

gun,* but kept a steady course until we had brought the enemy to bear south, when we bore up north, leaving him the choice of yawing to continue his fire, or to confine it to his bow guns. He preferred the former, by which means he lost so much way, that we were soon out of gun shot; the other frigate could not approach, and the corvette avoided us.

“Providentially we received no damage, although exposed for a considerable time to a point blank fire, scarcely going two knots; but few shot struck us. I have the greatest reason to be pleased with the steadiness and good conduct of the officers and people under my command.

“At half-past five, having a fresh breeze from the S.W. we had gained so far upon the enemy that they left off chase by signal; the Commodore shortening sail, and hauling round the north end of Capraia.

“From a Neapolitan pilot I had on board I learn that this is a French squadron from Genoa, as he says, he knows of ships of this description, viz. one of the line, two frigates, and four corvettes, being fitted out there. We chased one corvette off the island of Piglio, on the 26th ultimo; and the other two, I was informed by an American, are employed with convoys between Genoa and Toulon.

“I have the honour to be, &c.

“JAHLEEL BRENTON.”

“CHARLES ROWLEY, Esq.”

On the return of the French squadron to Toulon the Captain of one of the frigates was broke for his conduct; but it is not known whether this was the Captain of the the Pomone, who lost the opportunity of bringing the

* “I have often heard this exciting circumstance mentioned, and the impatience with which the sailors obeyed my brother’s orders not to fire in return for the enemy’s shot; observing, as he says, that their fire deprived them of the breeze. The sailors were heard to say that they did not so much care for themselves, but it was too hard their poor captain should so soon be shut up in a French prison again.” F. B.

British frigate to close action, or the Commander of the *Incorruptible* for not joining in the attack upon her.

After this narrow escape, the *Spartan* proceeded off Toulon in pursuance of her orders. Captain Brenton's object was to have reconnoitred that port, in order to ascertain correctly the enemy's force, ready for sea, or under equipment; but he was chased off by a French line of battle ship. He returned the next day, and made out that there were only four ships of war in the outer road, two of which were of the line, with several fitting in the inner road. He considered it of importance that the senior officer at Palermo should be informed of the state of the enemy's squadron in Toulon; and therefore availing himself of a strong westerly wind bore up for that place, running through the straits of Bonifacio, where he fell in with the *Sirius*. Captain Prouse proceeded to Palermo with the information, and the *Spartan* directed her course to Ponza, with an account of the French squadron being at sea; in order to put the garrison on that island, and the island of Capri, on their guard. Captain Brenton says, "The *Spartan* now proceeded on her return to Toulon; but on the following day met with a disaster, which, in my estimation, far exceeded in severity any that had ever befallen me, in the whole course of my professional career. When off Nice, in the morning of the 14th of May, we gave chase to a polacre ship, which we continued with light and variable winds until near sunset, when it became perfectly calm; the chase being still at the distance of six or seven miles, but the weather so clear that she was distinctly made out to be a mer-

chant vessel. The officers entreated me to send the boats, which I was unwilling to do, in consequence of a recent order from the Commander in chief, not to send any boats where they could not be protected by their ship; an order that was clearly pointed as an injurious practice, which had crept in amongst the cruisers, of sending away boats to a considerable distance, to conceal themselves on points of the coast, in order to capture the trading vessels, whilst their own ships were out of sight of the land. Upon this occasion the distance of the chase was not an hour's pulling; and I determined to send such a force as I considered would put all resistance out of the question, and ensure the return of the boats early in the morning. I accordingly ordered out the barge, launch, and two other boats under the command of first and second lieutenants, and manned by volunteers, consequently by the best men in the ship. A light breeze having sprung up before the boats came up with the polacre, she had availed herself of it, to get close in with the land near Nice; and upon approaching they discovered that she had a tier of guns. I had given the most positive orders to the first lieutenant not to attack her, should she prove a vessel of force; but this gallant young man, considering she could not be viewed in this light, when the number of his men and boats was calculated, at once decided upon making a dash, and ordering the second lieutenant with one boat to board on the larboard side, he, with the others, immediately pulled up on the starboard, and commenced the attack. They were received with the utmost coolness by the enemy, who poured such a destructive fire

into the boats, that crowded as they were, it produced a most disastrous effect, and prevented them effectually from boarding. Both the lieutenants fell at the first fire, covered with wounds; the second, with his midshipman and many of the boat's crew, were killed upon the spot, as were many in the first lieutenant's division, and indeed each boat was filled with killed and wounded. The survivors made a gallant but ineffectual attempt to board; but they were too much reduced in number to succeed; and the boats on both sides letting go their hold, the polacre passed on a-head with a light breeze, keeping up a continued fire of musketry while within reach.

“From the very heavy fire which was opened upon the boats on their getting alongside, and laying their oars in, for the purpose of boarding; a fire, which had been judiciously reserved for that critical moment; it was concluded that assistance must have been sent to them from the coast, as it was scarcely possible that the crew of a merchant vessel could have composed such an effective volley. The vessel was some months after captured by Lord Cochrane, in the *Imperieuse*. The people denied having received any assistance on this occasion; and we are therefore bound to give them full credit for their most gallant defence.

“All eyes from the *Spartan* were of course directed to the quarter in which the boats were chasing; and it was not until one minute past ten that a slight scintillation of firing was observed, without any report. This soon after ceased, and not a doubt existed in the mind of any one on board the *Spartan*, that the attack had been successful. We had now got the breeze, and were

steering for the scene of action, every one expecting to see the polacre approaching with the boats accompanying her, but a most melancholy disappointment awaited us. The oars of a boat were at length heard. When within reach of the boat she was hailed; and the answer told the melancholy tale of their defeat, and that the boats were all on their return filled with the dead and dying. The following was the sad list of sufferers:— Killed, one lieutenant, two midshipmen, twenty-four seamen: wounded, one lieutenant (mortally), and thirty-seven seamen; scarcely ten men out of about seventy being untouched. The dead were laid side by side on the main deck, in order to be prepared for burial, being sewed up in hammocks. The wounded were carried into my cabin, the only part of the ship where there was sufficient space for their accommodation in dressing their wounds; and while this was doing, which took up the greater part of the night, the lower deck was prepared for their reception; all the hammocks, mess tables, and chests being removed for the purpose; a measure which became absolutely necessary in that warm climate, lest the air below, infected by the numbers wounded, should have generated disease amongst the healthy part of the ship's company. The number of these was so much diminished by this fatal event, that there was little difficulty in finding accommodation for them under the half deck and forecastle; so that the whole extent of the Spartan's 'tween decks became a most convenient and well ventilated hospital. On the following morning the dead were brought up for burial, and arranged along the starboard waste

hammocks, with a man to each, for the purpose of launching the body overboard at the proper time; the bodies of the second lieutenant and his midshipman were in coffins at the gangway. I could with difficulty get through the mournful service, and at the words 'commit their bodies to the deep,' when the whole were launched into the ocean, an universal sensation was experienced by the ship's company. The effect may be imagined, but it cannot be described. Four and twenty active young men in the prime of life, in all the energy of the seaman's character, buoyant with spirits and health only a few hours before, now gone to their awful account. This was indeed an awakening scene, and undoubtedly left a deep, although perhaps but a transitory impression on all who witnessed it."

To keep the sea under such circumstances was out of the question. Captain Brenton, however, did not quit his station until he had made another effort to get off Toulon, where he hoped to have fallen in with the British squadron under Captain Rowley, and also that he might carry the latest intelligence of the state of the enemy's ships in that part. But on the 17th the Spartan was again chased off from Cape Sicie by a French ship of the line, and two frigates, but as she considerably out-sailed them, they hauled their wind in for the land; and Captain Brenton made the best of his way for Malta, where he arrived on the 24th, having providentially very fine weather, smooth water, and light breezes, so that the wounded were under as favourable circumstances as possible. They were enabled to keep the scuttles on the lower deck con-

stantly open; and the value of this ventilation may be estimated when it is stated, that such were the effluvia coming from the lower deck in consequence of the wounds, that it was found most unpleasant to all who were looking over the gangway.

