion with such gentleness and dignity, that those who differed from him never failed to respect and to love him ; and could not help venerating the man, even while they felt that his principles condemned their practice.

In this point, indeed, a memoir of Sir Jahleel Brenton seems an important opportunity for bringing the example of such a man before the younger members of his profession as a model for imitation ; and an office which might have been urged upon me, as due to the memory of a deceased friend ; and might still have been urged in vain, to one so occupied and pledged to other duties ; may be viewed in a different way, when it is considered in reference to those who may be benefited by acquaintance with his character, and are not likely to know from other sources what were its peculiar and distinctive qualities.

The name and profession of the editor will, therefore, it is hoped preclude the possibility of disappointment to those, who having been attracted by the title of this memoir, may take up the volume as a subject of mere

professional interest, a record of naval struggles or naval triumphs. The achievements of Sir Jahleel Brenton have been already appropriately recorded, and may be read elsewhere by those who wish to enquire into his services. It is proposed to give to the public now, that which the public has not hitherto known, but which may be profitable to general readers; and which must be full of value to those of his own profession; the narrative of a life not unmarked with trial, not devoid of the interest arising from great dangers undergone, and great qualities of mind and heart evinced in meeting them; but exhibiting in the midst of these, and of other circumstances not less perplexing or less afflicting; that consistency of moral conduct, that steady persevering patience, that cheerful hope, and child-like submission to the will of God, and above all, that uniform and prevailing benevolence of spirit, which belong to the Christian character, and which flow from the one single principle of Christian faith. That the union of these qualities may be seen in many individuals at present in the royal navy, I am thankful to believe and know; but their occurrence is not so general as to render example useless; while we also know, that men are more easily led to imitate the practice of one, who has taken his place in the annals of his country, than that of contemporaries; and that no line of conduct can be so safely recommended for adoption, as that which has already won the esteem and admiration of the world. I trust, therefore, that the memoir of such an officer as Sir Jahleel Brenton may be no unacceptable offering to a

service, which must ever be regarded with the deepest gratitude and interest, as the instrument of God's protecting providence to this country, and as the means of enlarging its beneficial influence ; and I hope that the hours, withdrawn from other duties and given to this, have been transferred rather than stolen, and transferred to purposes of wider usefulness and more extensive good, than those which belong to ordinary employment.

In my own profession, the biography of pious and devoted men has long been regarded as one of the most profitable lines of reading. It has been felt that the knowledge of truth is likely to be most effective when combined with its application, and exhibited in practice ; and as example is generally admitted to be more powerful than precept, and men are more easily led to imitate than to obey ; the memorials of those who have been eminent for zeal and holiness in the work of the ministry, have been multiplied largely of late years, and are recommended with confidence as among the most effectual means of raising the tone of feeling and determining the line of practice among the clergy. In this respect, every year adds to the resources of the church. Those who are removed from this field of labour testify to the living. One generation contributes the encouragement of its experience to the other ; and each pious, faithful, and zealous minister, whose labour and self-devotion are commemorated in this way, leaves in the record of his example that which may strengthen the faith, or stimulate the energies of those who are to follow him.

But while the church as a profession, is receiving this increasing advantage, and sees its means of improvement enlarged by the recollections of those who are removed from their field of suffering or of labour ; there is reason to presume that other professions are not equally benefited by the biographies of their distinguished members. They also have their memorials. The world is anxious to learn the particulars of their early life and education, as well as of their subsequent achievements ; and those who are called to imitate their example or to rival their exertions, are naturally desirous to study the secret of their excellence in the causes which conduced to it. But in cases such as these, in the narratives of men who have been distinguished in the naval and military services, or even in the profession of law or medicine, it is natural that professional excellence should form the chief object of attention to those who write, as it is probable it will be the chief object of interest to those who read. The soldier and the sailor, the lawyer and the physician are described, rather than the man ; and the qualities which raised the individual to distinction, are in these cases so separate from those, which formed his value as a man, that it is possible the latter may be wholly lost sight of, while every effort is being made to do justice to the former. There is danger, therefore, in all such memorials, that much that is great and good in the individual, may be merged in the merits of the officer, or in the brilliancy of the career pursued in practice ; and that private excellence, that which constitutes the real foundation of the man's value, and

makes his life most profitable as an example, may be lost sight of, while justice is being done to that which only made him an ornament to his profession, or an instrument of national advancement.

In a clergyman on the contrary, the chief if not the only claim that he can possess on the recollection of others, the only sense in which his life can be held up as an example to those of his own profession, consists in his personal piety ; in the remembrance of that eminence to which the grace of God had raised him, as a holy, humble-minded, faithful man ; and that is, therefore, told of him, and that is dwelt upon in him, which it is most useful for other men to know, but which is equally and alike useful to all of every profession and of every rank. The world estimates its heroes by a different rule, and looks in consequence to qualities of a different kind. It dwells on that which is professional to the exclusion of that which is personal. It dwells on those things which catch the eye, and fill the ear, and arrest the imagination ; while that which passes within, that which constitutes moral eminence, and which renders a man a model for a Christian to follow, is overlooked in the more exciting narrative of contests for distinction, as irrelevant to the character which is being exhibited ; and thus, the benefit of example, in cases such as these, is lost to men, because men are more interested in results, than in causes ; in the things that have been done, than in the principles of those who did them ; and regard the subjects of biography as successful candidates for the world's applause, rather than as models for private imitation.

It has also sometimes happened, that religious feelings, when strongly developed, have led a man to withdraw from the active duties of his profession, either in the army or navy; and have made his example less profitable to others, by making it less peculiar, less specific than it would have been, if he had continued where he was; and thus, these professions have lost a benefit, which seemed to be their right, by losing those individuals whose moral character would have reflected additional lustre on their public services. It is impossible, indeed, to deny that the first impulse of strong religious conviction, must lead a man to wish to withdraw from every thing that separates him from God; and to live to Him alone, whom he has now found to be alone worth living for. It is equally certain, that the fear of falling back, the dread of being entangled again in sins, which the soul has learnt to hate, may reasonably lead a man to fly from associations, which he knows from experience to be dangerous; and to endeavour to secure his own weakness by saving it from exposure. Excellent men are continually found arguing and acting in this manner; and where the grounds are so reasonable, and the object at stake of such incalculable importance, it is not easy to resist or to controvert their plea. But if some feel it necessary to quit the field, and to withdraw from a contest they are unfit to meet, or in which they see reason to distrust their means of standing firm; the greater must be our gratitude for those who venture to remain, and who dare to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

The testimony that they then bear, is one of peculiar value ; and we may venture to hope, that where the danger is considered before it is braved, and man only exposes himself from the conviction of duty, and under the confidence of support from heaven, he will not be allowed to fail. As his days are, so shall his strength be ; and we may trust that God, who sees the principle on which the man continues at the post of danger, will not forsake His faithful sentinel, but will make His grace sufficient for his trial, and cause his own strength to be perfected in the weakness of His servant.

