

British squadron, that very few vessels could get into it. It was obstinately defended by Massena, but reduced to the greatest extremities, for want of provisions. On the 4th of June it capitulated; but such favourable terms were granted to it, by the Austrian General, that the French were great gainers, by its surrender; as it gave freedom to the army shut up within its walls, and enabled them to contribute greatly to the issue of the battle of Marengo, which occurred ten days afterwards. It has too often been the fate of England to be involved in these short-sighted treaties, by which all the advantage has been forfeited that valour and enterprize had gained.

By the terms of this capitulation British transports were to convey the French troops to Nice, with all their military baggage; and while receiving it on board, a bale, marked military clothing, burst while hoisting in, and displayed some beautiful Genoa velvet. This occasioned an examination of all the packages already on board, and led to the discovery of an immense quantity of similar plunder. Massena was exceedingly angry at this detection, and accused the English of a breach in the terms of the capitulation, although it had been acted upon, up to that moment to the very letter; but the fact was, that it deprived him of much, which he had expected to carry off with impunity.

About 12 o'clock on the 4th of June the squadron entered the harbour of Genoa, and at once fired a royal salute in honour of the birth-day of their sovereign. The scene was truly beautiful; presenting as it did

that superb city, rising above the shores of the bay, and its harbour covered with boats, with splendidly decorated flags, and filled with gaily dressed people of both sexes. These boats thronged round the British ships, and shewed but too plainly the misery that had been endured by the wretched inhabitants. The countenances of the company, ghastly with famine and disease, but ill accorded with their gay, and often rich costume. Many were too feeble to mount the side of the ships; and men as well as women were happy to have the aid of the chair for that purpose. The declared object of the visit was to pay respect to the British flag; but the real one was to obtain food at the earliest possible period. They were gladly received. The cabin, the ward room, and in short every part of the ship was filled by them, and a succession of meals brought upon every table, as one party was succeeded by another. But the most delightful circumstance connected with this day, was to see the British seamen, handing out of the ports, their own rations of provisions to the starving multitude who could not get on board. On their landing, the English officers observed the streets on each side strewed with the dead and dying; and although on the opening of the gates, immediately after the surrender, an abundance of provisions was poured in, it was long before the people again enjoyed the blessings of plenty; disease invariably accompanying famine, and shortening life, when the means of supporting it were restored.

CHAPTER IV.

DISAPPOINTMENT OF PROMOTION.—APPLIES TO LORD ST. VINCENT, AND THROUGH HIM APPOINTED CAPTAIN TO THE CÆSAR, UNDER SIR JAMES SAUMAREZ.—BATTLE AT ALGESIRAS.—EXERTIONS OF CAPTAIN BRENTON IN REFITTING THE CÆSAR, AND SUBSEQUENT VICTORY.—TEMPTING OFFER OF GOING TO ENGLAND WITH DISPATCHES DECLINED.—DEFINITIVE TREATY OF PEACE SIGNED.—SQUADRON AT GIBRALTAR.

ON the 14th of June Captain Brenton being superseded by Captain Dixon, left Genoa in the Culloden for Minorca, on his way to join his ship at Gibraltar, and from Mahon proceeded to Gibraltar in the Mondovi. On his arrival at Gibraltar he had the mortification to find the *Souverain* had been paid off, in consequence of an altercation between Lord Wm. Stuart and the Commissioner; and he received orders to return to England on half pay. The disappointment was the more severe, as Captain Brenton had been assured by Lord Keith, that the *Souverain* was to be considered as a stepping stone to Post rank; and that every vacancy in a Post ship was to be filled up from her, consequently that the last made Post Captain would always have that appointment. He was also well aware of the difficulty which existed in England of getting employed from half pay;

that it was only those that were in the stream that were carried along with it; whilst many officers, who had gained their promotion by a succession of gallant achievements, were passing their days in helpless indolence. They had got into the eddy, and had the mortification of seeing those whom they had left far behind, bringing up the breeze, and passing by them.

This was particularly the case with the greater part of the first lieutenants of line of battle-ships, promoted after general actions. They had received the rank of Commander with the delight so natural to the attainment of such a step: but wanting interest to obtain a command, they were soon forgotten; and many had to regret that they had gained their promotion.

Captain Brenton embarked in the *Anson* from Gibraltar, in July; and in crossing the Bay of Biscay they fell in with the *Louisa*, armed brig, on her way to join Earl St. Vincent, who had now the command of the channel fleet, and was cruising off Brest, with his flag in the *Royal George*. Captain Brenton availed himself of this opportunity of seeing his kind-hearted and noble chief again, to whom he was so truly indebted for relieving him from a situation, in which he felt himself disgraced; and for bringing him on, step by step, to that situation in his profession, from which he could only rise farther by seniority. He accordingly left the *Anson*, and in a few days after came in sight of the fleet. He was received by Earl St. Vincent with the warmest regard, who not only sincerely congratulated him upon his promotion, of which indeed he had himself been the cause, but thanked him in the most flatter-

ing terms for the conduct which had led to it. He then said, "I will now give you a letter to Lord Spencer, requesting him to give you a ship, and should he not do so immediately, I desire you to join me in Torbay without loss of time. I shall be there in the course of a week, when I shall expect to see you, unless you receive an appointment." He then wrote to Lord Spencer in the strongest terms, recommending Captain Brenton for immediate employment; adverting to the circumstance of his having gained both his Commander's and his Post commission in action with the enemy.

Captain Brenton arrived the following day at Plymouth, and proceeded to London, where he delivered his letter to Lord Spencer. His lordship holding out no hopes of immediate employment, Captain Brenton set out for Portsmouth, with the intention of proceeding to Torbay by the first ship going thither. He accordingly went on board the *Prince of Wales*, Sir Robert Calder's flag ship; and soon found himself on board the *Ville de Paris*, with his noble patron. His situation here was of an extraordinary description, and not without some degree of unpleasantness. The officers were, many of them, those who had been his messmates in the same ship, previously to his being made a commander out of her into the *Speedy*. They considered, and justly, that he had already had his share of promotion; and were apprehensive that his coming back to serve as a volunteer, might interfere with some vacancy to which they might be looking. This was a feeling very naturally to be expected, and for which every

allowance should be made; whilst even as regarded the captain of the fleet, and the captain of the ship, he did not feel quite certain that they might approve a non-descript officer, although in their conduct they shewed only the kindest attention.

With these feelings upon his mind, Captain Brenton walking the deck one morning with the Admiral, said to him, "My lord, I do not like this kind of life; I have no business of my own to do." His lordship answered, "I have been thinking you would not—and it has struck me that I might give you the *Joseph* cutter, commanded by Lieutenant Lapenotiere; that you might visit the in-shore squadron; and so give you an introduction to Sir James Saumarez, the commodore. You might there amuse yourself by making observations on the French coast; and when tired of your excursion, you may rejoin me either here or off Ushant, or in Torbay as it may be; as I mean to bear up for that place, with the first westerly gale."

Captain Brenton was delighted with the plan, and joyfully accepted it. It was not only agreeable in every point of view at the time, but in the end it led to the most beneficial results, as regarded his professional life, by leading to his appointment as the flag captain of that great and good man, the late Lord de Saumarez. He was received with the utmost kindness by Sir James; and having passed some days in the squadron, landing occasionally upon the islands off Brest; he returned to the *Ville de Paris*, just as a gale of wind was springing up, and on the following day the fleet anchored in Torbay.

Lord St. Vincent always resided while on shore at Torr Abbey, and having introduced Captain Brenton to Mr. Carey, the hospitable master of the mansion, he became one of the family for some weeks. A great naval promotion being at this time expected, Lord St. Vincent made it a particular request, that Sir James Saumarez should be included in it, and have his flag flying in the *Cæsar*, as one of the junior admirals in the channel fleet. He at the same time wrote to Sir James, informing him of his having made this application; and requesting, in the event of its being successful, that he would have Captain Brenton appointed as his captain. This Sir James most kindly and readily granted; and on the 1st January, 1800, Captain Brenton received his commission for the *Cæsar*, and joined her at Spithead a few days after.