“The severe fatigue and anxiety experienced by Dr. Grey, the surgeon, upon this occasion, had such an effect upon his health, that he was under the necessity of leaving the Spartan, and retiring from the navy.”

There are two circumstances connected with this melancholy catastrophe, which are too interesting to be passed over in silence. One relates to the midshipman who was killed in the boat, with the Second Lieutenant, (Mr. Williams.) He was the son of Admiral Christie, and had been placed under the particular care of Captain Brenton. On the 23rd of April, when the boats were sent in, to cut out a vessel, young Christie requested he might be of the party, to which Captain Brenton readily assented, as it was his practice to give every youngster, however young, an opportunity of shewing what he was made of, (according to the professional phrase); and having done this, he seldom allowed them to be exposed in the boats again, until they had attained the age of sixteen, when they took their turn with the others. Christie conducted himself upon this occasion like a fine gallant boy, and gave great promise of future distinction. On his coming on board the Captain expressed himself well satisfied with his conduct, and said, “Now Christie, as you have established your character, do not ask me again to let you go on any more boat expeditions, until you are more than sixteen; for I shall

certainly refuse you." Notwithstanding this warning, when the boats were preparing to go after the polacre, Christie came up, and begged he might be of the party; but was decidedly refused. It appeared afterwards that the Second Lieutenant, (Mr. Williams) an officer of great merit, and for whom Captain Brenton entertained the highest regard, thoughtlessly suggested to the poor boy that he should run forward, and get into the boat unseen by the Captain, under the bows; promising to receive him into his own boat, and accordingly he did so. The consequence was, that the Lieutenant and his young friend both fell together at the first fire from the polacre. Captain Brenton suffered great affliction upon this occasion, but thoughtless and inexcusable as poor Williams's conduct was, it never weakened his regard for his memory; attributing it to the motive by which he was undoubtedly influenced, a warm admiration for the display of gallantry in one so young, and the feeling that this very gallantry would be the boy's apology for disobedience.

The other circumstance is of a very romantic description, and is given in Captain Brenton's own words. "The coxswain of the barge, reported among the killed and wounded, was a very fine active young man, and had been indulged with the permission to bring his wife on board the ship. She was very young at this period, and the attachment between the couple was very remarkable, as well as the respect they obtained from all on board from the correctness of their conduct, which was in every respect exemplary. On the boats returning,

and the report of Bodie's death, (for such was his name,) his poor little wife was frantic with grief, and flew from one part of the ship to another, with the most agonizing shrieks. When the dead were placed on the main deck, she flew to them, uncovering their faces, and calling out for her husband. She then ran up, and took her seat on the coxswain's box, in the barge, which had now been hoisted in, calling for her husband; and from thence to the Captain on the quarter deck, imploring him to let her see the body. Calling for some of the people who were in the barge, upon whom the greatest dependence could be placed, I desired to know how Bodie had been killed; when one of them said, 'Sir, we were boarding the vessel together on the starboard side, and were getting into the main chains, when I was wounded and fell into the boat, and Bodie at the same time was killed, and fell between the boat and the ship.'" The wife was present at this detail, and at length seemed convinced of her dreadful loss. The greatest attention was paid to her by all on board, to alleviate as much as possible her sufferings; and on the arrival of the Spartan at Malta she was received, by Captain Brenton's recommendation, into the protection of a very respectable family. Her situation excited the most lively interest at Malta; a subscription amounting to £80, was made for her; and she soon after sailed for England in a Transport, with a letter to Mrs. Brenton at Bath, by whom she was received, and remained with her for some time, previous to her departure for Ireland, where her mother was living. Captain Brenton also

gave her a recommendation to the Committee of the Patriotic fund, which obtained for her £50.

The Spartan having landed her wounded, and refitted, proceeded to Messina, in the hopes of procuring a few men from the Trade and Transports there. She then continued her course for Toulon ; and on approaching the Hicres Islands, in the middle of June, we boarded a merchant vessel from Genoa, from which we received the following intelligence. " A polacre, it was said, had arrived there some weeks previous, which had been attacked by the boats of an English frigate, and had succeeded in beating them off. When the firing had ceased, the cries of a man were heard under the stern, and an English sailor was found hanging on by the rudder chains, and wounded. On taking him on board he proved to be the coxswain of the frigate's barge ; he stated that he had been severely wounded in endeavouring to board the polacre, and had fallen between the ship and the boat, but as he passed a-stern he had caught hold of the rudder chains, and hung on until the action was over. The story added, that on the vessel's arrival at Genoa, the man was sent to the hospital ; and on his wound being cured, had been marched into France." No doubt now existed as to the correctness of this statement, and I immediately wrote to Verdun, requesting my friends would make enquiries as to the depôt to which Bodie was sent ; and on ascertaining his safety, that information might be immediately sent to Mrs. Brenton, at Bath, in order to her communicating the joyful news to the supposed widow. In a very few weeks a letter reached

Mrs. Brenton from the Rev. L. C. Lee, at Verdun, informing her that Bodie had reached that depôt, and was no sooner known to have been Captain Brenton's coxswain, than the greatest interest was manifest in his behalf, and permission was procured for him to remain there, where every care would be taken of him, and that he had quite recovered from his wounds. These joyful tidings were soon in the hands of Mrs. Bodie, at Cork, whose happiness may be easily imagined."

On the 18th of June the Spartan resumed her station off Toulon, and found the enemy's force considerably increased since that port was last reconnoitred; when four sail of the line were ready for sea, but this force was now rapidly augmenting. The Spartan was for some time the only ship employed in watching the movements of this squadron, and was frequently chased off the land by them; but as the French were uncertain as to the position of the British Squadron, and concluded they were cruising out of sight of the coast, they seldom ran farther than six or eight leagues from Cape Sicie.

On the commander in chief, Lord Collingwood, having received Captain Brenton's account of the disastrous attack upon the polacre, he gave directions for a court of enquiry to be held upon Captain Brenton for this affair, consisting of Captains Hoyle, Rowley, and Fayerman; he directed them also to enquire into the circumstances attending the loss of the Transport, which came out of England under convoy of the Spartan, and which as has been stated, parted company

with that ship off Lisbon, and ran on shore near San Lucar, where she was taken possession of by the Spaniards, but burnt by the boats of the Malta. The following are the reports made by the Courts of Enquiry—" Present,

CAPTAIN CHARLES BOYLES,
 " FRANCIS FAYERMAN,
 " CHARLES ROWLEY.

"The Court, pursuant to an order from Edward Thornborough, Esq., Vice Admiral of the Blue, &c. dated the 6th day of October, 1807, repaired on board H. M. S. Spartan, and there made a strict enquiry into the unfortunate result of an attack made by the boats of the said ship on a Polacre ship, on the night of the 14th of May, and the Court is of opinion that the Commander in chief's order of the 16th of June, 1806, on the subject of sending armed boats from the ships, has not been deviated from in this instance; as far as their judgment is capable of forming an opinion, from the narrative received from Captain Jahleel Brenton, and corroborated by the examination of the officers that were called before them; who had heard the orders given to the officer commanding the detached boats, and who assert that the chase appeared to be a merchant vessel, quite becalmed, about five or six miles distant, and not near any fort.

Signed, C. BOYLES,
 F. FAYERMAN,
 C. ROWLEY."

Then follows the enquiry respecting the Transport—
 "At a Court of enquiry held on board H. M. S.

Spartan, in Palermo Bay, Wednesday, 7th of October, 1807,—Present,

CAPTAIN C. BOYLES,
 „ F. FAYERMAN,
 „ C. ROWLEY.