On this principle we cannot doubt, that the determination to which Colonel Gardiner came, and in which he was encouraged by the excellent Doddridge, to continue in his original calling, and not to quit the army when he came under deep convictions of religion, has rendered him a far greater blessing to the world, than he could have been, had he yielded to his first impressions, and left the service. His memoir would in that case have remained a record of the unspeakable goodness of God. He might have edified the world by the piety of his life, and he might have been named to succeeding generations as a monument of Divine Grace, rescuing man from the bondage of sin, and plucking him like a brand out of the fire. But the memoir, as it now stands, is rendered still more valuable by the testimony of his later life, and by the evidence it contains to that faith by which he lived ; and the power of the grace of God is manifested more signally in upholding him amidst the opposition

which he at one time thought himself incapable of meeting, than in enabling him to fly from it at first. Whatever might have been thought then of Colonel Gardiner's determination at the time, there can be no doubt, that Christ was more nobly confessed in the midst of a sinful and adulterous generation, than He could have been in the retirement of religious life ; and that the doctrine of the gospel was more visibly adorned by the example of one, who lived in the world without belonging to the world, than it could have been by the piety which withdrew its subject from general observation, and led him to seek security by withdrawing from the scene of temptation. But it is obvious that tho value of such memoirs is enhanced by their rarity. Probably from the causes which have been enumerated, the narratives which exhibit the moral and religious character of men belonging to the army or navy are comparatively few ; and those professions in consequence lack the benefit, which example and experience offer in other cases.

But the loss is not confined to them. There are reasons why it may be regarded as a general, a public loss ; and why all may have cause to regret that which seems to be a professional want. Whether it be that the character of these two professions, whether it be that the familiarity with danger, the necessity for energetic action and quick decision, carries into the religion they profess, something of its own nature, and leaves its own particular stamp and impress on its qualities ; it seems admitted, that the men who have been called by the grace of God to a profession of religion, under

such circumstances, have been, generally speaking, marked and decided Christians. It was a centurion of the Roman army to whom Christ bore that noble testimony, that "He had not found so great faith, no not in Israel; and we may reasonably think that that power of grace which sets the soul at liberty in cases such as his, and enables it to break the ties by which it has been bound, may go on and carry it to higher attainments than are accessible to other men. But it may be also confidently asserted, that if the testimony which is there borne to truth, is not more clear and decided than in common instances, it is more unquestioned and more unquestionable. The statement that comes from one, born and bred under the influence of religion, is always liable to suspicion. It probably may bear upon its surface some traces of the work of man, in the tone which education has given to the habits of the mind, to the language and opinions; and in that respect, it may seem to want the simplicity which belongs to the works of God, and which shews the source from which the impressions spring. But let the tone of religion be what it may, it carries a sort of professional stamp upon it, and is less appreciated than it ought to be, whenever men think that it is the effect of circumstances, the result of care, and that it could not have been otherwise. On the other hand, whenever it happens that conviction is effected under different circumstances, when religion is found growing where it was least expected, and where it is obvious that there was nothing to favour or encourage it;

when it is found taking its stand in the midst of opposition and rebuke ; overcoming the world by a power which is not of the world, and which the world cannot understand ; and enabling a man to resist the persecution of which the world is most sensitive, the persecution of ridicule and contempt, exercised by associates or superiors, and applied with little consideration or regard for feeling ; when this is seen to be the case, then we cannot be surprised, if the world is convinced that an influence more than human is at work ; while it sees that done, which seems to be impossible to man ; and men are compelled to feel that it is the power of God by which the change is effected, while they see a change accomplished, which to them, and according to their own views and feelings, is nothing less than miraculous. The unwillingness of the heart to admit a truth which involves its own condemnation, will naturally induce men to suppress the acknowledgement of what they feel on such occasions. But the conviction may be deep, though no confession follows. The testimony which is borne to truth under circumstances such as these, will possess an authority and weight which nothing else can give, from a sacred and unuttered reverence of the power that has produced it ; and the results may be perceived at distant times and in distant places, when the facts had been forgotten by all, except the persons who had appeared at first most opposed or most indifferent.

But beyond these reasons, which may shew the value of the memoirs of men belonging to the naval and military professions, it cannot be denied that the

situations in which such men are placed, and those qualities which may be called their professional qualities, must add an interest to the narrative ; and make their examples more profitable, in proportion as their lives have been more interesting. The narrative of hardships endured, of dangers braved, has always been one of the most legitimate sources of delight. The description of man rising superior to the fear which overcomes and subjugates others ; daring things, from which other men shrink ; and making a way through difficulties which seemed insuperable ; has ever possessed a charm which no other narrative could rival ; and while human nature remains what it is, and the world is constituted as it is, the qualities of courage, energy, and activity, will give an interest to the character with general readers, which the higher graces of humility, patience, and love might be incapable of imparting. But as it is important that truth should be presented in the form most likely to secure its acceptance, no opportunity should be lost which offers religion to the eyes of the world in the history of those, whom it respects and admires for excellencies of another kind ; and whenever religion is combined with these, it is little less than an absolute duty to give publicity to the character, and to admit the world to benefit by the example.

Whatever then be the quality which excites admiration, whether it be professional talent, or intellectual superiority ; or whether it be simply that energy of mind which enables man to overcome difficulties and to struggle through trials ; the certainty that the exhibition of such a character will be read with interest,

makes it valuable as a vehicle for truth; and renders it desirable that such a vehicle should be improved. But we must also feel that of all the various qualities which have this effect, and which may in consequence be turned to such a purpose, there is hardly one which arrests attention so generally, and carries so much interest with it to common readers, as boldness or contempt of danger. All men cannot appreciate the higher qualities of mind, the powers of reasoning or imagination, which lead to literary or political eminence; but all seem capable of understanding the value of that sort of firmness which enables man to bear hardships, or to rise superior to fear. It thus has happened, that in all works of fiction, courage has been the principal feature of the character held up to admiration, and cowardice has always been regarded as the reverse; while we know that in real life, no narratives have been so acceptable to general readers, as those which described dangers and hardships met and overcome by the firmness and energy of those, who were exposed to them.

