

TRAVELS OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

CHAPTER XVI

This is a very short chapter, but contains a fact for which the Baron's memory ought to be dear to every Englishman, especially those who may hereafter have the misfortune of being made prisoners of war.

On my return from Gibraltar I travelled by way of France to England. Being a foreigner, this was not attended with any inconvenience to me. I found, in the harbour of Calais, a ship just arrived with a number of English sailors as prisoners of war. I immediately conceived an idea of giving these brave fellows their liberty, which I accomplished as follows:-After forming a pair of large wings, each of them forty yards long, and fourteen wide, and annexing them to myself, I mounted at break of day, when every creature, even the watch upon deck, was fast asleep. As I hovered over the ship I fastened three grappling irons to the tops of the three masts with my sling, and fairly lifted her several yards out of the water, and then proceeded across to Dover, where I arrived in half an hour! Having no further occasion for these wings, I made them a present to the governor of Dover Castle, where they are now exhibited to the curious.

As to the prisoners, and the Frenchmen who guarded them, they did not awake till they had been near two hours on Dover Pier. The moment the English understood their situation they changed places with their guard, and took back what they had been plundered of, but no more, for they were too generous to retaliate and plunder them in return.

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