“The Court, pursuant to an order from Edward Thornborough, Esq., Vice Admiral of the Blue, &c. dated 6th October, 1807, being in pursuance of an order from the Right Honourable Cuthbert Lord Collingwood, dated 29th of May last, repaired on board H. M. S. Spartan, and calling before the Court the commander and officers of the said ship, made a strict enquiry and investigation into the cause and circumstances of the Mary, Ordnance Transport Ship, parting company with the Spartan, when the Captain was charged with her safety, and taking into consideration the great value, and still greater importance of the vessel's cargo. The Court is of opinion, from the examination and strict enquiry made of Captain Jahleel Brenton, the master, master's mate, the boatswain and gunner, the only officers called, two of the Lieutenants being dead, and the other Lieutenant at the time in his bed, where he had been for some time; that every thing was done on the part of Captain Jahleel Brenton to insure the safety of the Mary Ordnance Transport; and the circumstance of the said Transport separating from the Spartan, was caused by the carelessness, negligence, and bad conduct of the Master of the Mary, Ordnance Transport Ship.

Signed, C. BOYLES,
 F. FAYERMAN,
 C. ROWLEY.”

This affair being thus settled the Spartan resumed her station off Toulon, and soon after the fleet, under the Commander in chief, Lord Collingwood, arrived off that port. On Captain Brenton's going on board the Ocean, his lordship received him very coolly, and said, "Sir, I am not at all satisfied with the report of the Captains who composed the Court of Enquiry into your conduct." Captain Brenton replied, "and I, my Lord, am not satisfied with the nature of the tribunal, before which it took place, as I should have preferred a court martial; and I have to request you will be pleased to order one to assemble now for the purpose of trying me." His Lordship replied, "No Sir, that is discretional with me, and enough has already been said upon the subject of both; but," continued he, "I have another cause of complaint to bring against you. How came you, while senior officer at Malta, to permit a French Colonel, a prisoner of war, to return to France on his parole?" adding, "they did not treat you so when you were a prisoner." Captain Brenton could not help being amused with the gravity of the charge, and the commentary upon it. He explained that the Colonel in question was taken by His Majesty's sloop the Weazle, on his passage from the coast of Italy for Corfu in a small trabacolo; that the colonel's wife, then on the point of being confined, and two very young children were with him; that on the Weazle firing to bring the vessel to, the lady was so much alarmed, that she was taken in labour, and after giving birth to an infant, died: that the three children were with the colonel at Malta, and that on a strong recommendation from Sir

Alexander Ball, the civil commissioner, he, Captain Brenton, had taken upon himself to allow the colonel to go to Naples on parole, on condition that having placed his children in safety, he should return, unless exchanged. Such were my reasons," added Captain Brenton, "and in acting as I did, I thought I was only doing, what I am convinced your Lordship would have done, had you been there." This could not draw from his Lordship any sign of approbation, although it was perfectly true; for his Lordship, with all his dryness of manner, and roughness of exterior, had a kind and feeling heart, and was a warm and sincere friend. His prejudices, it is true, were strong, and not easily subdued. He was notwithstanding accessible to conviction, and ready to acknowledge the efforts of those officers, whom he knew to have the good of the service at heart, however he might differ with them on some points.

As the editor feels that he has undertaken a narrative of trials and struggles, which, generally speaking, pass unobserved and unnoticed by the world, he does not deem it irrelevant to call the attention of his readers to the peculiar trials which were included in the first periods of this service in the mediterranean. Of Lord Collingwood it is hardly possible to say too much, whether he be considered as an officer or as a man; and the very circumstance, that differing as he did so widely from Lord Nelson in qualities and character, he succeeded in securing to so high a degree the regard and confidence of that distinguished commander, proves what the opinion must have been which

Lord Nelson formed of his talents and courage. But the character of Lord Collingwood as an admiral was just that which must have led him to pass a severe judgment on this unfortunate affair with the *Polacre*. His courage was that of a firm well disciplined mind, which had been accustomed to view danger with indifference, when it came in the way of duty, but which saw no necessity to go out and brave it, when there was no adequate cause. His professional life had been chiefly passed in ships of the line, as forming parts of great fleets, and engaged in great movements ; and he had therefore less sympathy with that spirit of adventurous daring, which suited the commander of a cruising frigate ; and he was disposed to look with jealousy, if not disapprobation, at the risks which were continually run for the sake of captures of very little intrinsic value. At this period also, age had added something of severity to his judgment, and he was not likely to admit any extenuation of an error, which had cost the lives of so many valuable men, and which seemed to have been incurred by acting in opposition to an express order of his own.

The former disaster in Captain Brenton's naval career might also have existed some prejudice against him in the mind of the Admiral. The unfortunate are seldom regarded as wholly clear of blame. The loss of the *Minerve* had been justified by the sentence of a Court Martial ; but an old and cautious commander might have suspected that the commander of the frigate had been rash and indiscreet, if not absolutely in fault ; and might have thought that this unhappy

attack on the Polacre was part of the same conduct, another act of a daring, but inconsiderate and injudicious officer.

The Captain of the Spartan had therefore to support a prejudice existing against the Captain of the Minerve, and had much to bear and much to do, before he overcame the impression which this untoward attack had made on Lord Collingwood's mind. That he did succeed in removing it ; that he did succeed in satisfying his Admiral's judgment, and did conciliate his good will and approbation, may be an encouragement to others, who under similar circumstances, think all is lost because a single error has been committed ; and give up and cease to strive to please, because they feel that they have to work against a strong and perhaps unreasonable prejudice in a Commander.

The private memoranda afford no information as to the struggles which this afflicting circumstance must have occasioned ; but the reader has already seen and known enough of the mind and feelings of the subject of this memoir, to doubt what must have been his resource. We cannot doubt, that the defeat he had sustained, and the sad and sorrowful tokens of it in the loss of his gallant people, sent him in tears and humiliation to the throne of grace ; that he there mourned deeply and sincerely over the rashness of the attempt, and his own imprudence in permitting it ; that he considered himself as guilty in some degree of the deaths of those, whom he had allowed to expose themselves ; and that many and earnest were his supplications for mercy and forgiveness.

But it may also be certain that this humiliation before God—this severity of self-enquiry and self-condemnation, prepared him in a peculiar manner for the trial, he was to meet from men. The Admiral, naturally, reasonably offended at this, which seemed a wanton waste of life, found him so humbled, that his resentment was disarmed. The censure that he might have felt himself bound to pass, on the point of discipline, was, he saw, anticipated. He could not strike one who was down. He could not reprove one whose self-reproof was manifest. He was obliged to feel for the man, whose own feelings had been so acute ; and he saw that it was unnecessary for the interests of the service, to say anything where so much had been already done within. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth ;” and many are the causes of offence in every service, which would come to nothing, if they were not raised into importance by the pride of those who endeavour to defend their error, instead of acknowledging and condemning it themselves.

We shall have occasion to remark a similar trial in the following Chapter, where an accident occurred, which appeared to arise from want of care in the management of the ship ; and which for a moment again put the character of the Captain of the Spartan in jeopardy with an Admiral of such correctness as Lord Collingwood. The affair in that case was capable of explanation, and the circumstances under which it happened, exonerated the Commander of the ship from blame ; but those, whose daily lives are not exposed to such contingencies as belong to active service, will do well to

remember how trifling are the causes which may lead to consequences so serious, and in this way learn to feel for those whose forgetfulness or momentary inattention may be visited with such severity.

CHAPTER XI.

CRUIZE OFF TOULON. — REFITS AT MALTA. — STORM OFF SARDINIA. — JOINS LORD COLLINGWOOD'S FLEET. — DISASTER. — FALLS IN WITH THE FRENCH FLEET AT SEA. — EXERTIONS TO CONVEY INTELLIGENCE AND TO WATCH THE ENEMY. — RETURNS TO TOULON. — SERVICE ON THE COAST OF ITALY IN COMPANY WITH LORD COCHRANE. — REFLECTIONS.