There need therefore be no hesitation in saying, that as every thing which raises man above the weaknesses of his nature, adds dignity to his character; the contempt of danger must always entitle him to respect; and this feeling which adds a sort of grandeur to the bad, gives a sort of heroic magnificence to the good.

But while we believe that this admiration of courage is inherent in our very nature, and is felt even by those who are unwilling to confess it; we cannot be surprised if the admiration which is due to courage, comes gradually to be limited to such courage as a Christian is

capable of exercising. The boldness which shuts its eye on danger, and rushes on destruction, may astonish, but it cannot continue to interest the mind, because it does not satisfy the reason. Men gradually cool on their impressions, and begin to calculate instead of wondering. They examine the principle of the action which is set before them. They compare the risk run with the advantage to be gained; and if they find the risk infinitely exceeding the value of the prize, or perceive that it was braved under the mere impulse of passion, in defiance of reason rather than in subordination to reason; they learn to separate the courage of the animal from that of the man, and expect that the boldness of the latter should be regulated by that which is the glory of his nature; and that even his daring should be reasonable in order that it should be honoured. In this way the world distinguishes the frenzy of the drunkard, or that recklessness of life which is found in the infuriated savage, from the well ordered deliberate firmness, with which a disciplined mind meets every emergency of trial; and refuses the very name of courage to the madness, which rushes on death, from the mere impulse of excited passion.

But under circumstances which seem more favourable; after the first comparison has been made between the object sought and the danger run; and there has been found reason enough to justify the exposure according to the world's principles; another comparison is apt to follow, which is conducted on Christian principles, and subjects courage, or contempt of death, to a different analysis. To a Christian mind death is

invariably connected with the judgment that is to follow. Viewed as the end of the present state of being, it is necessarily considered as the entrance to that which must succeed it ; and an event which puts a close to the concerns of time, carries the mind, by an inference which cannot be resisted, to the contemplation of eternity. But he, who has allowed his imagination to dwell on the secrets of that unexplored abyss, which commences when life ceases ; and has weighed calmly and deliberately the value of things that are infinite and eternal ; turns back to life with a conviction which cannot be uttered of the vanity and nothingness of temporal objects, when once compared with those which are to come hereafter. To him, the eagerness with which the world is pursuing the various prizes of gain, honour, pleasure, wealth, seems nothing less than madness ; and all that is called good, and all that is called evil among men, will shrink into nothing, in comparison with the good and evil with which he has been conversant in meditating on the prospects of eternity.

To such a man, death appears in a very different character from that in which it is viewed by the savage, or by man, when his moral state resembles that of the savage. Death thenceforth may be braved, but it cannot be despised. At the call of duty it will be met without hesitation ; but it will not be met with indifference or carelessness. The man who meets it will know what cause there is to fear it ; though he may be able to rise above the sense of fear, and despise it. But the victory which he thus gains over fear, the principle by which he overcomes the terrors with which he has

become acquainted, must be the result of very different elements from those which he acted on before; and must be formed in a very different manner from that which constituted courage in a less enlightened state of mind.

Now, that there are means of doing this; that the gospel offers to man, what may be called the whole armour of God; that the power of meeting and overcoming him, who is called the King of Terrors, may be possessed, and has been, and is continually exercised by those who seem the weakest of our race, is happily a subject of such general notoriety, that it does not require a proof or explanation. But till this power is acquired; until these means of victory are possessed; the contingency, the inevitable contingency, in every case where life is risked, involves such awful consequences; that the mind may be justified in shrinking from the prospect of danger, where the loss of life must be followed by the destruction of the soul; and even the narrative of perils becomes too painful to be a source of pleasure to the reader. Courage under such circumstances may be an object of wonder, but it cannot be a legitimate object of admiration; and the reader must shudder while contemplating results, on which men rushed without thought or preparation; and dangers, which were boldly braved, merely because they were not understood.

The impression made is widely different, when self-possession and calmness in the midst of danger, are regarded as the effects of faith; and man is seen rising superior to the fear of death, because he feels that he is

raised above its power. This is Christian heroism ; and compared with this, all other heroism sinks into feelings which cannot be reconciled with reason, or be recommended for imitation.

I admit that it may be thought the interest of States to encourage and foment a courage of another and a lower kind, even that animal courage which rushes upon danger without consideration, and shuts its eyes on the real nature of the evil that is braved. The pride of men may be gratified by the imagination of superiority above other men, which this indifference to danger gives them ; or by the distinctions to which it leads ; and the world may concur in admiring that which feeds or flatters the imagination. But reason, sooner or later, must be heard ; and reason will gradually make itself heard, in a voice which cannot be resisted ; and reason must refuse its sanction to a judgment which teaches men to throw away eternity for a temporal advantage ; and encourages the exposure of the soul to consequences, the amount of which cannot be calculated.

And yet, let it not be supposed, that courage loses its real character, because the occasion for its display is mistaken by the world at large ; or that the effect of religion is to make men cowards. So far from this being the case, courage, even courage of the highest kind, is not only indirectly inculcated, but is absolutely commanded in the gospel ; commanded by Him whose word is truth, and who alone can enable his servants to do that, which He in His wisdom sees fit to command. The only difference is, that the courage which the

gospel teaches is reasonable in its exercise ; a courage, which has reason on its side, and aims at nothing which cannot be justified ; which only despises death, because it has seen that death need not be feared ; and only defies suffering, from the conviction that it is to be borne as submission to the will of God.

Acting under these principles the Christian hears his blessed Master say, "Fear not them who can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do;" and feels his heart respond to the exhortation. He reads the experience of the Psalmist, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me;" and he rejoices to think, that he can anticipate the same support in corresponding circumstances. He hears the apostle say, "Add to your faith, courage;" and the faith by which he walks, and by which he overcomes the world, raises him above the power of the world's disturbances: and thus, in those things which are, and must be the causes of alarm and terror to men in general, he feels himself a conqueror, and more than a conqueror, through Him that loved him. With him then it is no struggle to rise superior to the fear of death, for it is habitual to him to despise it. The sting is taken out, its terrors are gone; and Christ, who commands him not to fear death, has delivered him from its power.