In February they proceeded to Torbay, and from thence Sir James resumed his station off Brest. This was a most arduous service in winter time, when the gales from the westward came on so suddenly, and with so much violence, that it was scarcely possible to clear the land. The Black Rocks however lost much of their terrors upon Sir James Saumarez resorting to the anchorage in Douanenez bay, which he did in the preceding November; convinced that the enemy would not dare to attack him there, from the apprehension that the British fleet might come over from the opposite coast, either during or after the attack; in which case the whole of their attacking force, with whatever ships they might have captured, would fall into our hands. It is true it required much nerve to run for the Cul de Sac in a heavy gale, with mortar batteries crossing each other

from the Bec du Rez, and the Bec du Chevre; and with a shoal in the centre of the entrance. The master of the *Cæsar* however was a very skilful man, and an excellent pilot. He unhesitatingly took the charge, and anchored the squadron in the eastern part of the bay, just without the range of the shells from the batteries, and with only one point of the compass open to the sea. Upon the last occasion the squadron consisted of six sail of the line, and a frigate. The gale lasted three days, and upon its subsiding, Sir James left his anchorage, and resumed his station off the Black Rocks, having his ships and crews refreshed by the repose he had procured them, instead of being crippled and exhausted by being continually exposed to a heavy sea.

In the month of April a cutter joined the fleet, bringing a weekly newspaper of extraordinary importance, in which was included Lord Nelson's destruction of the Danish block ships at Copenhagen, and the landing of the British army in Egypt, with the subsequent victories. The Admiral directed that it should be read to the ship's company, who were accordingly assembled for the purpose, and gave three hearty cheers on hearing the news.

In the latter end of May Sir James was ordered into Plymouth, to take the command of a squadron about to assemble there for a particular service; to the great joy of every officer and man on board the *Cæsar*, who were heartily tired of the blockade of Brest; and who were elated with the hope, of at length seeing more active service. The squadron assembled in Cawsand bay, consisting of the *Cæsar* and *Pompée* of eighty guns,

with the Hannibal, Audacious, and Spencer of seventy-four guns each. They sailed from Plymouth on the 15th of June, and reached Lisbon four days afterwards; and having sent in despatches to the British ambassador, continued their course for Cadiz, where they arrived in the latter end of June. On the 5th of July the first battle of Algesiras took place, as detailed in the following official letter.

London Gazette, August 1st, 1801.

Copy of a letter from Rear Admiral Sir James Saumarez to Evan Nepean, Esq. dated on board H.M.S. Cæsar, at Gibraltar, 6th July.

“SIR,

“I have to request you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that conformably to my letter of yesterday’s date, I stood through the straits, with his Majesty’s squadron under my orders, with the intention of attacking three French line of battle ships, and a frigate that I had received information of being at anchor off Algesiras. On opening Cabritta point, I found the ships lay at a considerable distance from the enemy’s batteries, and having a leading wind up to them, afforded every reasonable hope of success in the attack. I had previously directed Captain Hood, in the Venerable, from his experience, and knowledge of the anchorage, to lead the squadron, which he executed with his accustomed gallantry; and although it was not intended that he should anchor, he found himself under the necessity so to do, from the wind failing, (a circumstance so much to be apprehended in this country) to which circumstance, I have to regret the want of success, in this well intended enterprize. Captain Stirling anchored opposite to the inner ship of the enemy, and brought the Pompée to action, in the most spirited and gallant manner, which was followed by the commanders of every ship in the squadron. Captains Darby and Ferris, owing to light winds

were prevented, for a considerable time from coming into action; at length, the Hannibal getting a breeze, Captain Ferris had the most favourable prospect of being alongside one of the enemy's ships, when the Hannibal unfortunately took the ground, and I am extremely concerned to acquaint their Lordships, that, after having made every possible effort, with this ship and the Audacious, to cover her from the enemy, I was under the necessity to make sail, being at the time only three cables length from one of the enemy's batteries.

“ My thanks are particularly due to all the captains, officers, and men under my orders; and although their endeavours have not been crowned with success, I trust the thousands of spectators from his Majesty's garrison, and also the surrounding coast, will do justice to their valour and intrepidity, which were not to be checked from the numerous batteries (however formidable) that surround Algesiras.

“ I feel it incumbent on me to state to their Lordships the great merits of Captain Brenton of the Cæsar, whose cool judgment, and intrepid conduct, I will venture to pronounce were never surpassed. I also beg leave to recommend to their Lordships' notice, my flag lieutenant, Mr. Phillip Dumaresq, who has served with me from the commencement of this war, and is a most deserving officer; Mr. Lansborne, and the other lieutenants, are also entitled to great praise; as well as Captain Maxwell, of the marines, and the officers of his corps, serving on board the Cæsar.

The enemy's ships consisted of two of eighty-four guns, and one of seventy-four, with a large frigate; two of the former are aground, and the whole are rendered totally unserviceable. I cannot close this letter without rendering the most ample justice to the great bravery of Captain Ferris. The loss in his ship must have been very considerable, both in officers and men; but I have the satisfaction to be informed that his Majesty has not lost so valuable an officer.

“ I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

“ JAMES SAUMAREZ.

“ P.S. The Honourable Captain Dundas, of his Majesty's

Polacre the Calpe, made his vessel as useful as possible, and kept up a spirited fire on one of the enemy's batteries; I have also to express my approbation of Lieutenant Janverin, commander of the gun boats, who having joined me with intelligence, served as a volunteer on board the Cæsar."

The manner in which the interval between this action and that which succeeded it within a week's distance, was passed, must be described by the subject of this Memoir himself. He says, "On the Cæsar anchoring at Gibraltar after this disastrous affair, the Admiral sent me on shore, to communicate with the Governor, (General O'Hara), who expressed much regret at the fate of the day, but was truly sensible of the efforts that had been made to ensure success.

"Before my return on board, the Admiral had retired to his cot, and in a state of mind which may be easily conceived by those to whom his character was known; so sensitive, and at the same time so devoted, to his country. He felt most keenly the apprehension that the important service, for which he had been despatched from England, might be frustrated by the unfortunate, and totally unexpected termination of the attack. On the following morning, he sent me with a flag of truce to the French Admiral at Algesiras, who on my boat coming within range of his guns, threw a shot over us. I immediately laid upon my oars, as a boat with a corresponding flag of truce was seen pulling towards me. On coming within hail, the French officer demanded what was the object of my mission; but I declined delivering it to any but Admiral Linois himself. I was then requested to wait until the officer

could obtain further orders. He soon returned with directions for the Cæsar's boat to follow to the Formidable, the French flag ship. Here I was received by a guard, forming a double line from the gangway to the cabin door; and when in the cabin, I was enclosed in a circle of officers, in the centre of which stood the Admiral. I then delivered my message from the British Admiral; which was, that an exchange of prisoners might immediately take place, which M. Linois declined; on the ground of requiring authority for such a measure from the Minister of marine, at Paris. I then requested that the officers of the Hannibal should be sent over on parole, which was acceded to, and I withdrew; the French Admiral conducting me to the gangway, in the same manner as I had entered the ship; begging that I would request the Admiral, that on any further communication he might have to make to him, it should not be by an officer of rank, but by a 'petit midshipman.' It was evident that M. Linois was unwilling that the crippled state of his ship should be too minutely observed; and hence the arrangement of the guard and officers, which effectually screened the internal state of the ship from observation; but I was amply indemnified by seeing the outward damages, which could not be concealed.

“ On my return the Cæsar had warped into the Mole, and was proceeding to strike the masts. Both mainmast and foremast had been severely wounded, the former so much so, as to be unfit for service; and the foremast required extensive fishing. All the wounded were sent to the hospital; and the killed in the squadron sent on shore for burial. The funeral of the officers—the mas-

ters of the *Cæsar* and *Pompée*, and a midshipman of the latter, who were buried with the honours of war, formed a most imposing and affecting spectacle, from the great number of troops drawn out upon the occasion, and from the whole population of the rock being spectators."