THE Spartan was employed for the remainder of the year in watching the port of Toulon. The service was at first very arduous, and one of constant anxiety, and solicitude, especially as the French squadron in the outer roads had increased greatly, and it became necessary to reconnoitre them with increased vigilance. Lord Collingwood returned to his station off Cadiz ; and the duty of watching Toulon devolved upon two frigates, the Sirius and Spartan in the first instance. On the former being called away, she was relieved by the Apollo ; but there was seldom more than one of these frigates off Toulon at a time, the other being absent for the purpose of refitting, or procuring water and provisions. Early in January, 1808, the Spartan went to Malta, to refit, having suffered much from the constant gales off Cape Scicie, and from the necessity

of carrying sail to keep in with the land against the heavy N. W. winds, which blow so frequently, and with so much violence on that part of the coast. And as it was with this wind that the enemy would leave their port it became an indispensable necessity that the frigates employed in watching them, should keep as close to the land as possible, that they might have a look out upon them night and day.

On the wind increasing from that quarter, it was therefore imperative upon the frigates to carry as much low sail as possible, and they were obliged to set their courses with close reefed topsails, as long as they could be borne in safety ; by this means, they generally managed to keep in smooth water, under the land ; but the greatest vigilance was required, lest in some of the heavy squalls coming down through the valleys, the lower yards might be carried away, and the ship crippled in sight of a powerful enemy, who would only have to slip, and take possession of the disabled ship, Admiral Thornborough who commanded the squadron, which in the latter part of the Spartan's station off Toulon, remained cruizing from fifteen to twenty leagues off the coast, was full of anxiety respecting the frigates ; and on Captain Brenton going on board the Royal Sovereign bearing his flag, to make his report of the ships in Toulon, he said to him, " My dear Brenton, I expected to have seen you worne to a skeleton from anxiety ; I can scarcely sleep for thinking of you. I dread particularly the treacherous calms off Cape Sicie, whilst the ships in the outer roads of Toulon have a fresh breeze off the land, which might bring them

alongside of you in a few minutes." This indeed was a source of very serious apprehension, and the Spartan was more than once placed in a situation of great danger from it ; the line of calm was however generally visible upon the water, and it was important to observe great caution in not approaching too near this line. There are few circumstances however which do not lose their power to alarm by familiarity with the danger connected with them, and so it proved in this case. On his being first employed in the service, Captain Brenton felt the full amount of his responsibility, and the danger to which he was exposed ; but after being frequently chased off the land by squadrons of ships of the line, and finding that they invariably left off chase by the time they had got seven or eight leagues from the port ; and finding also that they seldom gained much if any thing upon the Spartan during that run ; he became so accustomed to being chased, that it was considered a matter of common occurrence, and was unaccompanied by any anxiety. Upon one occasion, when about four miles from Cape Sepet, the entrance to the inner road of Toulon, blowing fresh from the N. W. several ships of the line were seen coming out, and the Spartan of course bore up ; at this time, an unfortunate boy fell overboard, and it became necessary to lower a boat down to endeavour to save him, and the time thus occupied was one of the greatest possible anxiety, it was however employed in letting out reefs, and in every preparation to make sail. The boy had sunk, and by the time the boat had returned, the enemy were out of the roads, clear of

Cape Sepet, and steering for the Spartan, scarcely more than a league distant ; but no sooner was the boat out of the water, than the helm was up, and the ship under a cloud of sail ; from this moment all anxiety vanished, and the enemy having run to the length of their tether, hauled their wind as usual.

It was upon one of these occasions that Captain Brenton, sitting in his cabin, watching the enemy in chase of him with his spy glass, was informed by the first Lieutenant that a strange sail was seen on the starboard bow. "Steer for her," said the Captain, "these fellows will leave off chase before we get up with her, and we may as well chase in our turn." As he expected, the enemy gave up the pursuit, and the Spartan continuing her course for the stranger, came up with her in the course of the afternoon, and took her ; she proved to be a very good prize.

The Spartan having refitted in January at Malta, was returning to her station off Toulon, and the wind being strong from the westward, the Commander as usual ran to the eastward of Sardinia and Corsica. When on the east side of Corsica, the weather being remarkably fine and clear, they were keeping as close to the shore as possible, in order to have the advantage of smooth water, and Captain Brenton and his First Lieutenant, both very unwell, were sitting together over the stove in the Captain's cabin. The people were at dinner, when in a moment a heavy squall came on. The ship was taken aback, and was laid over with her guns in the water, and before the sail could be taken in, the fore yard was

gone, and the ship on a dead lee shore. The Captain and First Lieutenant were soon on deck, and every exertion made to get the ship into safety ; but the proximity of the land rendered her situation for many hours one of extreme peril. She was got under a snug sail, and a maintopsail yard was substituted for a fore-yard. The wind however continued to increase after the sun went down, and blew with great violence, whilst a heavy sea got up. The ship was wore, as the wind veered a point or two each way, but at ten o'clock it was evident that they could not be far from the S. E. coast of Corsica. Captain Brenton's chief object in wearing as he did, was to keep the Straits of Bonifacio open ; but even this was a most forlorn hope, for the innumerable rocks which abound in every part of these straits, render it a most dangerous passage. His intention was only to avail himself of it, in the event of being so near the coast as to leave no alternative but either going on shore, or attempting to run through the straits ; in the latter case their safety depended on steering by the breakers—a fearful resource when the sea was running so high, that the whole surface of the water was broken. Every eye was directed to leeward, and every moment the order was expected to put the helm up ; when by the interposition of a kind providence, the wind which had been nearly at east, flew round six points, and enabled the ship to clear the land, and by daylight she had such an offing as enabled the Captain to keep her away for Palermo, where the *Spartan* arrived on the following day, and to the great surprise of all on board, found Sir Richard Strahan

with his squadron lying in the bay, having run up the Mediterranean in chase of the Rochefort squadron. It became necessary that the Spartan should proceed with the utmost dispatch off Toulon, and application having been made to the Sicilian Commodore for assistance, he was pleased to supply the ship with a fore yard from one of his frigates, and the *Lavinia*, one of Sir Richard Strahan's squadron, having been put under Captain Brenton's orders, they made sail for their destination. The wind being perseveringly from the west and north westward, the ships endeavoured to beat up under the lee of Sardinia, but gained but little ground. At length, the wind getting round to the N. E., and blowing very hard, Captain Brenton determined upon bearing up, and running along the south coast of Sardinia, to endeavour to get to Toulon by a western route. On arriving, however, off Cagliari, he spoke an English Privateer, from which he obtained the information, that on the 1st of March, a frigate which had been cruising off Toulon, had arrived in the road of Pulla, near Cagliari, with an account of the French squadron, having got out of Toulon; and from the cross examination which Captain Brenton entered into, he felt convinced that this frigate must be his consort, the *Apollo*, which he had left off Toulon. The privateer captain further added, that on the following day he was boarded by the *Wizard*, sloop of war, and had the same intelligence from her, with the additional news that five French sail of the line, and a frigate had lately entered the Mediterranean. This was the squadron which Sir Richard Strahan had pursued.

With such important information, Captain Brenton felt himself justified in dispatching Captain Hancock in the *Lavinia* to Admiral Thornborough at Palermo ; and he then stood with the *Spartan* into the bay of Cagliari, which he reached on the 4th of March, and received from the British Minister a confirmation of the report respecting the French squadron. He proceeded in search of Vice-Admiral Thornborough, but fell in with Lord Collingwood and the fleet off *Mar-etimo* ; who having heard of the movements of the enemy, was in pursuit of them. All the other frigates and small vessels having been detained in different directions in quest of the enemy, the *Spartan* was kept with the fleet, and every morning, as soon as a flag could be distinguished, was ordered to look out in a given direction, as far as signals could be made out ; and was recalled in the evening.