If the Christian, therefore, is not only encouraged against fear, but is actually commanded not to fear; if he is taught to regard courage as a duty; and to glorify the Master whom he serves, by the firmness with which he overcomes that, from which other men are

shrinking; we see that it is not without reason that he is daring; and that he is bold in the midst of danger, only because he is superior to it.

High as the standard is, which the gospel proposes; and much as it exceeds all the bearings of the mind in general, it is as reasonable as it is lofty. The grounds on which the duty is enforced are unquestionable and undeniable; and man cannot dare too much when he only dares according to this direction.

One great advantage therefore with biographies like the present, consists in the exhibition which they offer of courage, based on Christian principles, and regulated by Christian feeling; and there are special reasons why this connexion between courage and Christian principle should be traced and noticed. It is hardly possible to doubt, that the first effect of religious impressions on a mind previously untouched and unenlightened, will be to awaken such a sense of the importance of things spiritual and eternal, as will overpower all other feelings, and overwhelm the mind with the discoveries which have been made. The soul then, for the first time perhaps, becomes an object of anxiety to the man, who previously had never given it a serious thought. The vague inexplicable fear of death, of which he had been always conscious, grows then into a firm and settled conviction, that of all objects, death is the most tremendous; since it is obvious that its consequences may be the most awful. He feels that with such a subject it is madness to trifle, and folly to be indifferent. His former carelessness is regarded with wonder and astonishment; and the mind is lost and bewildered

in endeavouring to comprehend the truths which have thus suddenly burst upon it, and which seem too tremendous to be contemplated.

In fact, such is the character of those truths which religion includes, and which, on such an occasion, we suppose to be suddenly and powerfully revealed, that it would seem probable that the equilibrium of the mind should be disturbed by their discovery; and that every consideration should be lost sight of, in comparison with the one great question, "What shall I do to be saved." That such should be the effect seems natural, reasonable, and probable; and if it did not generally happen, that a fresh and livelier sense of duty is awakened at the same moment, when these impressions are produced; and that conscience becomes more active, as a sense of responsibility is formed; it might have seemed inevitable, that the first burst of religious feeling should weaken and unnerve the man, and lead him to fly from an exposure which he had learnt to fear, without consideration of the consequences that might follow. Whatever may be the causes which regulate the first impulse of these religious feelings, it is satisfactory to know from experience, that this excessive and violent action is seldom exhibited. The moral character is generally strengthened in proportion as the conscience is awakened; and the faith is strengthened, and the man gains firmness in the perception of every relative duty, in the same degree in which he is brought under the influence of religion. To this it must also be added, that the impressions which the gospel forms, are not those of fear alone, even when the conscience is most strongly

touched; and that terror, in a Christian's view, is never so entirely separated from hope, as to justify any desperate or violent departures from ordinary practice. "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father:" and this, which forms the comfort of the advanced Christian, is not without its effect in mitigating the first agonies of conviction in the convert. Duties are recognized, while every thing else is forgotten; and men feel that whatever may be their anxiety about their souls, their salvation will not be forwarded by the neglect of that which they see and know they ought to do.

There is in truth a sort of general conviction in men, that if religion merely taught them what they had to fear, and did not combine with that the knowledge of what they have to hope; if it awakened us to a sense of our responsibility, without shewing how the claims of that responsibility had been met, it would have been a gift of very questionable value; for in that case it would have darkened all the present scene of trial, without shewing an horizon on which a better light was falling. It thus happens, that though the effect of first impressions may be to awaken fear; the effect which follows, when these impressions are retained and improved, is to relieve or remove fear; and every subsequent advance in knowledge, has a direct tendency to cast out fear, to substitute love as the principle of action, and to make hope the character of the mind, until hope rises to the very level of assurance.

Those therefore, who think that religion is likely to unnerve the man, and to unfit him for the hour of danger, by making him aware of the reason there is for fearing death; betray their ignorance of the subject; and shew how little they are acquainted with the principle they are traducing. All men know enough to make them afraid of death. Independent of any sufferings which the body may undergo, there is a shrinking from extinction, which belongs to our very nature; and is found acting with almost equal influence in every member of the human race; except in the few and rare cases where man has sunk himself to the level of the brute; and thus it is evident that man needs not the light which religion gives, in order to fly from that which human nature dreads. But this feeling, the fear of death, which religion does not create, she can regulate, control, and conquer; and while all men in their hearts feel the fear of death, and are obliged to close their eyes against their own convictions, or to harden their hearts by habitual submission to other principles, while pretending to despise it; the Christian alone is capable of looking forward to death with calmness, and of exercising a deliberate and rational contempt of it.

So long then as the present state of things exists; so long as the blessings of peace are to be preserved by war; and the security and the comforts of the many are to be purchased by the exposure of the few; there must be professions where the call of duty may imply the risk of life, and where courage must be the character of the men who belong to them. Courage will then become a duty; and men must be found by

whom death shall be braved without hesitation, whenever the interests of the service require it.

But a Christian community, while it admits this painful necessity, and tracing the origin of wars and fightings to the lusts which war in our members, sees in them the marks of the universal corruption of our nature; and looks on war as the disgrace rather than the glory of man; must still feel anxious, that the courage which it cherishes and honours as the means of national security, should be the courage formed on those bright and lofty principles, which shall discharge its duty to the public most effectually, without any unjustifiable risk to the individual. There is an obvious necessity that the public peace should be protected; but there still may be a question, whether this protection may not be too dearly purchased; if a limited measure of temporal advantages were to occasion the loss of an eternity of happiness to those by whom it is preserved.

It is surely no idle refinement, no morbid spirit of argument, which compares an infinite loss occurring to an individual, with a definite and limited loss occasioned to the community of which he forms a part. Men have not hesitated to say, that the security of property would be purchased at a price too dear, if it was to be maintained by capital punishment; and if political wisdom condescends to note the value of an individual life, can it, with any consistency, deny the value of an individual soul?

A Christian community is, therefore, not only justified in taking every measure, which may raise the moral character of those employed in its defence, and

may make them bold and courageous upon principle ; but it is also bound to use every means which may render those whom it exposes, as superior to the power of death, as they are, or endeavour to be, to its terrors.

