

mast-heads!—Set your topmast and lower studding-sails!—The breeze slackens—run up your royals and topgallant-studding-sails!” But oh, the merriment of their British prisoners at the tardy, confused, and lubberly way in which these orders were executed! An equal number of our sailors would have accomplished the same work in one-third of the time at least! And then the amusing remarks which they made upon the slovenly trim of the sails:—“I say, Jack, d’ye see that topmast studding-sail there?—my eyes! why, it sits like a purser’s shirt dangling on a handspike!” Such gibes as these, with the loud laughter which generally followed, were sufficiently annoying to *Mounseer*. Nor was the quarter-deck a scene of less interest than the main-deck and fore-castle. Though every countenance was lighted up with an animation and eagerness which almost approached a transformation of their original features, yet, from the opposite sensations which were felt, it was surprising to observe the difference between those who were anxious to be overtaken and those who were eager to effect their escape. Every minute the captain was intensely watching with his spy-glass whether the English frigate—for such their fears had certainly defined her to be—was gaining upon us. Alternate gladness and dejection exchanged sides between the prisoners of war and the French crew as the affirmative or negative was announced. After a chase of two hours, at the rate of about twelve knots, the hull of our pursuer became visible. All prisoners were immediately ordered off the decks; and the command was given to clear away for action. What words can suffice to describe the intense agony of suspense felt by the prisoners confined in the darkness of the ’tween decks, whilst we heard the hurry and confusion over our heads, as they were clearing away their guns and preparing for battle, and the clamorous shouts and execrations of the French sailors, as they despaired of escape and deemed a battle inevitable. In this fever of excitement we were kept for about two hours, unable to obtain the slightest information of the progress of the chase, and expecting every moment to hear a broadside, every Frenchman being charged, under the severest penalty, not to answer any enquiry from the prisoners respecting the situation and position of the ships. Towards the evening, however, the breeze slackened, and we had the mortification to hear that the English frigate had given over the chase and altered her course. We were again permitted to walk the deck, and eyed, with many a wistful look, the prospect of our deliverance receding from our sight.

On the ninth day after our capture we were taken into Brest. Melancholy were my reflections as we sailed past the fortifications on either hand, on our entrance into one of the noblest harbours in Europe; contrasted with which dejection, the gaiety and hilarity of the French crew tended but to make my condition appear more disconsolate and wretched. Seen from the shore, our frigate must have appeared a beautiful object; gliding majesti-