It seemed as though a fatality attended Captain Brenton, and that some circumstance or another should always arise to prevent his acquiring the approbation of the Commander in chief. Having been thus employed in looking out till the morning of the 13th of March, when particularly anxious to be in readiness to take his station on the look out, he was up at three o'clock, and as soon as daylight appeared, made sail in the quarter pointed out, and was as usual recalled in the evening. In the course of the first watch the wind had become very light, and the *Spartan*, at ten o'clock, was yet at a very considerable distance from the body of the fleet, which was on the *Spartan's* lee bow ; he therefore directed the officer of the watch to let him know when

he should approach within a couple of miles of the fleet, and lest there might be any misunderstanding, he also gave this order in writing. The Spartan at this time had all sail set on the starboard tack ; Captain Brenton soon fell asleep, and to his utter astonishment and dismay, was awoke by hearing a crash, and running on deck, found the ship had run on board the Malta of 80 guns, and that the Spartan's main yard was carried away. This indeed was a most serious disaster, his ship being the only frigate in the fleet, and at such a juncture. However as there was no sea running, the ships instantly separated, and the Spartan having got round on the other tack, kept her main-top-sails set by bringing the sheets below ; and keeping her royals set, was enabled to get up into her station on the weather beam of the Commander in chief, to whom Captain Brenton sent an officer informing him of the accident, and expressing his hope that the ship would be effective again in a few hours. His Lordship's feelings may be easily imagined by those who knew him. He instantly sent his carpenter on board, with armourers and every other assistance that could be devised, but before these artificers were in readiness to work, there was but little left for them to do, the main yard was down and fished, and the hoops only remained to be put down, which were then preparing at the forge ; and before eleven o'clock the yard was again up, and the Spartan as efficient as she had been the preceding day. The Admiral was appeased, and the affair had no other consequence than that of an order to try the unfortunate Lieutenant by a Court

martial. It may not be useless to explain how this neglect happened, as it may prove a warning to thoughtless young men, who in every other respect are most anxious and zealous to do their duty to the utmost. It is well known to be the custom of the service for an officer coming up to take charge of the deck, to be accosted by his messmates in the following manner, "Here you have her," describing the sail she is under, and repeating any orders he may have received from the Captain. Upon this occasion, to the "Here you have her," was added, "and you will find the captain's order in the order book in the Binnacle drawer." The young officer, who took charge of the deck, probably intended looking into the book for these orders, but forgot it. He now approached the fleet, and all at once alarmed for his responsibility, and hesitating on which side of the ship approaching him he should go, it ended as all these cases of indecision generally do, by running on board of her. The Commander in chief soon after this, having gained intelligence that the enemy had been seen off the mouth of the Adriatic, made all sail in pursuit of them, dispatching the Spartan to Rear Admiral Martin, at Palermo, with the information; and the Rear Admiral immediately directed Captain Brenton to proceed without loss of time to the Bay of Tunis, and not gaining any tidings of the enemy there, to cruize between the south coast of Sardinia and the coast of Africa, in order to prevent if possible the enemy passing to the westward, from the Adriatic, without being seen.

The Spartan had not been long on this service, when

on the 1st of April, 1808, the weather being hazy, and a fresh breeze from the north west, a fleet was descried to the southward, amounting to ten sail of the line, and four frigates. Captain Brenton felt so certain that this was Lord Collingwood, not having heard of the junction of the French squadrons, that he did not at first even make the private signals, but was satisfied with shewing his number. As they ran down under their topsails, the Captain, and the first Lieutenant, looking at them through their glasses, the former said, "Who is that old fashioned fellow who carries his mizen topmast stay-sail, *under* the main top?" The first Lieutenant immediately replied, "There are three of them that have it." Then said the Captain, "It is the enemy's fleet. Haul your wind at once." They did so, and then made the private signal, and no sooner had the Spartan made this change in her course, than every ship to leeward made all the sail she could carry upon a wind. The Spartan set her coursers, jib, and driver, and Captain Brenton, finding the enemy did not gain much ground upon him, felt satisfied with this addition, and was rather desirous that they should get a little nearer to him before night, when he felt that he could always get from them. Captain Brenton was now anxious to communicate the position of the French squadron to Rear Admiral Martin, at Palermo, and also to Sir Alexander Ball, at Malta; but he felt it to be his imperative duty to remain with the French fleet himself, and to dog them wherever they might be bound. He at once decided upon putting a canvass deck upon the launch; and applying for beams the rough pieces, which at that

time it was the custom to issue from the dock-yard for boat oars, to be made up on board when required ; the launch being thus provided with a deck, and being furnished with a carronade, signal flags, ammunition, provisions, and water, became a very servicable, and efficient dispatch boat. When it became quite dark the launch was hoisted out and equipped, but some delay in sending her away occurred, in consequence of the French squadron having gone on the larboard tack, by which means they were exactly in her track for Trapani. The Lieutenant was directed to proceed by land to Palermo, with his dispatches for Rear Admiral Martin ; and the Master's mate, who accompanied him in the launch, was to proceed with her to Malta with the same intelligence for Rear Admiral, Sir Alexander Ball.

“ SPARTAN, CAPE TOLAZO, 5 p.m. APRIL 1st, 1808.

“ SIR,

“ We are now in company with the enemy's squadron, consisting of ten sail of the line (two of which are three deckers), four frigates and a brig. We fell in with them this morning at ten o'clock, Galita then bearing S. S. E. distant thirty-eight miles ; they were then steering about West, with the wind apparently at E. N. E. (we had it all North), I immediately bore up to reconnoitre them ; upon the wind drawing round to the westward, and blowing fresh (which it did shortly after) they wore by signal, and hauled their wind on the larboard tack. When near enough to distinguish flags, I made the private signal, which was not answered, and we have since been keeping a station about six or seven miles in the wind's eye of them. At dark I mean to send away the launch, having fitted her up with a temporary deck for the occasion, and put her under the command of Lieutenant Coffin, third Lieutenant, to whom I beg leave to refer you for particulars. He is a most excellent young officer, and has in my opinion added to

his merit, by the very handsome manner in which he has volunteered his services on this occasion. It is my intention to use every endeavour to keep sight of the enemy, and having ascertained their destination, to take the earliest opportunity of sending information of it; watching them myself till I have reason to believe the Commander in chief, or some of his squadrons are acquainted with their situation.

“ I have the honour to be, &c.

“ JAHLEEL BRENTON.”

“ REAR ADMIRAL MARTIN, &c.

“ PALERMO.”

When the French fleet had got sufficiently to the northward, to offer a prospect of the launch pursuing her course unobserved, she was ordered to shove off; but she had scarcely got a mile from the ship, when, to Captain Brenton's great dismay, the enemy were seen on the starboard tack, and there was the greatest probability that the poor launch would have fallen into their hands. The officer however on seeing them approach, most judiciously lowered his sails; by which means, they passed without seeing him, although as he said, one of the ships was so near him, that he thought his capture inevitable. He was most providentially preserved, and the Spartan kept her station on the weather beam of the French Admiral during the night, and as day approached made sail on the opposite tack, by which she was soon out of danger of pursuit, and preserved that distance until the evening, when she again bore down and took her station for the night. On the morning of the 2nd, just before daylight, the enemy were still on the starboard tack, on which they had been the whole night. The Spartan