On the 9th day of July, three days after the battle of Algesiras, the *Superb*, and *Thames*, were seen under a crowd of sail, steering through the straits of Gibraltar; and soon after the Spanish squadron of six sail of the line, was observed in pursuit of them. The British ships anchored in Gibraltar bay, and the enemy hauled their wind for Algesiras, where they anchored with the French squadron, evidently with a view of conveying them round to Cadiz. Sir James Saumarez convinced that such was the intention, at once decided upon attacking them with four ships, as it was considered utterly impossible for either the *Pompée* or *Cæsar* to be in readiness. He sent for Captain Brenton into his cabin, and informing him of the resolution he had come to, directed that his flag should forthwith be shifted into the *Audacious*, and that the crews of the *Cæsar* and *Pompée* should be distributed amongst the other ships. Captain Brenton acknowledged the expediency of the flag being shifted, and the probability that the *Cæsar* would not be refitted in time to receive it again, before the enemy left Algesiras; but requested the Admiral to permit him to make the effort, by keeping his people on board, until the enemy were seen to be getting under sail, to which Sir James consented.

Captain Brenton turning the hands up, informed the

crew of the Admiral's intention, and called upon them to use every exertion to put their ship in a state to bear their Admiral's flag again into battle, should the enemy give them an opportunity. An universal cry was heard of all hands, "All night and all day." This however Captain Brenton would not permit; but he employed the whole ship's company, from four in the morning until eight in the evening; of the remaining eight hours, each watch was alternately allowed four of repose. He alone slept not, for his active mind, and ardent disposition, were wound up to the highest pitch of excitement; and he has been heard himself to describe, the overwhelming sense of sleep and weariness, by which he was overcome, when these exertions were happily terminated.

By the most strenuous efforts of every individual concerned, on the morning of the 12th the new mainmast had been got in and rigged, and the other damages in some measure repaired. We extract a few more particulars from Captain Brenton's note, "A great, though not a visible progress," he says, "was soon made; indeed the latter circumstance was avoided as much as possible, in order to prevent the enemy supposing that any attack was intended. The following day was an arduous one, and on Saturday the 11th, so much appeared yet to be done, that the Admiral, who had never been very sanguine in the hope of having the Cæsar ready, again urged me to send the people away, lest they should suffer so much from fatigue, that they might become unfit for the exertions, they would be called upon to make, in the action about to take place. He added, "you now have done all in your power;

you must make up your mind to the disappointment." I replied, "you are now going on shore to dine at the Governor's; excuse my attending you, and if, when you return on board in the evening, the ship is not ready, I promise to have the people all ready for distribution, when you give the orders." To this the Admiral consented, and went on shore. It became now necessary rather to shew progress, than to conceal it; the top gallant yards were accordingly got up, and the yards crossed, and sails bent, before the different parts of the rigging were in the order necessary for getting under weigh. The Admiral on his return was delighted at what he saw, and relinquished all idea of removing into the Audacious.

The enemy at the same time were in movement in Algeiras bay. By two o'clock p.m. the Cæsar warped out of the Mole, and was at the same time employed in bending sails, setting up rigging, filling powder, receiving stores of every description from boats alongside, and preparing for battle; the band on the poop playing, "Cheer up my lads," which was answered by a regimental band on the Mole, with "Britons, strike home." The animation of this scene cannot be described, but the recollection of it must have continued vivid in the breast of the chief mover of these heroic exertions. The scene no doubt was peculiar, and the impressions left by it can be more easily conceived than described, when the two squadrons, occupying their respective sides of a small bay, separated from each other by a distance of only four miles, were mutually engaged in preparations for combat. Thousands

of spectators, occupied the surrounding hills and shores; the sea was covered with the numerous boats employed by the ships of war. And the general excitement which every where reigned, can only be imagined; as well as the feelings of Captain Brenton, when he made the signal of being ready for service, and again received the flag of his respected and gallant Admiral.

It was almost one of the latest efforts of Captain Brenton's pencil to recall the triumphant moment of the *Cæsar* warping out of the Mole, under the circumstances which have been described. He has often expressed the powerful excitement, which even the recollection of this period occasioned; and he never could give the narrative, even to the latest period of his life, without the most thrilling sensation. The particulars of the action will be found in the following official dispatch, and the results which followed these exertions must be given in the language of the letter in which Sir James Saumarez communicated his victory.

“ *CÆSAR*, OFF CAPE TRAFALGAR, JULY 13, 1801.

“ SIR,

“ It has pleased the Almighty to crown the exertions of this squadron, with the most decisive success over the enemies of their country. The three French line of battle ships, disabled in the action of the 6th instant, off Algesiras, were on the 8th reinforced by a squadron of five Spanish line of battle ships, under the command of Don Juan Joaquin de Marino, and a French ship of seventy-four guns, bearing a broad pendant, besides three frigates, and an incredible number of gun boats, and other vessels, and got

under sail yesterday morning, together with his Majesty's ship Hannibal, which they had succeeded in getting off the shoal on which she struck. I almost despaired of having a sufficient force in readiness to oppose such numbers, but through the great exertions of Captain Brenton, the officers, and men belonging to the Cæsar, the ship was in readiness to warp out of the Mole yesterday morning, and got under weigh immediately after with all the squadron, except the Pompée, which ship had not time to get in her masts.

“Confiding in the zeal and intrepidity of the officers and the men I had the happiness to serve with, I determined, if possible, to obstruct the passage of this very powerful force to Cadiz. Late in the evening I observed the enemy's ships to have cleared Cabritta point; and at eight I bore up with the squadron, to stand after them; his Majesty's ship, Superb, being stationed ahead of the Cæsar. I directed Captain Keats to make sail, and attack the sternmost ships in the enemy's rear, using his endeavours to keep in shore of them. At eleven the Superb opened her fire close to the enemy's ships; and on the Cæsar coming up, and preparing to engage a three decker, that had hauled her wind, she was perceived to have taken fire, and the flames having communicated to a ship to leeward of her, both were seen in a blaze, and presented a most awful sight. No possibility existing of offering the least assistance in so distressing a situation; the Cæsar passed to close with the ship engaged by the Superb, but by the cool and determined fire kept upon her, which must ever reflect the highest credit on that ship, the enemy's ship was completely silenced, and soon after hauled down her colours.

“The Venerable and Spencer having at this time come up, I bore up after the enemy, who were carrying a press of sail, standing out of the straits, and lost sight of them during the night. It blew excessively hard until daylight; and in the morning the only ships in company were the Venerable and Thames, ahead of the Cæsar, and one of the French ships at some distance from them, standing towards the shoal of Conil, besides the Spencer astern, coming up.

“All the ships immediately made sail, with a fresh breeze; but

as we approached, the wind suddenly failing, the *Venerable* was alone able to bring her into action, which Captain Hood did in the most gallant manner, and had nearly silenced the French ship when his mainmast (which had been before wounded) was unfortunately shot away, and it coming nearly calm, the enemy's ship was enabled to get off, without any possibility of following her.

"The highest praise is due to Captain Hood, the officers, and men of the *Venerable*, for their spirit and gallantry in the action, which entitled them to better success. The French ship was an eighty-four, with additional guns on the gunwale.

"This action was so near the shore that the *Venerable* struck on one of the shoals, but was soon after got off, and taken in tow by the *Thames*, but with the loss of her masts. The enemy's ships are now in sight, to the westward, standing in for Cadiz. The *Superb* and *Audacious*, with the captured ship, are also in sight, with the *Carlotta*, Portuguese frigate, commanded by Captain Crawford Duncan, who very handsomely came out with the squadron, and has been of the greatest assistance to Captain Keats, in staying by the enemy's ship, captured by the *Superb*.

