NAVAL TACTICS.

EXAMPLES.

INTRODUCTION.

It is proposed to illustrate the preceding demonstrations by examples taken from late Engagements;—of which the following is a Catalogue, according to the order of time in which they happened.

ENGAGEMENTS IN FORMER WARS.

1. Admiral Matthews' engagement with the combined fleets of France and Spain, off Toulon, February 11, 1744.

ENGAGEMENTS OF THE LATE WAR;—TWELVE IN NUMBER.

2. Admiral Byron, off Grenada, July 6, 1779.
3. Admiral Barrington, at St Lucia.

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1. Sir George Bridges-Rodney captures the Spanish transports off Cape Finisterre, takes the Spanish men of war off Cape St Vincent.

3. His engagement with the French fleet, off the Pearl Rock, Martinico, April 17, 1780.

5. His rencontre with the same fleet, to windward of Martinico, May 15, 1780.

7. His second rencontre, about the same place, May 19, 1780.

8. Admiral Arbuthnot, off the Chesapeak, March 16, 1781.

9. Sir Samuel Hood, off Fort Royal, Martinico, April 29, 1781.

10. Admiral Parker, on the Dogger Bank, August 5, 1781.


12. Admiral Greaves, off the Chesapeake, September 5, 1781.

From this Catalogue, that the proposed Illustration may be made with the greater advantage, we shall begin with those engagements the most applicable to the subject, selected without attending either to the dates, or order in which they took place.

SECTION
EXAMPLES.

SECTION I.

Of Engagements, where the British fleets being to windward, by extending their line of battle, with a design to stop, take, destroy, or disable, the whole of the ships of the enemy's line to leeward, have been disabled before they could reach a situation from whence they could annoy the enemy;—and, on the other hand, where the French, perceiving the British ships in disorder, unsupported, and thus disabled, have made sail, and, after throwing in their whole fire upon the van of the British fleet, ship by ship, as passing in succession, have formed a line to leeward, to be prepared if another attack should be made.


2. That of Admiral BYRON, off Grenada, July 6. 1779.

3. Admiral ARBUTHNOT, off the Chesapeake, March 16. 1781.

4. Admiral GREAVES, off the Chesapeake, September 5. 1781.

5. Admiral Sir GEORGE BRIDGES-RODNEY, off the Pearl Rock, west end of Martinico, April 17. 1780.
1. **The Description of Admiral Byng's Engagement with the French Fleet, Off Minorca, May 20, 1756.**

38. B. (Plate VI. fig. 1.) The British fleet, about one o'clock afternoon, upon the starboard tack, and after they had weathered the French fleet, F, then upon the larboard tack.

39. B. (Plate VI. fig. 2.) The British fleet edging or lasking down to attack the enemy, F, lying to, to receive them. (Vide No. 18. 28. and 29.)

40. A. The van of the British obeying the signal, by bearing away two points from the wind, but each ship steering upon her opposite in the enemy's line.

41. A. (fig. 3.) The five headmost ships of the British line brought to, and engaged in a smart cannonade, but not till after having greatly suffered in their rigging by three broadsides received from the enemy, during a course of some miles, while, at the same time, they had it not in their power to make retaliation. (No. 17.)

42. G. The fourth ship of the enemy having received some little damage, or being so instructed, as Mr West has conjectured, bore away, that is, quitted the line, and, in a very little time after, the

* British, 13 ships, 1 sloop. * French, 12 ships, 5 frigates.
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the fifth ship, H, then the two headmost, I, and, after them, the third ship, for the same reason, it is presumed, followed their example, and quitted the line also; each ship, as she went off, occasioning repeated huzzas from the British Tars, who conceived that the superiority of their fire had beat these ships out of their line; and, lastly, about the same time, but in another part of the line, the third ship a-stern of the French Admiral, (the ship against which the Ramillies more particularly directed her fire), quitted the line likewise, and withdrew from battle. (No. 20. and 21.)

43. While matters were going on after this manner in the van, the Intrepid, the sixth ship of the British line, at B, having lost her fore-top mast, was so taken a-back, that her course was flopped. This, of consequence, produced a disorder and stoppage to the ships next a-stern; some designing to go to leeward, and others endeavouring to get to windward of the distressed ship, as at B. (No. 19.) *

44. (Fig. 4.) Meanwhile, the centre and rear of the French, who, though at a great distance, had been busy firing random shot, perceiving this disorder in the British line, (at B. fig. 4.), made sail, and with impunity, threw in the fire of their whole line, each ship as she ranged past the van of the British; after which they bore away in succession, to join their own van, and form a new line of battle three miles to leeward, (as in fig. 5.), to be prepared, should the British Admiral have any thought of making a second attack. (No. 21. and 22.).