It is easy to state the almost insuperable difficulties which here at once present themselves. The habits of life, which have rendered the military and naval professions proverbial, and which seem inseparable from their position in society ; the withdrawal from domestic ties, and from all the usual restraints of the tendencies of men ; these may be named at once, as rendering the attempt at such a moral improvement chimerical ; and these will long continue to render its accomplishment difficult. In the meantime the world at large, either indifferent to the consequences, or despairing of a cure, have found it a much cheaper, and a much more compendious way, to teach their defenders to forget death, than to endeavour to prepare them to despise it ; and lamentable as it is to say, grave men, and men who were thought wise men, have argued as if it was necessary that men should be immoral in order that they might be brave ; and have tried to shew that it was expedient that thousands should be eternally miserable, in order that some temporary advantage might be achieved by their exertions.

But the difficulty of a work does not imply that it is impracticable. Something may be done, if all cannot be accomplished : and wherever any great and undeniable evil exists in society, it is so obviously the will of God, that it should be abated or removed ; that man ought to think of nothing, but the means of attempting

that, which he may leave to the power of God to perform.

It is therefore manifestly expedient that men engaged in those professions, where life is of necessity most exposed, should be prepared to meet death with firmness. The world has its nostrums for effecting this object, and these it is always ready to supply. It has a sense of honour for the high-minded and noble. It has levity and carelessness for the unthinking. It has brutish indifference for the multitude. With one or other of these, it drugs the men, who are to be the protectors of their country's welfare; and sends them forth to danger, like those who are blinded and intoxicated. We admit the efficacy of the means, but we are compelled to feel that the remedy is worse than the disease: and we dare not purchase courage for our soldiers and sailors, at a price which compromises all the highest hopes of man.

Without dwelling at present on other resources for accomplishing this important end; on resources, which might be made to act directly on the habits of these professions; it seems that example might in some respect be more beneficial than precept; and that the narrative of one, who exhibited, in his public life and conduct the model of what a British officer should be, while he was, at the same time, in the full sense of the word, a Christian; of one, who might have been described through life as "*sans peur et sans reproche*;" and who became the ornament of his service, while living in close communion with his God; might be useful to others, as shewing that religious principles and

professional excellence are not incompatible; and might encourage the young to pursue a course which should make them all that their profession implies, and all that their country can require, without forfeiting that inward peace, and that future hope, which belong to the true Christian, and make up the sum of his privileges, as well as the substance of his character.

To those who knew Sir Jahleel Brenton, or who can now recall the singular combination of qualities which formed his character; qualities which impressed respect while they conciliated the affection of every one around him; it is unnecessary to dwell upon features not likely to be forgotten. But it still may be useful to remind others, and especially those who may be tempted, in running over the following pages, to smile at the tone in which this great and good man speaks, when occupied with questions of a religious nature; that there have been few men, whom an Englishman would have been more desirous, on any occasion of importance, to put forward, as the representative of his country, than the subject of this memoir. The description which the great historian of Rome applied to the man whose merits he has immortalized by his biography, might have been with equal justice applied to him, "*Bonum virum facile crederes, magnum libenter.*" Goodness seemed to belong to him; and it sate so easily on him, that it coloured every word, and look, and gesture. No one ever met him, without feeling convinced that the qualities which conciliated and pleased, were in his case not the incidental expression of a courtesy assumed to serve a particular purpose; but that they were qualities on which

dependence might be placed, as exhibiting the real feelings of the man; dignified, and yet kind; indulgent to others, and yet firm in principle; as playful in the hour of repose, as decided and energetic in the time of peril. Carrying with him, in the stores of a well disciplined mind, and a refined taste, ample resources for profitable conversation, he was fitted to take his place in any form of society, and would have done justice to any situation to which his country could have called him; while his country might also have felt, that the man selected to represent her character, and to maintain her claims, would have also been what few could be; would have been the Christian representative of a Christian people; and would have shewn the lustre which consistent religion spreads over that which is admirable in man, by the effect produced on his own life and conversation.

To prolong the memory of such a man seems nothing less than a duty. To extend the knowledge of his excellence; and before that knowledge is effaced by the competition of other claimants for distinction, to shew the secret springs of the excellence which is admired; to trace to its real source, all that in him was distinctive and peculiar; to shew that it was to the grace of God, and to that alone, he owed the combination of qualities so rarely met with as united, and so much heightened in value by combination; to encourage imitation by example; and to hold up to the future defenders of our country, one, whom they may be proud to follow in the course of service, and whom it will be their happiness to imitate in private life; this

seems a debt, which every one who feels the blessings of security he owes to their exertions, and who glories in his country's honour, should endeavour to discharge.

Conscious of my own inadequacy for the office, which I am describing, I am still sustained by the hope that the reader will afterwards learn what the writer cannot teach; that inferences will be drawn, and conclusions formed from the narrative, which shall realize the purpose with which it has been undertaken; and that the familiar acquaintance that may be gained by admission to the private thoughts and feelings of so good and great a man as Sir Jahleel Brenton, may lead many a mind to adopt the sentiments which are here recorded, and that many a high-spirited and gallant youth may be induced by his example to follow the steps of one who never forgot his God, while engaged in his country's service; and was as faithful to his Saviour as he was obedient to the call of duty.

CHAPTER I.

SETTLEMENT OF THE BRENTON FAMILY IN AMERICA, — AND DESCENT. — BIRTH OF THE SUBJECT OF THE MEMOIR. — BREAKING OUT OF THE WAR AND REMOVAL TO ENGLAND. — EDUCATION AND INTRODUCTION TO NAVAL SERVICE, IN THE DIDO. — PASSES FOR LIEUTENANT, AND ACCEPTS AN INVITATION TO SERVE IN THE SWEDISH FLEET. — ADVENTURES ON WAY TO JOIN, AND CONCLUSION OF SERVICE. — APPOINTED AS LIEUTENANT TO THE ASSURANCE. — TRANSFERRED TO THE SPEEDY, AND SENT ON COMMAND OF THE TREPASSEY TO NEWFOUNDLAND. — RETURN TO ENGLAND AND APPOINTED TO THE SYBIL. — VOYAGE HOMEWARDS IN THE CLEOPATRA, AND IN A SPANISH MAN OF WAR FROM CADIZ.