was put about, and Captain Brenton, who had been on deck nearly the whole night, left orders to stand on the larboard tack, until the topsails only of the French squadron could be seen from the deck, when the ship was again to be put in stays, and bear the same tack with the enemy. He had not long however been asleep, when he was called by the officer of the watch, and informed that the French squadron had tacked and lay up for the Spartan; that they had a fresh breeze whilst the Spartan was nearly becalmed. The enemy approached rapidly, and had got within four or five miles, when their wind also failed them, and a most anxious day was passed by all on board the Spartan. The sails were sometimes trimmed for one tack, and sometimes for the other, and their steering sails, a-low and a-loft, and all in the course of an hour or two, as the wind veered round the compass. In the afternoon the wind set in again, and blew steady from its old quarter, the N. W.; and the French Admiral determined to avail himself of every change, in the hope of catching the British frigate, divided his squadron into two parts, and put one on each tack; but the Spartan having the breeze strong and steady had the heels of them, and had got so far to windward before dark, that when the squadron again united, and got upon the starboard tack, which they always did at night, she was again under the necessity of bearing down, in order to ensure keeping sight of them during the night. On the evening of the 3rd the wind having got round to the Northward, the French Admiral was observed to keep away, (about west) and a frigate

went along the line, apparently speaking every ship ; which movement Captain Brenton interpreted in the following manner. "The French Admiral finding he cannot shake off the British frigate, or get hold of her, is determined to pursue his course to the westward ; it may be for the straits of Gibraltar, on his way to Cadiz ; or it may be, that with the expectation of the wind getting into its prevailing quarter, S. W., he wishes to take advantage of it to get to Toulon, and probably taking Minorca in his way, and joining the Spanish squadron of six sail of the line known to be there. At all events," said Captain Brenton to his officers, "we must endeavour to accompany him ;" and in his turn, in order to puzzle the French Admiral with regard to the Spartan's movements, he continued close hauled until he had lost sight of the French squadron, then keeping away upon the same course, they were last seen steering, and setting the courses, he expected soon to be again abreast of them, and to resume his position for watching them on the following day. Gantheaume, who commanded the French squadron, evidently had laid a trap for him, and expected this movement, for after dark he must have hauled his wind expecting to get to windward of the Spartan. As the night was dark, great anxiety was felt to get sight of the enemy again, and an eager look out kept on the lee bow. All at once the junior marine officer who was on the lee gangway called out, "here they are Sir, close to us on the lee quarter ;" and there indeed they were, not much more than a mile distant. As the Spartan was off the wind and going at a great

rate, with all hands on deck, Captain Brenton decided upon at once wearing her, and getting on the other tack, as far preferable to keeping his enemy astern, and so near him, or running the risk of any accident which might happen in the stays. He accordingly ordered the helm to be immediately put up, and the ship flew round with rapidity, and was round on the other tack under the mainsail in a few moments. She was evidently within gun shot of the leading ship of the French squadron, but only for a very few minutes, and they were probably deterred from firing, lest it might attract the attention of other cruizers. The French squadron soon after wore, which they did very deliberately ; the signal having been first made by the Admiral, and when repeated by his second astern, hauled down in his ship, and so on throughout the line, only one ship having the signal up at a time, and no guns being fired upon any occasion ; this clearly betrayed a desire not to attract notice. The Spartan continued carrying a press of sail all night, and soon got over on the coast of Sardinia ; when she went again upon the starboard tack, and at daylight saw the enemy's squadron upon the larboard tack, broad on her lee bow. On the evening of this day the weather was very squally, and wind so variable, as sometimes to bring the enemy to windward, a position most unfavourable to the Spartan, though there was no apprehension whatever of any ship of the enemy gaining upon her on a wind, although many might have done so while going large. Captain Brenton, to avoid these disadvantageous circumstances, stood well over to the coast

of Sardinia, in the expectation of again crossing upon the French squadron in the morning, but he saw no more of them. They had undoubtedly availed themselves of the changes of wind, favourable to their getting to the N. N. W. as they were known to have reached Toulon in a few days after.

Captain Brenton was now under considerable anxiety, as to the steps he should next take. From the conduct of the enemy during four days, there was every reason to believe that their object was to get to the westward, but whether to the straits of Gibraltar, or Minorca, or Toulon, he could not determine. Depending upon his launch having carried all the information to Sicily and Malta, he resolved to steer for Minorca, under the probability that M. Gantheaume might have gone thither for the Spanish ships, as has already been suggested. He also thought, that on this course with the perpetual changes of wind so frequently experienced in the spring in the Mediterranean, he might again fall in with them, whether their destination was to either of the places above mentioned.

From the evening of the 5th to the morning of the 7th, the Spartan was nearly becalmed the whole time, but a fresh breeze then springing up from the S. W. the Spartan stretched over for Minorca, and made that island on the evening of the 8th. Captain Brenton was in the hope of being able to reconnoitre port Mahon in the morning, but in the course of the night it came on to blow very hard from the northward; and to have attempted to have worked up to the island would have expended too much valuable time. All that

remained in his power now was to endeavour to secure Admiral Purvis, who commanded the British squadron off Cadiz, against surprise. He accordingly made all sail for Gibraltar ; he arrived off the rock on the evening of the 10th, and brought to off Cabrita, whilst he sent a boat on shore for intelligence ; and on its return proceeded through the straits under bare poles, in order not to miss the squadron under Admiral Purvis, which he saw at day-light, and communicated his intelligence by telegraph.

The Admiral immediately made the signal for his squadron to clear and prepare for battle. He gave Captain Brenton great credit for his conduct upon this occasion, as did Lord Collingwood on his rejoining him. Having remained with the squadron off Cadiz, as long as any probability remained of the French squadron coming down, the Spartan was again ordered to Palermo, to rejoin Rear Admiral Martin ; and on his arrival there, Captain Brenton was directed to resume his station off Toulon ; where he was informed he should find the Commander in chief, which was the case. Lord Collingwood expressed himself highly pleased with all the measures he had pursued under these trying and difficult circumstances ; and said he had been greatly relieved, on hearing of the Spartan's safety, as a report had reached him, that the French squadron was seen going into Toulon, with an English frigate their prize ; and little doubt was entertained in the fleet, as to the correctness of the report, or, as to the Spartan being the ship taken. His Lordship was heard to exclaim when he heard the news, "That

poor Breton was the child of misfortune." Captain Breton was now again upon his old post, but had the comfort of another frigate, the *Lavinia*, being put under his orders. There were at this time six sail of the line in Toulon, and four frigates ready for sea; and six men of war, with two frigates refitting. The enemy frequently came out as usual, chasing off our frigates and returning into port again.

On the 1st of August, Captain Breton having observed a frigate and convoy getting under weigh in Toulon, and suspecting they were destined for Corsica with troops, where he had been informed some disturbances had taken place, recalled the *Lavinia* by signal from Cape de L'Aigle; and directing Captain Hancock to occupy the Spartan's post off Toulon, made sail himself in chase of the frigate, and gained very fast upon her, in consequence of which she hauled into the bay of St. Tropaz, and anchored under the citadel. The Spartan succeeded in taking two of her convoy, and was very near taking a man of war brig, having got within gun shot of her; but being becalmed, the Frenchman got away with his sweeps. The Spartan had three men wounded by a shot from one of the batteries, but only slightly.

In the beginning of September, the Spartan was ordered to cruize in the gulf of Rosas, to prevent the enemy's vessels from collecting on the coast between Cape Creux and Cape Couronne. On the 7th, Captain Breton fell in with the *Imperieuse*, commanded by Lord Cochrane, and joined him in an attack he was making upon some merchant vessels near Cape Mejean;

one of which they burned, and captured two, which not being worth sending into port for adjudication, they destroyed. The Imperieuse had one man killed upon this occasion, and the Spartan one wounded.