* The rate at which the ships were supposed to move through the water at this time, having their fore-fails and fore-top-fails set, might be full three miles per hour; and, with all their fails set, near six miles. Admiral Byng's Trial, p. 45.
45. This engagement of the unfortunate Mr Byngh, whether we shall consider the British mode of making the attack, or the French mode of avoiding the attack, while it offers an example strictly applicable to the principles laid down (Sect. IV.), is also a proof, that neither the one mode nor the other is a new practice, but is of a date as far back as the former war 1756.

46. The British fleet being to windward, in running down to the attack in an angular course, and extending their line of battle, with a design to stop, take, destroy, or disable, the whole of the ships of the enemy's line, by having their headmost ships the longer exposed to an unequal cannonade, and therefore to a greater share of the damage, have been disabled before they could reach a situation from whence they could annoy the enemy.

47. That a single ship, in their line of course (No. 28.), to make the attack, the Intrepid (No. 19.) having lost her fore-top mast, and her way by that means being stopped, occasioned a disorder among the ships immediately a-stern, some endeavouring to pass her to windward, and some to leeward; by which accident of losing a mast, how much soever impossible it is to guard against it, much time was lost, and support to the ships a-head retarded at a time the most necessary, when far separated from the rest of the fleet, and while obliged to sustain a fire from almost every ship in the enemy's line in passing. (No. 21.)

48. On
48. On the other hand, that the enemy, from their position to leeward, perceiving the effects of that superiority of fire, which undoubtedly they had over the British fleet, coming down to make the attack, whether it was in the mode of running endways right before the wind, as it was said the van did for some part of their course, or lasting, as was the form in the approach of the centre and rear divisions, laying hold of the advantage, that is, of the disorder occasioned in consequence, and without loss of time, or remaining till they might be crippled themselves in their turn, crowded sail, and, in the mean time, made sure of disabling a part of the British fleet, that is, the van; and whether it might, or might not, have been practicable for the enemy to have cut off any one, or more, of these headmost ships, now so far separated and unsupported, is not disputed; but, as they could not hope to succeed in an attempt of this kind without sustaining some damage, they, wisely preferring a more cautious conduct, kept their ships unhurt, to be the better prepared when formed in a new line of battle to leeward (No. 21.), to give the British Admiral a proper reception, should he again think of repeating the like attack, or should he afterwards attempt to throw in relief to the Castle of St Philips, or molest their troops employed in the siege, their particular object.

49. It has been said, that first the fourth ship from the head of the enemy's line soon bore away, quitting the line; then the fifth ship; afterwards the two headmost; and then the third ship, after that, followed their example; and, lastly, the third ship astern of the Admiral, and about the same time, quitted the line also. This, as a manoeuvre, no doubt makes a part of their system, that alternate
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ships was to be made to withdraw from battle (No. 24.), leaving intermediate ships, as a cover to sustain the line, and in this way to enable the enemy in the mean time:—And it was not in consequence of the superior fire of the British van; for these ships of the French that withdrew, as described, had received no damage, and were in no way disabled. One gentleman, a witness in the legal trial which followed this action, has these words: ‘The French fourth or fifth ship from the van, seemed to me to have bore up from the fire of our ships in the van, and very soon afterwards the three headmost of the enemy, but none of them appeared to me to be disabled; so that, whether it was to avoid action, or by a signal from their commander in chief, I know not; I should rather imagine the latter, as I had not observed any such close engagement, to oblige ships of their seeming force to avoid an action.’

59. Another witness in the trial, the commander of the Portland, the second ship of the van, being asked, ‘Did you beat away the ship opposed to you by yourself, without the assistance of any other ship?’ answered, ‘No; I can’t say that: she was a very heavy ship the second ship, of greater force than

The distance, on this occasion, between van and van of the opponent fleets, does at no time seem to have been less than four hundred yards. By many of the witnesses on Mr. Byng’s trial, it seems to have been understood, that nobody had been killed or wounded on board the fleet by musketry, not even in the van. On board the Defiance, the leading ship of the British squadron, small arms were, for some time, made use of;—as also by the enemy, as was conceived by some—but without effect on either side, as it would appear; for they were soon fired at.

† Admiral Byng’s Trial, p. 38. ‡ Ditto, p. 58.
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than the Portland, and the third still greater, which must be a seventy-four gun ship: Neither did I expect they would have bore away so soon; but their fourth and fifth ships bearing away before, from the Captain and Buckingham, they bore away also, really to our great surprize.'