SIR JAHLEEL BRENTON was the eldest son of Rear Admiral Brenton, a native of Rhode Island. The family appear to have emigrated to America in the early part of the reign of Charles the First, probably from apprehension of the coming troubles of the times. William Brenton, who settled as a merchant at Boston, in Massachusetts, about the year 1634, came from Hammersmith, in England. He must have been a person of some wealth and consideration, as he became a free-man, and a select man of the Colony, the same year; and in the following year, 1635, was chosen a deputy of the general court. He afterwards removed to Rhode Island, and then returned to England, from whence he finally removed from Hammersmith, with his whole family, consisting of three sons, Jahleel, William, and John, and settled at Newport, in Rhode

Island. In 1663 he became Deputy Governor of the Colony of Rhode Island, and Providence Plantations in New England, under the charter granted to that Colony by Charles the Second, in the fourteenth year of his reign. In 1667-8 he became Governor of the Colony, and died in the year 1674.

Jahleel, his eldest son, resided in Newport, Rhode Island. A great part of his father's property was bequeathed to him; and in the year 1691 he was appointed by commission, in the second year of William and Mary, Collector, Surveyor, and Searcher of the Customs within the Colonies of New England.

William, the second son, great grandfather to the subject of the present memoir, took up his residence either at Taunton in Massachusetts, or at Bristol in Rhode Island, though some doubts exist as to which of these places became his home. He married Martha Church, by whom he had three sons, Jahleel (grandfather to the Baronet), Ebenezer, and Benjamin.

Of John Brenton, the third son of William, nothing farther is known except that he went to a settlement called Bellevoir, in New England; and was not afterwards heard of.

Jahleel, the collector, died at Newport unmarried, about the year 1732, and bequeathed the greater part of his large estates in New England to his nephew Jahleel, who had married in the year 1714-15, Frances, daughter of Samuel Cranstoun, who was Governor of the Colony, and who died in 1727, aged 68 years. He was the son of John Cranstoun, the former Governor of the Colony, who was lineally descended from the Scottish

Baron, James Lord Cranstoun, as appears by the inscription on his tombstone in the churchyard at Newport, in Rhode Island.

Of the brothers of this Jahleel, Ebenezer and Benjamin, nothing has been recorded, though Jahleel, the Collector above-mentioned, made several bequests to them. Where they resided, or whether they left any descendants does not appear. Jahleel, the grandfather of the Baronet, had by his first wife, Frances Cranstoun, fifteen children—eight sons and seven daughters. Jahleel, his fourth son, the father of our present subject, was born October 22nd, (O.S.) 1729, died 29th January, 1802. He married in December 29th, 1765, Henrietta Cowley, daughter and coheirress of Joseph Cowley, Esq. formerly of Worcestershire, in England, and Penelope his wife, who was the daughter of — Pelham of Laughton, Esq.; whose ancestors had removed to Rhode Island during the civil wars in the reign of Charles the First.

Jahleel, the subject of this memoir, and the eldest son of Jahleel and Henrietta, was born the 22nd of August, 1770. There were besides four sons and five daughters; of the latter, all are still living; of the former two died in their infancy; the other two, with their eldest brother, followed the profession of their father, who had very early in life entered the British Navy. Edward Pelham was born the 29th of July, 1774. Of his active and useful life a sketch has already been given to the public, from the pen of his affectionate surviving brother. James Wallis lived to be a Lieutenant in the British Navy, and was killed in

action when First Lieutenant of H. M. S. Peterel, in the command of a boat expedition in chase of an enemy's vessel near Barcelona.

The seven elder children, were born in America, on the patrimonial property at Rhode Island; but the circumstance that the father of Sir Jahleel belonged to the service of Great Britain obliged him to relinquish his home, and the place of his nativity, at the time of the civil war, which ended in the separation of the colonies from the mother country. Urgent entreaties were used on the part of the Americans to induce Mr. Brenton to join their cause. He was even offered the highest naval rank which the Republic could bestow; though he was at that time only a Lieutenant in His Majesty's service; but that inflexible loyalty, which was always a strong feature in his character, rendered him alike insensible to bribery and persecution. That he might take an active part in the cause of his king, he was obliged to escape clandestinely from Rhode Island, where he left his wife and infant family, exposed to considerable hardships and difficulties; from which they were however soon happily relieved by the efforts of the British cruisers stationed on the coast.

The whole family were removed to England in the year 1780, when the young Jahleel was placed in a school at Enfield, in Middlesex. In the year 1781 he embarked as a Midshipman in the Queen, armed ship, commanded by his father, who had been promoted to the rank of Commander; and whom he shortly after followed into the Termagant, then a post ship; from which it may be reasonably inferred that the additional

rank of Post Captain had been bestowed upon this loyal subject as soon as possible.

At the conclusion of the war in 1783, the young sailor had time to resume his studies on shore, and for that purpose was sent to the maritime school at Chelsea, where, for the space of two years, he successfully pursued those branches of learning more particularly suited to the profession he had chosen. He always retained a grateful recollection of the advantages he had derived from this establishment, where the best education was afforded on the most reasonable terms to the sons of naval officers, who, from their limited income, might have found it impossible to procure the same advantages for their children in any other academy.

In the year 1785 he was removed to France, where his family then resided, as the acquisition of the French language was thought an important point. He has left a remark upon record which will exhibit the state of his mind at this time. "To shew," he says, "what an important influence the most trifling circumstances may have upon a man's life, I may mention that, whilst living at St. Omers, in 1786, I was considered to be in very feeble health from the return of an ague, first experienced in the preceding year at St. Vincents; and having at the drawing school evinced a strong inclination for painting, my parents thought of sending me to Italy, with a view of making that my profession, a plan which I eagerly caught at for the moment; but thinking it over in my own room, where my sword was suspended over the chimney, my eye no sooner rested upon it, than old associations and

prospects instantly crowded in upon me, and induced me at once to reject the tempting offer of a journey to Rome, and renewed my determination to go to sea."

In 1787 his father returned with his family to England; and the Dutch armament having taken place, Jahleel set off for Portsmouth to join the *Perseverance*, commanded by Captain, afterwards Admiral, Sir William Young, a valued friend of his father. This ship was however paid off soon after his arrival, in consequence of the restoration of tranquillity; and Jahleel embarked on board the *Dido*, Captain Sandys, who constantly employed him in sounding and surveying different bays and harbours on the coast of Nova Scotia. It was at this early age that his affections were bestowed upon one, who was well worthy of them; and of the rise and growth of this attachment, as romantic in its commencement as happy in its results, he has left some touching and affecting records in three manuscript volumes addressed to his children. A few extracts from these, to exhibit the character of the writer, without encroaching on the sacredness belonging to a domestic memorial of such a kind, will be introduced in the present notice.