"I am proceeding with the squadron for Rosier bay, and shall proceed the moment the ships are refitted, to resume my station. No praises that I can bestow are adequate to the merits of the officers and ships' companies of all the squadron; particularly for their unremitting exertions in refitting the ships at Gibraltar, to which, in a great degree, is to be ascribed the success of the squadron against the enemy.

"Although the *Spencer* and *Audacious* had not the good fortune to partake of this action, I have no doubt of their exertions, had they come up in time, to close with the enemy's ships. My thanks are also due to Captain Holles, of the *Thames*, and to the Honourable Captain Dundas, of the *Calpe*, whose assistance was particularly useful to Captain Keats, in securing the enemy's ship, and enabling the *Superb* to stand after the squadron, in case of being able to renew the action.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

"J. SAUMAREZ.

"EVAN NEPEAN, Esq."

The following circumstances not being mentioned in the official dispatch are taken from Captain Brenton's notes. "At eight o'clock the Venerable made the signal for being on a shoal, and her foremast was seen to go over her side. Sir James ordered me to proceed to her in my gig; and to give directions to Captain Hood, not to run any risk of losing his men, but to abandon the ship, and burn her if necessary; as the whole remaining ships of the enemy were approaching from the westward, whilst the Superb, Spencer, and Audacious were still at a considerable distance to the southward. The Thames frigate was at the same time ordered to close with the Venerable, to be in readiness to receive her men. As I approached, her mizen mast fell, and she was still striking hard upon the shoal, completely dismasted. On reaching the quarter deck, I found Captain Hood sitting upon a gun, surrounded by his little midshipmen, who were looking earnestly at the gallant Captain, with a view of ascertaining how he would act in the extremity in which he was placed. Having heard my message, he said, 'I hope the Venerable is not so far gone yet, but we may save her; but tell the Admiral to let the Thames stay by me, and I will take care she does not get into the enemy's hands.' The Venerable was got off by the great exertions of Captain Hood."

Captain Brenton again speaks for himself, he says, "The Admiral informed me that it was his intention to commit the dispatches of this glorious victory to my charge, to be conveyed to England, and directed me to prepare for my immediate departure; but I was im-

pressed with a very strong expectation, that the struggle was not yet over, but that Gantheaume might be hourly expected through the straits, and consequently that another action might ensue. I therefore resisted the temptation, which this most flattering mission held out to me, and requested that I might be permitted to remain in charge of my ship. The Admiral in consequence sent home his flag lieutenant with the account of the action, and the squadron proceeded to Gibraltar to repair their damages, and to be again in readiness for an action which few doubted would take place." The whole merit, and self denial, and patriotism of this decision, can only be made evident when the fact is stated, that the object of Captain Brenton's early and constant affections, was at this precise time expected in England with her brother. It is a singular circumstance that the first news Miss Stewart heard upon her arrival in England related to the battles of Algesiras.

Captain Brenton's memoirs referring to this period, continues to be full of interesting details. "The rock of Gibraltar had as picturesque an appearance on the return of the little squadron, as it shewed on the day of their departure. Every battery, or pinnacle of rock, which overhung the bay, was crowded with spectators, all cheering and waving hats and handkerchiefs. The acclamations mingled with a royal salute from the batteries (congratulatory to majesty) re-echoed over the bay, and the Admiral's landing was most triumphant. He was received, as was most justly his due, in the

most distinguished, I may add, the most affectionate manner. All who had witnessed his gallantry and devoted conduct in the preceding week, and felt for his misfortune, now sincerely rejoiced in the change. They considered that defeat had never existed; but that the action began on the 6th, and had been kept up, with inexhaustible energy through the week, terminating on the 13th with complete success. The ships were soon refitted, as none but the Venerable had received much damage.

“On visiting the hospital on my tour of duty a few days after the battle, I observed a poor fellow, belonging to the Audacious, who had lost both his arms, above the elbow. He was quite cheerful, and evidently rapidly recovering. I asked what were his wishes for the future; whether to be sent to Greenwich Hospital, or to have a pension for life, in the place of his nativity. He replied, ‘I hope, your honour, it is not so bad with me yet; I know the cook of the —; he has lost both his arms; but there is not a handier fellow in the fleet.’

“On the day on which the Cæsar left the Mole, as I have mentioned, for the purpose of attacking the combined squadron, and while lying to, off Europa point; a small boat was seen, with two men in white dresses, pulling off to the ship; and on coming alongside they proved to be two of the Cæsar’s crew, who had been wounded at Algeiras, and sent to the hospital. Having applied to the surgeon for permission to return on board; and being refused on account of their wounds being still under cure, they actually ran away in their

hospital garb, and finding a boat on the beach, took possession, and pulled off to join their Commander."

When a ship's company was actuated by such a spirit, it was hardly possible to doubt of the success that would attend them; but it may be well to bear in mind, that the spirit which secured this victory was formed previous to the crisis in which it was needed, and the hour of action in which it was exhibited; and that attachment to the individuals by whom they were led, and confidence in their commanders, added this extraordinary character of vigor to the natural energy and courage of the men.

Officers who would wish to have around them, in the day of action, or in the hour of great exertions, a crew like that of the *Cæsar*, must be known among their people as Sir James De Saumarez and Captain Brenton were; must secure affection by shewing it, and by kindness and attention must win the hearts of those who are to be the means of their success, or the instruments of their preservation.

In the latter end of August Sir James Saumarez resumed the blockade of Cadiz, but was soon after superseded in his command by Vice Admiral Sir Charles Pole, to whom he became second in command. Thus he remained until the news arrived of the definitive treaty of peace having been signed; when Sir Charles returned to England; and the squadron again under Sir James Saumarez took up their anchorage for the winter at Gibraltar. They had frequent intercourse with the Spaniards at this time,

and Captain Brenton took an early opportunity of enquiring after his gallant antagonist, Captain Suadeville, who commanded the gun boats in their attack upon the Speedy, in November, 1799, which, if his conduct had been as faithfully supported by others as it shewed enterprize on his part, might have been attended with other results. The Governor sent for him, and a cordial meeting was the consequence.

CHAPTER V.

RETURNS TO ENGLAND.—RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CÆSAR AND THE CHAPLAIN.—MARRIED TO MISS STEWART.—REFLECTIONS ON THIS EVENT, MADE AFTER HER DEATH.—HOSTILITIES RECOMMENCED IN 1801, AND APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND OF THE MINERVE.—DANGEROUS ACCIDENT AND INJURY DURING THE FITTING OUT THE FRIGATE.—SAILS FOR THE COAST OF FRANCE.—THE SHIP STRIKES OFF CHERBOURG, AND AFTER A GALLANT DEFENCE IS SURRENDERED, JULY 3.

EARLY in February Captain Brenton received an account of his father's death; and as peace had now taken place, he was urged to return to England at the earliest opportunity. This, however, was a measure which he could not reconcile himself to, until the definitive treaty had been signed, or a general recall of the squadron had taken place. In the beginning of March, orders arrived from England that a part of the squadron, left under the command of Sir James Saumarez, should be sent immediately to the West Indies, to watch the motions of a detachment of French ships of the line, about to proceed to that part of the world, with the expressed intention of recovering the island of St. Domingo from the empire of the blacks. But under such a ruler as Buonaparte, the French were not to be trusted with a very large force, in the immediate vicinity of some of our richest possessions.

On the first arrival of the news of the preliminary treaty being signed, the crews of the squadron off Cadiz testified the most extraordinary manifestations of joy and delight. They flew to the rigging and cheered loudly; many of them actually throwing their hats up in the air, to the almost certainty of losing them, and even kicking their shoes overboard: this was particularly the case in the *St. George*.