31. Here it might be proper to observe, alluding to what was premised in the Introduction (Page 6.), that neither was the usual spirit of British seamen any way deficient on this occasion, nor could the cause of miscarriage be attributed to any fault of construction in our ships. For the only opportunity given, by which any comparison could be made, in point of failing, was when our fleet weathered that of the enemy, at one o'clock, immediately before the engagement. And this circumstance, if it was not a proof that the British ships were the better failers of the two fleets, showed plainly, on the other hand, that the French, in their giving up the contest about the wind, were not only unwilling to hazard the danger of making the attack, but indeed preferred the leeward situation, from whence they could with the greater certainty disable their adversary's ships, while they might preserve their own unhurt. (See Introd. page 19.)
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ADMIRAL BYRON'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FRENCH FLEET, OFF GRENAADA, THE 6TH OF JULY 1779.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM ADMIRAL BYRON, RELATIVE TO HIS ENGAGEMENT.

"It being my intention, from this intelligence, to be off St George's Bay soon after day-break, I drew the ships of war from among the transports, leaving only the Suffolk, Vigi-
lant, and Monmouth, for their protection, under the orders of Rear-Admiral ROWLEY, who was intended to conduct the de-
barkment of the troops; but he was to join me with these ships if I saw occasion for their service. One of the enemy's frigates was very near us in the night, and gave the alarm of our approach. Soon after day-light, (on Tuesday the 6th), the French squadron was seen off St George's, most of them at anchor, but getting under way, seemingly in great confusion, and with little or no wind. The signal was imme-
diately made for a general chase in that quarter, as well as for Rear-Admiral ROWLEY to leave the convoy; and as not more than fourteen or fifteen of the enemy's ships appeared to be of the line, from the position they were in, the signal was made for the ships to engage and form as they could get up: In consequence of which, Vice-Admiral BARRINGTON in the Prince of Wales, with Captain SAVER in the Boyne, and Captain GARDNER in the Sultan, being the headmost of the"
the British squadron, and carrying a press of sail, were soon
fired upon, at a great distance, which they did not return till
they got considerably nearer. But the enemy getting the
breeze of wind about that time, drew out their line from the
cluster they were lying in, by bearing away, and forming to
leeward, on the starboard tack, which shewed their strength
to be very different from our Grenada intelligence; for it was
plainly discovered they had thirty-four sail of ships of war,
twenty-six or twenty-seven of which were of the line, and
many of these appeared of great force. However, the general
chase was continued, and the signal made for close engage-
ment; but our utmost endeavours could not effect that; the
enemy industriously avoiding it, by always bearing up when
our ships got near them; and I was sorry to observe, that
their superiority over us, in failing, gave them the option of
distance, which they availed themselves of, so as to prevent
our rear from ever getting into action; and, being to leeward,
they did great damage to the masts and rigging, when our shot
could not reach them. The ships that suffered most were those
the action began with, and the Grafton, Captain Colling-
wood, the Cornwall, Captain Edwards, and the Lion, Cap-
tain Cornwallis. The spirited example of Vice-Admiral
Barrington, with the former three, exposed them to a fe-
vere fire in making the attack; and the latter three happen-
ing to be to leeward, sustained the fire of the enemy's whole
line, as it passed on the starboard tack. The Monmouth like-
wise suffered exceedingly, by Captain Fanshaw's having bore
down, in a very gallant manner, to stop the van of the enemy's
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...squadron, and bring it to action. But, from the very smart, and well-directed fire kept up by these ships, and others that were engaged, I am convinced they did the enemy great damage, although their masts, rigging, and sails, appeared less injured than ours. The four ships last mentioned, with the Fame, being so disabled in their masts and rigging as to be totally incapable of keeping up with the squadron, and the Suffolk appearing to have received considerable damage in an attack made by Rear-Admiral Rowley upon the enemy's van, I took in the signal for chase, but continued that for close engagement; formed the best line which circumstances would admit of; and kept the wind, to prevent the enemy from doubling upon us, and cutting off the transports, which they seemed inclined to do, and had the latter very much in their power, by means of their large frigates, independent of ships of the line. The French squadron tacked to the southward, and I did the same, to be in readiness to support the Grafton, Cornwall, and Lion, that were disabled, and a great way abaft. But the Lion being likewise much to leeward, and having lost her main and mizen top-masts, and the rest of her rigging and sails being cut in a very extraordinary manner, the bore away to the westward when the fleets tacked, and, to my great surprise, no ship of the enemy was detached after her. The Grafton and Cornwall fled toward us, and might have been weathered by the French, if they had kept their wind, especially the Cornwall, which

A living proof of the advantage of demolishing an enemy's rigging, in preference to the killing his men, or striking the hull of his ship. (No. 4th, 5th, and 6th)
which was farthest to leeward, and lost her main top-mast, and was otherwise much disabled; but they persevered to strictly in declining every chance of close action, notwithstanding their great superiority, that they contented themselves with firing upon these ships, when passing barely within gun-shot, and suffered them to rejoin the squadron, without one effort to cut them off. The Monmouth was so totally disabled in her masts and rigging, that I judged it proper to send directions, in the evening, for Captain Fanshaw to make the best of his way to Antigua; and he parted company accordingly.