In the year 1789, the time then allotted for the service of a midshipman having nearly expired, he returned to England, and joined the *Bellona*, commanded by Captain, afterwards Sir Francis Hartwell. In the month of March, 1790, he passed his examination for a Lieutenant; and foreseeing no chance, either of promotion or active employment during the profound peace, then subsisting between Great Britain

and her neighbours, he, with a view of gaining experience in his profession, accepted a Lieutenant's commission in the Swedish navy, then engaged in active operations against the Russians in the gulf of Finland. Of his later and better thoughts on this subject he has left a valuable record in the manuscript before alluded to. He there says, speaking of the period in question, "In after life, when better acquainted with my religious duties, I have felt and acknowledged the guilt of this step, for such it was; but I was led away by the idea of acquiring distinction and eminence, so natural in youthful minds, and so powerfully excited by the biography of those whom the world holds up to admiration for their conduct in arms, without any reference to the cause which alone can render war justifiable."

Leaving England for this purpose, he did not reach Carlscrona until the fleet had sailed; and before he could join them in the gulf of Finland, it was already blocked up in the bay of Wyborg, by the Russians. The vessel on board of which he was embarked was lying in the port of Lowisa, when the action took place off its mouth on the 3rd of July, which nearly annihilated the Swedish fleet, by depriving them of seven sail of the line out of twenty-one, while the remainder with difficulty reached Helsingfors. Hither Mr. Brenton proceeded, and undismayed by this mortifying defeat of the power which he came to serve, presented his commission to the Duke of Sudermania, then commander in chief; and was immediately appointed Lieutenant of the Konig Adolf Frederic, bearing the flag of

Vice Admiral Modée. He, at the same time, received orders to introduce the British system of discipline among the men, for which purpose he was fully supported by the Vice Admiral and Captain.

Of this period the following record has been left in his own hand, "On arriving at Gottenburg, I found a carriage there waiting for Sir Sidney Smith, who had also volunteered his services in the same cause, and was expected from England. It had been sent there by the Duke of Sudermania; and as Sir Sidney was known to have taken another route, General Toll, the governor of Gottenburg, offered it to me; and he, at the same time, requested me to superintend a convoy of British sailors, provided it would not delay me too much. The number of these men amounted to twenty or thirty; each had a horse and cart for the conveyance of himself, and chest, and hammock; and in each of these was a Swedish driver, in many instances this was a female.

"This cavalcade had, previously to starting, been drawn up in a line in the market-place; and this line the sailors had arranged in three divisions, naming an admiral in each, and hoisting a handkerchief for a flag. The procession was very orderly while passing through the streets; but we had no sooner got upon the broad road than there were evident attempts made to try the respective *rates of sailing*; and at length the signal was made for a general chase. The Swedes, and particularly the women, soon lost all controul; the most prudent jumped off; and in the course of a short time many of the carts were upset, some in the ditches

on each side of the road, and there were but few to which some disaster had not happened.

“But little progress was made in the course of this day; and fearing I might not reach Carlsrona before the fleet should sail, I left my countrymen to the Swedish officers, and proceeded without stopping day and night. I was however too late. The fleet had sailed, and I was obliged to wait for the *Hecte*, a Swedish frigate then preparing for sea; and at length, with the English sailors who arrived in the course of a week, I embarked in her, and proceeded to Helsingfors. Here I was put on board the *Hussar*, a *two decked brig* carrying twenty twelve-pounders on the lower deck, and fourteen four-pounders on the upper; or as Johnny facetiously said, ‘My eye, here is a craft; a two-decked brig, the quarter deck got forward, and the captain’s cabin under the forecastle.’ The fact was, that the upper deck came no further aft than the mainmast, and was rather a prolonged forecastle; the captain’s cabin was under the deck, and next to the galley or cook’s room.”

On the 9th of July the battle of Swinkasund took place between the Swedish and Russian Galley fleets, when the skill and gallantry of the British officers serving in the latter made the fortune of the day for a long time doubtful. That of Sir Sidney Smith and his followers however, on the side of the Swedes, was more successful, by whose exertions a brilliant victory was gained. This circumstance convinced his Majesty Gustavus the Third, that none were so fit to oppose Englishmen as Englishmen; and he accordingly directed

that all the British officers should be immediately sent from the grand to the galley fleet. They arrived there a few days after the action, and were distributed amongst the flat bottomed frigates. Mr. Brenton was appointed to the Sturkollen. The following is the record he has left of some circumstances belonging to this period.

“On reaching Swinkasund, the English officers were presented to the king of Sweden, Gustavus the third, on board his yacht, the Amphis, where his Majesty's flag was flying. Their reception was most cordial. I was the only officer who spoke French, and therefore became the organ of communication. The bay at this time was covered with the wreck of the late battle. The wrecks of two fine frigates were lying on the beach, besides those of other vessels. Three frigates, a fifty gun praam, and innumerable gallies and gun boats had been sunk. The masts of the larger vessels were out of the water; and many of those of the smaller ones, according to the depth of water where they had sunk. All were abandoned as irretrievably lost; whereas, had the victors been English instead of Swedish, it is not too much to say that nearly all, if not the whole, of these vessels would have been weighed. One frigate in particular had received but little damage. She was on shore, and lying with her starboard gunwale in the water; her masts had been cut away by the Swedes, who never thought of attempting to get her off. The Englishmen regretting to see so beautiful a vessel consigned to destruction, waited upon the king, and volunteered to save her, at which he was greatly pleased, and ordered

every assistance and material they required to be given to them. They accordingly set to work with all the ardour and confidence of their profession; cleared the vessel of whatever could be got at, and laid out anchors and purchases in such a manner as to give every hope of success; expecting, on the following day, to have their triumph. In the course of the night however, the gear they had prepared was cut away, and carried off by boats sent from the Swedish ships; the officers alleging that they were ordered to collect whatever blocks or ropes could be found amongst the wrecked vessels; but there was reason to ascribe this conduct to the jealousy of the Swedish officers; a jealousy easier to be accounted for than excused. It must at the same time be allowed that the king was imprudent in the partiality he evinced towards foreign followers; and as those in question were all young and thoughtless, and arrogant, neither concealing their fancied superiority over the Swedes, nor using any endeavours to conciliate them, it is only providential that more serious events did not occur. All hopes of getting off the frigate were now abandoned, and the Englishmen were sent to their respective ships."