But when the order was given out for the detachment to proceed from Gibraltar to the West Indies, a general murmur of disappointment and discontent was heard throughout the ships selected; and the crews of some actually refused to weigh the anchor. The Admiral with his Captain went on board these ships; and it was only by his authority, backed by the steadiness of the faithful marines, that the men could be induced to return to their duty. Captain Brenton says, "This ill humour shewed itself in other ships, and the cables were hove in with a very snail-like movement, until all at once a French squadron of several sail of the line appeared off Europa point under a crowd of sail, on their way from Toulon to *St. Domingo*. No arguments were then needed. The capstans flew round like lightning; all was alacrity and energy, and the British sailor was himself again. Every ship was under weigh, and every sail spread, before the French could get far off; and they proceeded in company to the West Indies. There are fine traits in the character of the true British seamen. They never fail in the time of need. Give them your confidence, and depend upon them. Steadiness and consistency of discipline will always control them.

Irritated as they had been by the severity of their disappointment, they now saw that there was a reason sufficient for it, and obeyed with alacrity ; and I have no doubt they secretly regretted the pain they had given the Admiral, for want of knowing what, he could not, consistently with his duty, communicate to them."

In the middle of March, definitive arrangements having been made for the reduction of the squadron, Captain Brenton, anxious to return to England, requested Sir James Saumarez to permit him to exchange with Captain Downman into the *Santa Dorothea* frigate, then under orders for England. The Admiral having consented, the Captain quitted the *Cæsar*, but not without great regret, from having enjoyed so much happiness in her, and seen so much brilliant service under his warm friend, his kind-hearted and gallant Admiral.

"Perhaps no ship in the British navy had ever enjoyed more comfort and harmony than the *Cæsar* ; and much of this was undoubtedly owing to the conduct of the Chaplain, the Reverend Evan Holiday, who was indefatigable in every part of his duty. And as it is important to shew, how far benefit may arise to a ship's company from the Chaplain's influence, independent of the weekly instruction, to which he is bound by the articles of war on the Sabbath, it may not be amiss to describe Mr. H.'s system. In the first place his conduct was so correct, and so accordant with his sacred functions, in his intercourse with his messmates, that the same guarded and decorous manners, were preserved by them, whilst he was present in the ward-room, as though a lady

had been present; and that alone was a great point where so many young and high-spirited men were collected together, in all the thoughtlessness and buoyancy of early life; whilst at the same time he never assumed authority, or discouraged innocent mirth; and on the contrary, was upon the kindest and most intimate terms with all. His public duties were most carefully and religiously performed. It was thought, and perhaps correctly, that his preaching was too exclusively moral; but it was according to the light he had acquired; and was most conscientiously given, as the best instruction he had to impart. His sermons were generally, it might almost be said always, applicable to existing circumstances, and had reference to some event, or some person, which it seemed expedient to advert to. He was most successful also in preventing the infliction of punishment, as well as in preventing the crimes which called for it. No sooner was a man put into the master at arms list as a culprit, than Mr. H. was in communication with him; got at his character, his motives, and the circumstances which had led him to commit the fault. It thus often happened, that he found out such favourable points, as enabled him to recommend the culprit to mercy, and to induce the Captain to pardon him, on such recommendation coming from such a quarter; when otherwise he could not have done it without wounding the feelings of the officer, who had made the complaint; and doing injury to the discipline of the ship. One very remarkable instance of the success of this benevolent exercise of his duty may be named as an exhibition of his general practice. One

of the seamen of the *Cæsar*, who had been on shore on liberty at Gibraltar, was brought off under a military guard, charged with robbing his messmate in the guard house, whilst lying asleep there in the course of the preceding night. Captain Brenton knowing the man accused, to be one of the most correct characters in the ship, as well as one of the best seamen, was greatly surprised at the charge; and expressed his astonishment to the man himself, that he, of all others, should be so inculpated. The man strenuously denied being guilty, but the evidence against him was so clear and so consistent that it was not possible to disregard it. Addressing the prisoner therefore he said, "Lewis, I cannot think you guilty, nor will I take it upon my own responsibility to act upon so awful an occasion: think well upon what has passed, for if you adhere to the protestation of your innocence, I must write for a court martial to be held upon you." The accused replied, in the most respectful manner, "Sir, I never can acknowledge being guilty of a crime, of which you may well suppose me incapable; but as I have no witness to bring forward in my own behalf, and that of the soldiers is so strong, and so positive against me, I fear I must be condemned by a court martial; and therefore I request you will cause me to be punished on board my own ship; as I feel convinced my punishment will then be less severe, than what would be awarded by a court martial." The Captain replied, that he would never take upon himself the risk of punishing an innocent man, and again urged his confession of guilt; and then consigning him to an arrest wrote the letter; and before presenting it to the Admi-

ral, shewed it to the accused, who however persisted in maintaining the charge to be false. The chaplain who had attended this examination, requested to speak to the captain in private; when he said, "Sir, there is something so very extraordinary in this affair, particularly as it involves such a man as Lewis, that I take the liberty of requesting that you will withhold the letter for the court martial, until I can investigate the affair; and if you will allow me, I will immediately go on shore for the purpose." He accordingly went, and came off the following day in triumph, having detected a most abominable combination, amongst some of the soldiers of the guard, by whom the charge had been fabricated, and who had themselves robbed the sleeping sailor. This was clearly proved to the entire satisfaction of the officers of the regiment. The real culprits were punished, and poor Lewis resumed the high character he had formerly borne, to the great joy of every one in the ship, and to none more than to Mr. Holiday. Much has a really religious active minded chaplain in his power.

The Editor cannot but be reminded at this period in the memoir, of frequent conversations which passed on the subject; and of the manner in which the effects of Mr. Holiday's ministrations were appreciated by the captain of the *Cæsar*. It appeared as if the Chaplain in that ship exercised a kind of moral influence, which formed by itself no inefficient system of discipline; and certainly gave to the real and proper discipline a correctness and precision which can be seldom attained. The moral character of each delinquent was known, the

degree in which it might be safe to remit punishment was understood beforehand; and it was seldom allowed to fall where any nobler principles existed, on which it might be possible to work through other means. The benefit of the system pursued was still more distinctly seen when the state of things was altered. Mr. Holiday was succeeded by a man of a different character, by one, who satisfied himself with the performance of duties which were absolutely required, and aimed at nothing more. The change was soon perceptible in the way in which discipline was maintained; and both officers and crew felt the difference arising from the new chaplain's conduct. Hints were given, advice was tendered, but nothing produced any effect; and the Chaplain contented with the formal discharge of his Sunday's duties, took no interest in the moral condition of the men, and as he knew nothing about their state, was never able to advocate their cause effectually or to befriend them.

On his leaving the ship, Captain Brenton entered into a long and faithful exposition of the deficiencies in his conduct, and pointed out the consequences which had ensued from the negligent mode in which he had fulfilled his office. He stated to him again the course that had been pursued by Mr. Holiday; and added his conviction, that three-fourths of the punishments inflicted during the term of his chaplainship might have been avoided, had the same paternal practice been maintained.

In the month of March Captain Brenton exchanged with Captain Downman into the *Santa Dorothea*, and

proceeded in that ship to England. The definitive treaty having been signed, she was paid off upon her arrival, and Captain Brenton was soon after married to the object of his early and constant affections, Miss Isabella Stewart, daughter of Anthony Stewart, Esq. of Maryland in Virginia, and sister to the Solicitor-General of Nova Scotia, who, with his family was at this time in England. Of the happiness of this union, the pen of the bereaved husband has left the most affectionate testimony in the records which have been before mentioned, and which he began to arrange after the death of his wife, which took place in the year 1817.