On the 8th, the boats from the two ships landed and destroyed the signal post and telegraph in the bay of Saintes Maries; from thence they proceeded to attack three batteries upon the Isthmus of Leucate, where a number of vessels were lying hauled up on the beach. Lord Cochrane had reconnoitred this part of the coast some days previously, and had landed and spiked one of the guns on the southern battery. On the 10th, at daylight, the boats landed and completed the destruction of that battery; whilst the ships protected them by their fire, from the troops which were assembled. At one p. m. the boats were formed in two divisions, the first made a feint of landing near the village of Caunet, by which means the troops were all drawn to that point, and the ships running in attacked the centre battery near the village of St. Lauren, and the second division of boats proceeded under cover of the Imperieuse, and carried the northernmost battery. A beautiful instance of ready seamanship was displayed by Lord Cochrane upon this occasion. Having already reconnoitred the coast, he requested he might be permitted to lead upon the occasion. The Spartan was following the Imperieuse, at less than a cable's length distance, the ships going about three knots; when the Imperieuse was observed suddenly to swing round, with much more rapidity than any action of the helm could have produced. The fact was, that Lord

Cochrane from the mast head saw a squadron of the enemy's cavalry galloping towards a gorge on the coast, which had they passed, they would have cut off the retreat of our people, who were employed in spiking the guns. His Lordship immediately ordered the ship's anchor to be let go, and the swinging round brought her starboard broadside to enfilade this gorge, by which the cavalry were instantly turned. The boats were then again landed, when one vessel was blown up, and another burnt, the others considerably injured by the fire from the frigates ; but the enemy having collected in considerable force with field pieces, the boats were recalled. The Spartan had two wounded upon the occasion, and the Imperieuse one.

On the following day the two ships anchored off Cette, and endeavoured to burn the shipping in the harbour, by throwing congreve rockets amongst them ; but without effect, probably owing to the defective state of the rockets.

On the 12th they again landed, burnt a custom-house, near Mont Julien, two pontons on the canal, and some guard houses, bringing away a number of small arms.

On the 13th they chased nine sail of merchant vessels off Point de Tigne, and captured six of them, viz., one ship, three brigs, a xebec, and a bombard ; these vessels had run on shore, with the wind blowing hard from the N. W. The Spartan and the Imperieuse anchoring near them, and heaving them off, they were no sooner afloat and anchored near the frigates, than a gale of wind came on, directly on shore, which

obliged the ships to remain there till the 16th, in hourly expectation of the enemy bringing down guns, as they were within shot of the beach. Captain Brenton in his official letters states the conduct of Lord Cochrane to have been above all praise; and that it was throughout an animating example of intrepidity, zeal, professional skill, and resources which he trusted would be treasured up in the memory of all who witnessed it.

The Editor may be allowed to add as a tribute due to the distinguished officer thus casually introduced to notice from connection with the subject of the Memoir, that he has frequently heard Sir Jahleel Brenton mention, that he admired nothing more in Lord Cochrane, than the care he took of the preservation of his people. Bold and adventurous as he was, no unnecessary exposure of life was ever permitted under his command. Every circumstance was anticipated, every precaution against surprise was taken, every provision for success was made; and in this way he was enabled to accomplish the most daring enterprises, with comparatively little danger, and still less of actual loss.

The public who heard of his unceasing activity and dauntless courage, regarded him as one only ambitious of the character of a successful commander, and little knew that he never risked an attack of which he had not calculated all the probable contingencies, and compared most jealously the loss he might himself sustain, with the injury to be done to the enemy.

Lord Collingwood in acknowledging Captain Brenton's official account of these affairs expressed much approbation. The service performed was in itself trivial,

but the effect upon the enemy important ; as these perpetual attacks made on different parts of the coast were very harrassing to them, and kept their cavalry, as well as other descriptions of force, constantly in motion ; whilst they at the same time paralyzed their trade, which at this period of the war was confined entirely to the coasting department. It became necessary also for the enemy to keep a much larger military force in their maritime departments, than they would otherwise have done, and the amount of troops sent to the army was consequently diminished.

The coasters were at length so apprehensive of falling into the hands of the English cruizers, that they seldom dared to quit the shelter of a port, until signals had been made from the different stations on the coast, that no enemy was near.

While such was the perilous and anxious tenor of Captain Brenton's days, some light may be reflected on his personal character, by introducing a short extract from that domestic memoir, to which reference has previously been made, as exhibiting the feelings that were passing in his mind, while occupied in this active service. The thread of the narrative, it is true, will be broken ; the thrilling interest connected with these critical moments must be suspended ; but it is well that the reader should see the character of the man in whose dangers he is led to share, and should learn even through the interruption of the story, that the duties of the service may be discharged in the most exemplary manner, whilst the heart retains all the warmth and tenderness of well regulated affection. Speaking of

this period of his life to his children, he says, "This was a time of great anxiety, which to a heart formed like your dear mother's, was perhaps rendered more severe, by the struggle between her religious convictions and her worldly affections, between her wish to repose entire confidence in God, and those feelings, which although given us for our happiness, we are not able to controul, when we have reason to fear that those we love are suffering, or in danger. The enemy's squadron had escaped from Rochefort, and got into the Mediterranean, where they formed a junction with that of Toulon, and an action with our fleet was consequently expected. My beloved Isabella knew I was cruising off Toulon, and was naturally full of apprehension. I had been relieved in the early part of the year, in order that I might go to Malta and refit, and upon my return having fallen in with Lord Collingwood, I was detached in quest of the enemy, which I fell in with, the beginning of April, off Sardinia. I lost sight of them on the fourth day, and concluding from the course they had steered, whilst I was with them, that they were going either to Minorca or Cadiz, I went successively to those places, giving the alarm to our Commander in chief, who was blockading the latter. I had the satisfaction of receiving Lord Collingwood's entire approbation of my conduct; and what was not less gratifying, a letter, whilst off Cadiz, from your beloved mother, which had been written but little more than a fortnight. I was also enabled to send her accounts of my welfare, which from the nature of the service upon which I had been engaged, she could not

otherwise have received for a considerable time ; whilst reports of our having fallen into the hands of the enemy were circulated throughout the Mediterranean, and generally believed." This circumstance seems to have called forth the following expression of gratitude from the anxious wife.

Bath 1808.—" Just received letters from my beloved Brenton, which have more than ever given me cause for gratitude to the All wise disposer of events. Oh ! merciful God, how is it possible for me to express the gratitude due to Thee, upon this occasion particularly whilst every hour of my life is marked by some of thy bountiful mercies. But thy late preservation of my husband, both from the enemy, and the perils and dangers of the sea, call for more than usual gratitude." Captain Brenton adds, " Whilst so many are habitually congratulating themselves upon the instances of what they call 'good fortune,' or their 'lucky escapes,' or pluming themselves upon their own success as the necessary consequences of their own judgment or merit ; let us, my darling children, follow the example of your angelic mother, and refer all we meet with to the merciful and watchful care of a benign and superintending Providence—let us pay our gratitude where it is due ; and in all our trials remember what He has done for us. Let us resign ourselves to His divine will, and assure ourselves that were it not good for us to be afflicted, adversity would never reach us."

CHAPTER XII.

REMOVED FROM THE TOULON STATION TO THE MEDITERRANEAN.—CRUIZE OFF CANDIA, AND IN THE ADRIATIC.—ACTION AT PESARO; AND OFFICIAL LETTERS.—CO-OPERATION WITH THE AUSTRIANS IN THE ADRIATIC.—LETTERS FROM LORD COLLINGWOOD EXPRESSIVE OF HIS ENTIRE SATISFACTION.

THE Spartan having resumed her station off Toulon, discovered on the morning of the 2nd of October, that five frigates and a store ship had got out during the preceding night in a heavy gale from the N. W. Captain Brenton concluded they were gone to Corsica, as the store ship was constantly employed in bringing timber from that Island.

The Spartan was now released from this arduous duty by the Proserpine, and Captain Brenton was ordered to put himself under the orders of Rear Admiral Martin, on the coast of Sicily, and to cruize between the Faro of Messina, and the entrance of the Adriatic. On this head, Captain Brenton's own notes may be used.