From this time there was no active service, peace being proclaimed in a few weeks. His Swedish Majesty invited the British officers to continue in his service; but as there was every probability of Great Britain being involved in a war with Spain at that period, Mr. Brenton preferred returning to England. Of this time he has also left a record. He says, "In the month of August the peace was proclaimed at

Kymena. The king assembled the British officers on board his yacht, and addressed them in the most flattering manner; telling them that he was well assured how greatly they would have distinguished themselves had an opportunity offered; and that if they would remain in his service he would insure their advancement. Four out of the eight accepted his offer; but three besides myself declared our intentions of returning to England, and expressed our anxiety to have means provided for our return as soon as possible; as we had every reason to believe that our country was upon the eve of a war. The Spanish armament having taken place, the king recommended us to the care of the Commander of the Galley fleet, with directions that we should be immediately paid, and have a conveyance to such place as might enable us to procure a passage to England.

“His Majesty had no sooner gone than the British officers were embarked in a galley, with orders to proceed to Helsingfors, the great naval seaport in the gulf of Finland, where we were told we should receive our pay. On entering the bay, the galley hauled into the rocks; and having landed the Englishmen upon them, proceeded in execution of other orders, leaving us to get to Helsingfors as we best could.

“On reaching the town, we were told by the authorities that no order had been received for our payment, but that we must proceed to Stockholm, a journey of many miles, besides having to cross the gulf of Bothnia. One of our party having a sum of money in hand, generously assisted us; we must otherwise have been greatly

delayed, We set out from Helsingfors through Finland, in the common cart of the country, which consists merely of a pair of wheels, and two small spars lashed to the axletree, forming the shafts, and at the same time the only body of the carriage; upon these the chest and cot of the travellers were secured, making a very comfortable seat. We took our provisions for the journey, which consisted of hard bread, a ham, and a bottle of spirits. We could depend upon no supply on the road except a few eggs.

“In this manner we began our journey through Finland, not knowing a word of the language: we at length reached Abo, and procured an open boat to cross the gulf of Bothnia. The weather had become very tempestuous, and we were obliged to take shelter for a day or two on a small island in the gulf.

“At length we reached Gustihamnan, and from thence proceeded to Stockholm. Here we were obliged to wait for some days; the Swedish ambassador in England, it was said, had sent no account of the terms on which the British officers had been engaged. It was at length determined to give them a sum on account, leaving the ambassador in England to make a final settlement. The sum was twenty pounds to each; but one half of this was given in a bill on Copenhagen, done evidently with a view of getting the Englishmen out of the country as soon as possible, lest they might appeal to the king. We accordingly sailed for Copenhagen in an English merchant ship, landed at Elsineur, and had to proceed from thence to Copenhagen, where we remained a week, and left it at that time with but little

more of the twenty pounds than would enable us to pay our passage to England, where we arrived about the middle of November.

“By this time the Ambassador was changed, and his successor pleaded ignorance of our concerns ; nor was it till the year 1796 that any settlement was made. This only amounted to twelve pounds, making in all thirty-two pounds to each officer, instead of more than seventy-two pounds which had been promised.”

On the 22nd of this month, Mr. Brenton was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in the British Navy, through the interest of Lord Hood. Of this period he speaks thus :—“My first appointment of Lieutenant was second of the ‘ Assurance,’ a troop ship, ordered to take troops to Halifax, a station of all others I should have chosen, having numerous friends and relations at that place ; but particularly, from having formed an early attachment there. I was, however, destined not to perform this voyage, nor to see the object of my affections for the next ten years. I had been sent on shore at Rochester, in the pursuit of some deserters from my ship, when I was surrounded by a mob, and arrested by the civil power, on a charge of impressing within the limits of the city of Rochester. The Mayor, upon this vague charge, and without taking any evidence in support of it, committed me and four midshipmen to Bridewell. It was pointed out to the Mayor that an infuriated mob was waiting at the door, with the intention of attacking the officers on their way to prison ; regardless of the warning, he sent us under a few constables. I was immediately

knocked down, dragged through the streets, and narrowly escaped with life, losing nearly all my clothes. We were liberated the next morning, and a representation having been made at the Admiralty, their Solicitor was ordered to enter a prosecution against the Mayor of Rochester; and I was superseded from the Assurance, and appointed second of the Speedy Sloop of fourteen guns, on the home station, that I might be at hand to attend the trial. This did not take place till many months afterwards, when it came on at Maidstone. The Mayor suffered judgment to go against him by default, and in consequence paid the penalty of seven hundred and fifty pounds, which sum no doubt was supplied by the corporation. I continued for some time second of the Speedy, and was at length made first Lieutenant. I was generally kept in the command of the boats cruising after smugglers. The Speedy was paid off in the autumn of 1791."

Having remained from this period till the summer of 1792 upon half-pay, Mr. Brenton was then appointed to command the Trepassey, a small cutter at Newfoundland. The only personal recollections which have been found of Newfoundland, are contained in the following anecdote.—“ In an excursion made in the winter of 1792-3, from St. John's to the Bay of Bulls, Captain, the late General, Skinner forming one of our party, we had, on our return, to cross a large lake over the ice, some miles in extent. When about the middle, Captain Skinner informed me that he had long been severely pinched by the cold, and found an irresistible drowsy fit coming on. I urged

him to exertion, representing the fatal consequences of giving way to this feeling, and pointing out the state in which his wife and family would be found, should the party arrive at St. John's without him. These thoughts roused him to exertion for some time; but when we had reached the margin of the lake, he gave way, and declared he was utterly unable to struggle farther, delivering at the same time what he considered his dying message to his family. As there were some bushes near the spot, I broke off a branch, and began to thrash my fellow-traveller with it; at first without much apparent effect, but at length I was delighted to find that my patient winced under my blows, and at length grew angry. I continued the application of the stick, until he made an effort to get up and retaliate. He was soon relieved from the torpor; and as we were now but a few miles from St. John's, I pushed on before the party, leaving the captain under their especial care. I left also the stick, with strong injunctions that it should be smartly applied in the event of the drowsiness returning. I soon reached the town, and having had some warm porter with spice prepared against the arrival of my friends; with this and considerable friction he was enabled to proceed home, where he arrived perfectly recovered. He himself related the story at the Earl of St. Vincent's table at Gibraltar, many years afterwards; expressing, at the same time, much gratitude for the beating he had received."

In the early part of 1794 Mr. Brenton returned to England, and was appointed second of the Sybil, of twenty-eight guns, in which situation he remained for a few