It may perhaps be permitted to the Editor to mention here the occasion which led to the commencement of these records, as it is from them the principal materials of the present memoir has been drawn. Sir Jahleel Brenton had found amongst the papers of his departed wife, notes and memoranda written on particular occasions, which he felt a melancholy pleasure in transcribing for the benefit of his surviving children. Death had deprived him, by a most sudden and unexpected stroke of his eldest son, within a very short time of the death of his wife. Neither mother nor son were permitted to mourn for each other; and the sorrowing widower and father was comforted by this thought, as will appear from many of his reflections at the time. In alluding to the memoranda and papers he had been copying, he says, "The employment of transcribing and collecting them into one series, is to me, not only a source of comfort and consolation, but of

happiness. It appears to prolong to me the blessing of her dear society ; and I humbly trust it will excite me to follow her delightful example ; and to offer up my most sincere and fervent gratitude for all the blessings which have been so bountifully bestowed upon me in this world ; above all, for that greatest of earthly blessings, a virtuous and affectionate wife, who was not only a source of happiness to me, whilst I was permitted to possess her ; but whose bright example, and endearing counsels, have been, by the mercy of God, instrumental in enabling me to elevate my soul to that blessed hope of eternal life, which He has given us in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; the sum of all blessings and of all mercies. It is now a source of indescribable comfort to me, that I have never been insensible of her value ; nor have I neglected for many years, night and morning, to offer up my sincere thanks to Almighty God, for having blessed me with such a companion.

“ When I first began to arrange these dear affecting notes, my intention was only to copy them, according to their dates, and without comment, leaving intervals between them, for such further fragments as I might have the happiness of finding. This I accordingly did ; but after searching every place for papers, very few were to be found, so few indeed as to occupy a very small portion of the space which had been reserved for them. I then thought of filling up these spaces from recollection, with a relation of such circumstances in our eventful lives, as must be inexpressibly dear to our beloved children, when both their parents shall have long quitted this stage ; and how many a proof of

recorded love instantly suggests itself to my remembrance. I only regret that this idea did not sooner occur to me, that I might have begun at the very earliest period of our acquaintance. This I may yet be enabled to do, should I be spared long enough. I shall, however, in the first place, endeavour to fulfil my original intention of merely connecting the dear journals; and of thus shewing you, my dear children, how sincere, how tender, how increasing was the affection, which united your parents; how earnestly they had devoted themselves to the happiness and welfare of those, for whom all their solicitude was excited, both as to their temporal and eternal welfare.

“I know that it had been, for many years previous to our marriage, the practice of my beloved Isabella, to commit from time to time her reflections to writing; but I have not been able to discover any of an earlier date than that which begins this collection. You will, I am certain, my darling children, be deeply impressed with the strain of fervent gratitude, and humble trust in a continuance of the goodness of God, which pervades it. It will I hope elevate your hearts to those principles also, from which your inestimable mother derived her comfort and support in all her trials.”

Towards the conclusion of these records we find the original intention carried out. In the sketch of his first acquaintance with Miss Stewart, he says, “In reviewing the events of my past life, I have long felt a deep sense, and I hope a sincere gratitude, for the innumerable blessings, which a most kind, bounteous, and merciful Creator has so constantly showered down upon me;

but there is none in this countless catalogue, which appears to call so loudly for every effort by which I can shew the sense of them, as the inestimable treasure which he graciously vouchsafed to me in my beloved wife.

“The parents of your inestimable mother had long been settled in America, and she was born at Annapolis in Maryland, the 22nd of February, 1771, (on which day I was exactly six months old, being born the 22nd of August, 1770). There was a considerable analogy in the fortunes of our early days; her father as well as mine having lost the greater part of his property in the American war, in consequence of his attachment and loyalty to his sovereign, and being obliged to take refuge under the protection of the British arms. Mr. Stewart went with a part of his family to Nova Scotia. He had then recently lost a most amiable and affectionate wife; one, whom your angelic mother was thought greatly to resemble in person and mind. She accompanied her father, and was indeed the solace of his sufferings (he had for some time been deprived of the use of one side by a paralytic stroke). At the same time she was the delight of all who knew her, from the peculiar sweetness of her disposition, and the animated expression of her countenance; which though by no means composed of what the world considers fine features, had in it ‘something than beauty dearer,’ indeed it was indescribably so.

“In the year 1787 I embarked on board the *Dido* as a midshipman; and early in the following year went out in her to Halifax; an event that I shall ever consider

the most providential in my life, as it has had so strong and so material an influence upon every succeeding part of it. I then became acquainted with your inestimable mother. She had just completed her seventeenth year, and I was still in my eighteenth. I felt from the first day of our meeting a delight in her society, and a wish to be in the constant enjoyment of it, to a degree which was quite unusual with me. Our situations in life were too distant from each other for me to form any hope of gaining her affections. Young women take their place in society, so early in life, in comparison with what is customary with the other sex, that I saw her placed in a situation far above mine. She was already in the best society the place could afford; whilst I was beginning the world, in the humble though honourable station of a midshipman. She might have been justified in looking forward to an alliance with the highest individual in the colony; whilst I had still a long servitude to perform, and a very remote prospect of ever being able to gain that rank in my profession, which could authorize me to look up to the possession of her; even were it possible for me to gain an interest in her heart. That I did love her is most certain; but (I thought) it was a love arising from gratitude. I was naturally shy and diffident in society. She seemed to pity me, and to endeavour by every act of kind attention to give me comfort, and to promote my happiness. That I did frequently indulge visionary schemes of future felicity, in which she always occupied the front ground, is very true; but they were views which I thought it impossible ever to be realized. She was

however, even at that early period, constantly associated with every prospect that presented itself, as I looked forward to success in my profession; and so powerful was the attraction which her sweetness of disposition, and engaging kindness had over me, that although in the midst of kind relations, I sought her house in preference to all others, and passed every hour I could get on shore, either there, or where I knew she was to be found. In the course of the next year, we were separated by my going to Quebec with my ship; and on my return to Halifax in the autumn I found, to my great disappointment, that Mr. Stewart had taken his family back to Maryland. This prevented my feeling any regret from my father's recalling me from the station; which he did shortly after, in order to have me in a ship where I could be rated midshipman; no vacancy having occurred in the *Dido*. I carried home with me a sincere, a tender, and an indelible recollection of the happiness I had enjoyed in the society of my inestimable friend; an impression that no future event, changes, or circumstances could ever efface or weaken; although for many years I dared not indulge a hope of her ever becoming mine. Indeed I considered it almost impossible, that with such a mind as she possessed—so cherished as she was by all, who had the happiness of knowing her, that she could long remain single; and when I had attained to manhood, and had established in my mind the firm conviction, that this beloved and amiable creature was of all others the most likely to ensure my happiness; I did not allow myself to make an effort to obtain her affections, lest I might never

have it in my power to place her in such a situation as might be worthy of her ; and lest it might prevent her acceptance of the offer of some person more capable of making her happy, than myself.

“ During the course of eleven years from this period of our separation, in all the varieties of service, situation, and society, in which I was placed, these sentiments never quitted me. It was not until I rose to the rank of Commander, that I thought myself justified in looking to her, as the object of my ambition. I had, during the course of this time, in a correspondence with my dear cousin, made our mutual friend the subject of the greater part of our letters ; but with little hope or prospect that my wishes could ever be realized. My beloved Isabella however became acquainted, by means of these, with the steadiness of my attachment to her ; and it produced, as may be imagined, a reciprocal affection.

“ After having been more than a year in the command of the *Speedy*, and during that period having had the happiness to obtain, in several instances, the approbation of my Commander in chief, my prospects in the navy seemed so flattering, that although I had not been successful in a pecuniary point of view, I felt myself justified in endeavouring to excite an interest in the affections of her, who had so long possessed mine ; and wrote to her accordingly. But after writing the letter, in order firmly to establish in my own mind, that I was acting from the deliberate conviction that I was in search of real happiness ; that I was not carried away by such visionary schemes of felicity, as too often haunt the

imagination of those, who from the nature of their profession, are debarred from general society; I kept the letter by me. I had given my father a promise that I would never marry until I had attained the rank of Post Captain, when I knew I should have his perfect consent and approbation with regard to the object I had in view. I was therefore resolved not to take so important a step, until I should feel perfectly justified in doing so. I frequently read over the letter, and found that my sentiments, instead of experiencing the slightest or the most momentary change, were daily strengthened; that no alteration was made either by increase of rank, which I soon after met with; by professional success, which was the cause of it; or by my more intimate acquaintance with the higher classes of society, to which, through the friendship and kindness of my excellent friend and patron, Lord St. Vincent, I was soon after introduced. On the contrary, the rank and honours acquired an additional value from the hope that they would be acceptable to my beloved Isabella; whilst her sweetness of disposition, and consistency of character, constantly rose in my estimation, by contrasting them with what I met with; however superior many of her sex might have been in beauty of person, and in the advantages of rank and fortune.