“ Upon my arrival in the Mediterranean in the spring of 1807, I had been stationed to watch the enemy's fleet in Toulon, and I was continued in that arduous service till the latter end of 1808, when I was

relieved at the joint intercession of the junior flag officers, who had represented to the Commander in chief (though unsolicited by me) the hardship of one person being confined to such severe service, for so long a period. My stay there had, I believe, been protracted in the first instance, by a little prejudice on the part of the Admiral, in consequence of my having lost so many men, on the unfortunate occasion of the expedition of the boats ; and latterly from the expediency of keeping an officer on so important a station, who had the advantage of local knowledge, gained by the experience of so many months, as well of the coasts, as of the operations of the enemy.

“ I was at length removed to the coast of Calabria, and stationed between the Island of Sicily, and the mouth of the Adriatic, with a gratifying acknowledgement from Lord Collingwood of my having fulfilled the duties of my last post to his satisfaction. I had still less chance of success on this coast, than in the neighbourhood of Toulon, but the duty was not so harassing, or the responsibility so great, and I looked for something better.

“ In the spring of 1809 I was sent to cruize on the coast of Syria and Egypt, when I took two prizes, only one of which, however, got into port. On my return to Malta, my excellent and warm friend, Sir Alexander Ball, sent me to take the command of the little squadron in the Adriatic. No situation in the Navy could have been more agreeable to my wishes, particularly with such officers and friends under my command, as Captains Hoste, Duncan and Waldegrave.”

Early in January, 1809, intelligence had been received that Murat, then king of Naples, had resolved upon making a descent upon Sicily in the month of February. Great vigilance was consequently required to prevent any collection of troops or vessels on any point of the coast. The *Spartan* was kept upon the service during the greater part of 1808-9. Captain Brenton received a letter from Rear Admiral Martin, dated 19th January, 1809, informing him that an attack was confidently expected to be made by Murat, in the course of a short time, and that it was possible the Russian squadron at Trieste would co-operate in it, recommending the utmost vigilance for the protection of the eastern coast. He received at the same time another letter from General Sir John Stuart, confirming the expectation of Murat's intended invasion.

Early in February the Commander in chief (then at Malta) having reason to believe that no attack was likely to be made upon Sicily, ordered Captain Brenton to join him there in the *Spartan*, where he arrived on the 6th. An incident occurred at this time, which shews in a strong point of view the superstition of the British sailors. When the *Spartan* was at Malta in the early part of January, a corporal of marines had been sent on shore to bring off one of his party, who had gone on shore without leave. A scuffle ensued with some drunken men, and the corporal in self-defence having drawn his bayonet, the marine was killed. The parties were immediately taken up, and the following day after a minute examination into all circumstances by the magistrates, the corporal was acquitted of all blame,

and sent off to his ship, which sailed in the course of a day or two. The weather became very boisterous, a succession of gales of wind was experienced, and not one prize taken during the cruize. All this bad luck as it was called, was visited upon the corporal, who was supposed to be the Jonas, having been guilty of murder; and it was an opinion frequently expressed by the people, that no more good fortune would attend the ship, as long as corporal Mantle was in her. This was frequently mentioned to the Captain, who paid no attention to it. But on his arrival at Malta he mentioned the circumstance to Lord Collingwood, suggesting that the man should be tried by a court martial, as his acquittal was certain, and would be the means of whitewashing him in the eyes of his shipmates. His Lordship quite approved of this. The court was ordered and assembled accordingly, and the corporal fully acquitted. The spell was then broken—fine weather ensued—a prize was taken, and the corporal was himself again. On relating this story a few days afterwards to Captain Stewart of the Seahorse, he assured Captain Brenton that the early part of his last cruize had been particularly unsuccessful; but that while on the coast of Italy, it was discovered that a black cat was on board, which at once accounted for fortune having deserted the Seahorse. What was to be done? To throw the cat overboard was increasing the bad omen, and aggravating the case. Captain Stewart decided at once that he would run over to the coast of Sardinia, where pussy was landed with every proper respect and attention, and a prize soon after set the question at rest. The Captain was

a wise man, he took the only method of restoring good humour to his people, and was rewarded for it. It often requires as much judgment to deal with the weaknesses as with the vices of mankind.

In the early part of February Lord Collingwood told Captain Brenton, that in consequence of the length of time the Spartan had been kept off Toulon, it was his intention to give him a cruize off Egypt and Syria ; where he forthwith proceeded, remaining about six weeks, and returning at the end of that time, having taken one prize, and lost another of considerable value on the rocks on the east end of Candia. As there was something singular attending the capture of both these vessels, it may not be amiss to mention it in a few words. When the Spartan was in chase of the first off Cape Derne, night came on, when the chase was still seven or eight miles from the Spartan, and she was lost sight of. Captain Brenton said to his officers, "if I were now master of that vessel, I should keep away two points for some time, and then two more, and in the course of three or four hours, I would then bear up before the wind, and run for eight or ten leagues, and I think he will do so. I mean therefore to bear up at once, and run ten leagues to leeward, and then haul to the wind, as the best chance of seeing him in the morning ; he did so, and the following day at noon, when standing in for the African shore, the identical vessel was discovered coming out from the land, and by five o'clock was in possession of the Spartan. The master acknowledged that he had done just as Captain Brenton had imagined.

A few days afterwards a similar chase took place off the south coast of Candia, and the vessel being lost sight of at dark, the Spartan ran 10 leagues to leeward again, and furling all her sails waited for daylight, when the unfortunate Frenchman was seen coming down before the wind, and on seeing the Spartan, hauled round the S.E. point of the island. A long chase ensued ; at length, the chase ran in near some broken rocks, and let go her anchor. She was immediately boarded by the Spartan's boats, while driving among the breakers ; and delay having taken place in cutting the cable, she struck upon the point of a rock, and instantly sunk in deep water, giving the boats' crews barely time to escape. This was a serious loss, as the vessel had a valuable cargo from Marseilles to the Levant, and it was owing to the neglect of the boarding officer, who was ordered to take with him a *carpenter's* axe, to cut the cable with, as the sharpest ; but he forgot to take *any*, and whilst hacking at the cable with a cutlass, the vessel struck, and was lost. The accident suggested to Captain Brenton the idea of having a chest fitted up for every boat in the ship, which should contain all things that might be required, in case of being separated from the ship ; pistols, ammunition, carpenter's tools, provisions, candles, matches, sail needles, twine, compasses, &c, &c.

On the return of the Spartan to Malta, she was necessarily placed under quarantine ; and Sir Alexander Ball, the port Admiral, having directed Captain Brenton to meet him at the quarantine office, asked him "how long he required to be ready for sea." The

answer was, "Not an hour, after provisions and water were sent on board." These were ordered immediately, and in the course of the day, the baggage of the British Ambassador, (the unfortunate Mr. Bathurst who was afterwards supposed to have been murdered near Ratisbon,) and that of Don L. Bardaxi, the Spanish Ambassador both going to the Court of Vienna, were sent on board. The Spanish Ambassador was accompanied by his lady, and a numerous suite; with these the Spartan sailed on the following day, and reached Trieste on the 18th of April, where the Ambassadors were landed; and Captain Brenton, in pursuance of the orders he had received, took the squadron consisting of the *Amphion*, Captain Hoste (afterwards Sir William); the *Mercury*, Captain The Honourable Henry Duncan (afterwards Sir Henry); and the *Thames*, Captain The Honourable W. Waldegrave, now Lord Radstock, under his orders.

From Captain Hoste who had recently reconnoitred the enemy's ports on the coast of Italy, Captain Brenton received much valuable information. At Ancona there were two French, and one Venetian frigates; at Venice, one frigate ready for sea, and another which had just hauled out of the basin, with three brigs; the object of this force when united was supposed to relieve Marmont, at this time shut up in Dalmatia, and whose view was suspected to be to make his escape to Ancona. On the 23rd April, observing a number of vessels collected together in the port of Pesaro, he resolved to attack them; and the following is a copy of his official letter upon this occasion.