“ Upon my arrival in England, in September, 1800, having been made Post in the preceding month of February; I dispatched the letter; and remained in anxious expectation of the result for some weeks. At length the answer arrived; and delightful as the contents were to me, in assuring me that I had long been the object

of her affections, the ideas of happiness which it excited in my mind, were not to be compared to the real felicity which I subsequently enjoyed, during the whole course of our union. At length, after a separation of fourteen years, I met your beloved mother, and found her all that my most sanguine imagination had painted."

It is hardly necessary for the Editor to dwell on the exquisite delicacy and self command exhibited in this touching and simple narrative of an affection as romantic as it is reasonable. He would merely say, that if ever the intrusion on private memorials is justifiable, it is when features of character such as these, so peculiar and yet so beautiful, are to be brought to light. In other cases, where the gratification of curiosity is the chief end to be answered, doubts may be felt whether the advantage gained is any compensation for the breach of confidence that has been committed. But in this, it seems due to the subject of the memoir to shew to the world what was not seen by the world; and to exhibit the real value of his services by stating the sacrifices they cost him. It is also due to those who may be benefited by his example, to let them see the power which may be given to principle, when principle is founded on religion; and the degree in which the tenderness of affection may be combined with firmness, when the whole mind is brought under the influence of the gospel.

The following extract from the pen of Mrs. Brenton, seems important as illustrative of the domestic character of the husband, as well as the wife. It is dated, Greenwich, January 1st, 1801. "To Thee, Almighty God, I return my most hearty and humble thanks, for the

blessings I have, through Thy divine mercy, been permitted to enjoy during the past year, and also for the prospect of happiness on my entrance into the coming one. Grant, I beseech Thee, that I may so conduct myself as to merit a continuance of Thy goodness; and that as a wife and mother I may render myself worthy of Thy protection; and in the performance of my duty as a Christian, become more deserving of Thy divine favour, through the mediation of our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ."

The above prayer is inserted, not as being a model of what prayer should be, for in that respect the discernment of a religious mind will see its deficiency; but rather because it is considered valuable as exhibiting the mild, gentle, and affectionate spirit from which it proceeded, and as filling up the portraiture of her character. At the same time, and to reply at once to similar remarks, the Editor would beg leave to say, that if this prayer seems incorrect in expression, or in any sense to ask amiss; it must not be forgotten that there are seasons and cases when the heart anticipates the head, and when the warmth of feeling and simple piety supply what is wanting in theological knowledge. At this period of their lives, neither the subject of this memoir, nor his partner, saw things as they saw them afterwards; but they were faithful to the light they had, and they walked according to it; and though that light was as yet but dim, it was sufficient to guide those into the way of truth who were willing to be led. Thus proceeding, they saw more, they knew more, as they went forward. Truth was revealed, in proportion as they advanced; and in them both we may believe that

the promise was verified which says, "The path of the righteous is as the shining light, which shineth more and more until the perfect day."

To the wife's memoranda the husband subsequently added; "This first year, or rather part of it, had indeed been a period of happiness to us. In the early part of April I returned from the Mediterranean. On the 14th I saw my inestimable Isabella, after a separation of thirteen years. And on the 19th our union took place; in which I received the utmost reward to which I had ever allowed myself to look forward—one that amply recompensed me for all my exertions, or rather which appeared a blessing bestowed upon me by my bountiful Creator, far beyond what I could have dared to hope for. We enjoyed at Bath a few months of such happiness as seldom falls to the lot of human nature; but I felt it my duty to follow up my profession, and in the pursuance of that object we quitted our happy home."

In the autumn of 1800 the political horizon beginning to wear a lowering aspect, Captain Brenton had solicited employment, and had obtained the command of the *Minerve*, of thirty-eight guns; which at the date of the previous extracts, he was fitting out at Greenwich. On the 19th of January, 1801, he became a father, and gave to his first born son, whose subsequent death has already been mentioned, the name he so justly loved and respected of the Earl of St. Vincent, John Jervis.

In the month of March he sailed for Spithead, where he arrived on the very day that orders were given to prepare for war; and on that same day he met with a serious accident, by a block falling on his head, which

occasioned a severe wound, and a concussion of the brain. Of this event, the following record has been found from the pen of Captain Brenton, written a few days after this period; when his wife had mentioned the christening of his son. "The ship being ready for sea, I was obliged to leave my beloved Isabella and her darling infant, in order to proceed to Portsmouth, to fit for foreign service. She was to join me there as soon as she should be able to travel. The weather was extremely severe; a succession of gales rendered our passage a very long one. It was the 12th of March before I reached Spithead; and on that day a severe trial befel my inestimable wife, by a wound which I received on the head, by a block falling on me. The accident was considered so serious as to be reported to the Admiralty by telegraph; and a Captain was immediately appointed to act for me; the ship being required on the coast of Holland, in consequence of an armament taking place in that quarter. To prevent any alarming reports reaching my beloved Isabella, I sent off a midshipman to give her an account of what had happened. Her feelings received a severe shock, but her resolution was soon formed, and in a few hours she was with me at Portsmouth, —my tender nurse—my inestimable companion—and this she continued to be during the whole course of her invaluable life; the soother of all my cares and sufferings; making adversity itself a period marked by bright gleams of happiness. With her dear society, and that of her sweet infant, my mind was soon at rest. The wound though severe, and apparently dangerous, was soon in a favourable state; and every serious symptom

vanished, through the kind and protecting care of divine providence.

“ When I saw the *Minerve* get under weigh, it occurred to me that I should derive great benefit, as well as happiness, by proceeding by easy stages to Bath, and remaining quietly in my own house, until sufficiently recovered to rejoin my ship. I had no sooner suggested the idea than my darling *Bella's* eyes sparkled with delight. That home had indeed been an abode of real felicity to us ; but which she had consented to quit from the noblest principles, that of accompanying me to any part of the world, to which my professional duties should lead me. She now enjoyed the pleasing prospect of our remaining there for some time. All the comforts of our home were doubly appreciated in her estimation, as they would so materially contribute to my welfare ; and immediate preparations were made for our journey. Our sweet infant was by no means well, and his beloved mother seriously ill, before we reached Southampton ; but a great and merciful God spared and protected us. We reached Bath on the third day, all in a state of convalescence. The tranquillity I enjoyed in my happy home soon restored me to apparent health ; my wound healed, and I thought myself perfectly recovered.

“ My ship was on the coast of Holland, one of a squadron under Admiral *Thornborough*, watching an armament fitting out in the *Texel* and *Scheldt*. War was considered to be inevitable, and I became restless, and impatient to rejoin the *Minerve*. My inestimable friend saw the state of my mind ; and though deeply

suffering from anxiety on account of my health, added to the painful idea of separation, she piously acquiesced in the necessity, and resigned herself and all dear to her to the will of heaven.

“ I joined my ship on the coast of Holland, but I was soon convinced that I was not fit for active service. I told the Admiral of my wish to go on shore again. He kindly sent my ship in with me, and another captain was appointed to act for me. I proceeded to London to consult Sir Walter Farquhar; who, considering the wound to have occasioned a severe concussion of the brain, recommended the utmost tranquility of body and mind. Could I have remained undisturbed with the idea of approaching hostilities, I had at Bath every requisite for the most perfect happiness.

“ I reached Bath on the 13th of May: and on the 18th hostilities began with France, my own ship having on that day made many captures in the channel. It is needless to describe the state of my mind. It was by no means such as to promise much benefit from remaining on shore. Applications were also making for my ship, under the impression I should not be able to join her. I immediately formed my resolution to return to her; the exhilarating prospects of my profession bore me up.”

Captain Brenton preferred the certainty of suffering to the anxiety attached to retirement, and again resumed the command of the *Minerve*, employed in the blockade of Cherbourg; where several of the French flotilla had been collected, and were watching an opportunity to proceed to Boulogne. On the first of July a detach-

ment succeeded in getting into Barfleur, at an early hour in the morning, although chased by the *Topaze* and *Minerve*. In order to prevent the escape of any more, Captain Brenton determined to keep as near Cherbourg as possible. During the afternoon of the second a thick fog obscured the harbour, but by standing in under little sail, he succeeded in getting sight of what both the pilot and himself supposed to be the *Isle Pelée*, at the eastern extremity of the harbour, distant about a mile. The ship was then wore to stand off under easy sail for a short time. She had scarcely come to the wind, when a number of small vessels were discovered under the land, supposed to be the flotilla; and the *Minerve* again wore immediately to pursue them. A cast of the lead having been obtained, the pilot declared that the ship might run into the centre of the flotilla without danger, which was instantly done; and when in the moment of bringing the guns to bear upon them, she grounded upon a shoal, and the tide ebbing fast, left no hopes of her being extricated until its return. In less than half an hour the fog dispersed, and the moon shewed them the perilous situation in which they were placed. What they had imagined to be *Isle Pelée* was *Fort de la Liberté*, at the western side of the harbour. The shoal upon which the *Minerve* had grounded was no other than one of the cones by which the port was formed; and the supposed flotilla, the small vessels employed in carrying stones to those works. At the same time a heavy fire was opened from *Fort de la Liberté*, and *Isle Pelée*, as well as from two intermediate small batteries, and two gun brigs lying in the harbour.

Such a situation demanded the utmost energy from every one, and certainly more could not have been shewn than was exhibited. The boats were immediately hoisted out, and Mr. Walpole,* the third lieutenant, was directed to proceed in the first that reached the water, to endeavour to cut out from the interior of the harbour some vessel large enough to carry out a bower anchor. As Captain Brenton foresaw that he should require the launch, with her carronade to operate a diversion upon the gun brigs; the barge was to have been sent to the assistance of Lieutenant Walpole; but this gallant young officer pushed forward, without waiting for reinforcements, and boarding a lugger under the batteries, towed her out with his single boat, under a tremendous fire of great guns, and musketry, alongside the ship. She was laden with stores to the water's edge, consequently was incapable of bearing any addition to her burden. A new difficulty here occurred; to discharge her alongside was to increase the shoal; it was therefore necessary to veer her astern to the extent of a hawser, and to throw her cargo overboard, before she could be of any service. The fire from the batteries was very galling, and the ship began to suffer severely under it, both in her crew, and her rigging, and hull. The launch was sent with the second lieutenant, Mr. Fitzgerald, to call off the attention of the gun brigs, and had the desired effect of slackening their fire upon the ship. At midnight the lugger was hauled

* Afterwards the Honourable William Walpole, a Post Captain.

under the bows to receive the anchor, but was repeatedly hulled by shot, so as to render it necessary for carpenters to be continually repairing her. Whilst this tedious and laborious operation was being performed the anchor was at last placed in her, but the hawser from the kedge, which had been laid out for the purpose of warping the lugger, being shot away, it became necessary to employ the boats in towing her, a circumstance Captain Brenton would gladly have avoided, as it exposed the boats' crews, and took too many people from the ship. The line of boats soon attracted the notice, and consequently the fire of the batteries, and gun brigs, which now became tremendous; but every discharge was answered by the most animated cheers from the boats' crews, who gallantly succeeded in placing the anchor in its destined direction.

Every exertion was in the mean time made on board to lighten the ship abaft; as her stern hung upon a broken part of the cone, and there were six fathoms under her bows. The guns, useless under such circumstances, were all got under the forecastle, and every other weight from abaft; the two forecastle guns alone being employed against the gun brigs. At two o'clock the situation of the *Minerve* was so hopeless, from the wind having died away entirely, and some rise having taken place in the tide, that Captain Brenton had it in contemplation to burn the ship, taking the crew away with the assistance of the lugger and the boats. For this purpose the lugger was brought alongside; the wounded ordered to be placed in her, and every preparation

made to set fire to the ship, when all other resources should fail. The capstan was however manned, and they continued heaving as the tide rose.

The day broke at three o'clock, and the batteries increased their fire with surer aim, whilst the gun brigs, finding themselves within range of grape shot, annoyed the ship exceedingly. Many of the people at the capstan were killed or wounded, but their places were immediately supplied; and the men encouraged by their officers continued the most persevering efforts. At half past four the ship floated; the cable was cut, and such sail as could be made, trimmed amidst the cheers of the ship's company, who now considered their danger and labours at an end. The wind however again failed them, and the ship was set by the last drain of the tide upon another part of a broken cone, where she lay with only two fathoms and a quarter under her main chains. The lugger, upon which the crew depended for their escape was dismasted, and in a sinking state; (the wounded had been returned to the cockpit, as the hopes of getting the ship off had increased); she was also cut adrift, as was the launch by the enemy's shot; no boat remained, capable of carrying out an anchor; and deprived of every hope of saving the ship; Captain Brenton to prevent the further effusion of blood, at half-past five A.M. surrendered her to the enemy, after a most anxious struggle of nine hours.

The *Minerve* had eleven killed and sixteen wounded. The prisoners were landed at Cherbourg, to await orders from the First Consul, relative to their future disposal. These arrived in a few days, and directed

them to be marched to Epinal, the capital of the department of the Vosges, a distance of nearly five hundred miles: intelligence not very welcome to the unfortunate captives, as they had flattered themselves with the hope of being soon exchanged, and kept near the coast for that purpose. Of this event Captain Brenton speaks thus, "This was one of the most trying periods of my life, but one, in which I felt, in a peculiar degree, the benefit of a reliance on Divine Providence. When fully aware of the situation in which the ship was placed shortly after her taking the ground, by the fog clearing away, and the batteries opening their fire upon us, I remember walking aft, and leaning over the taff-rail, I offered a short and humble prayer to the Almighty for my beloved wife and child. The effect appeared to be instantaneous. In no period of my life do I remember to have ever been more composed than at that moment, nor did my tranquility ever forsake me during the whole of that trying night."

The concluding particulars of the loss of the *Minerve*, may be here inserted as given by Captain Brenton. "At length I put the question to my officers, whether any hope remained: all answered in the negative, and recommended surrender. The painful alternative was adopted; and the colours being hauled down, shouts of triumph resounded from the shore. I then went into my cabin, and having destroyed my private signals, proceeded to collect such things as might be most immediately necessary, threw them into my cot, which, though unoccupied through the dreadful night, was hanging up in my cabin. In this I had my

plate, and such of my clothes as I could the more easily get at, lashed up and given to my servant. Whilst thus occupied, the master of the French vessel, which had been taken in the preceding evening, and who had been kept below during the night, hearing that the ship had surrendered, made the best of his way to my cabin, and began to console me, 'Soncez mon brave Capitaine, que vous êtes distingué; que vous vous êtes défendu en brave homme; que vous avez seulement subis le sort de la guerre; que les Français sont de braves gens.' At this moment the batteries renewed their fire, and the panegyrist immediately took to his heels for his place of security, crying out, 'O les coquins, los marauds,' and such other terms as seemed at the moment most appropriate for this attack upon a fallen enemy. I then went on deck, and standing up upon the taffrail, waved a white flag, calling out at the same time, 'Nous, nous sommes rendus.' The gun brigs also repeated this information, 'Ils se sont rendus.'

"It was some time before the firing ceased, but providentially no one was hurt by it. The reason subsequently alleged for the continuance of hostilities was, that the *Minerve* had not lowered her sails; but had the Commandant known of how little importance this circumstance was in our situation, he would not have incurred the risk of an useless effusion of blood. Under existing circumstances, he only added to the injury already done to a ship in his possession. A boat from the senior officer of the gun brigs soon after came alongside; and after making himself very certain that the ship had indeed surrendered, received my sword,