When we were close in with St George's Bay, the French colours were seen flying upon the fort, and other batteries; which left no doubt of the enemy being in full possession of the is-land. To dislodge them was impracticable, considering the state of the two fleets. I therefore sent orders to Captain Barker, the agent, to make the best of his way with the transports to Antigua or St Christophers, whichever he could fetch, intending to keep the King's ships between them and the French squadron, which, at the close of the evening, was about three miles to leeward of us, and, I had no doubt, would at least be as near in the morning: For, although it was evident from their conduct throughout the whole day, that they were resolved to avoid a close engagement, I could not allow myself to think, that, with a force so greatly superior the French Admiral would permit us to carry off the transports unmolested: however, as his squadron was not to be seen next morning, I conclude he returned to Grenada.
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It is my duty on this occasion to represent, that the behaviour of the officers and men of his Majesty's squadron was such as became British seamen, zealous for the honour of their country, and anxious to support their national character. The marines, likewise, and troops that were embarked, with their officers, in the King's ships, behaved as brave soldiers; and, from the exemplary good conduct of those who got into action; from the visible effect which the brisk and well-directed fire had upon the enemy's ships, and from that cool, determined resolution, and very strong desire of coming to a close engagement, which prevailed universally throughout the squadron, I think myself justifiable in saying, that the great superiority in numbers and force would not have availed the enemy so much, had not their advantage over us in failing enabled them to preserve a distance little calculated for deciding such contests.

THE DESCRIPTION OF ADMIRAL BYRON'S BATTLE OFF GRENAADA, JULY 6. 1779, TAKEN FROM THE FOREGOING LETTER *.

52. F, (Plate VII. fig. 1.) The French fleet, as they were seen at day-light off the town of St George, most of them at anchor, but

French, 26 ships, 1 frigate, with a fleet of transports.
French, 26 hoops, 7 frigates.
but getting under way, and seemingly in confusion, with little wind.

C, Frigates on the out-look.

B, The British fleet discovering them from windward.

53. B, (fig. 2.) The British now extended in line of battle.

A, The three headmost ships under Vice-Admiral Barrington, carrying a press of sail, in consequence of the signal for general chase, were soon fired upon by the enemy, which fire was not returned till he got considerably nearer.

F, The enemy having now got the breeze of wind, are seen drawing out their line from the cluster they were lying in, and forming to leeward on the starboard tack.

54. B, (fig. 3.) The British fleet after the signal for close engagement, which, with their utmost endeavours, they could not effect; the enemy industriously avoiding it, by always bearing up when our ships got near them, as at F. Their superiority over us in failing gave them the option of distance, which they availed themselves of, so as to prevent our rear from ever getting into action; and being to leeward, they did great damage to the masts and rigging, when our shot could not reach them. Though the three headmost ships, A, were exposed to a severe fire in making the attack, yet the Grafton, the Cornwall, and Lion, being farther to leeward, at C, and consequentlly nearer the enemy, suffered most, having sustained the fire of the enemy’s whole line as it passed them, to leeward, upon the starboard tack. The
MONMOUTH, D, also suffered considerably, by Captain Fanshaw's
having gallantly borne down to stop the enemy's van, and bring it to
action; as did the Suffolk, in another attack upon the enemy's
van.

55. B, (fig. 4.) The British fleet forming the best line that
circumstances would admit of, to prevent the enemy from dou-
bling back upon us, and cutting off our transports, which they
seemed inclined to do, by means of their large frigates, as well
as their ships of the line.

C. The Grafton and Cornwall left far a-stern.

E. The Lion, being much shattered, making off to leeward.

56. F, (fig. 5.) The enemy, having tacked to the southward,
and upon the larboard tack.

B, The British, after having immediately got upon the same
tack, to be in readiness to support the Grafton and Corn-
wal, who were disabled, and had been left, a great way a-stern,
as at C. But the Lion, being much more shattered, had bore
away to the westward, as at E.; and, to our great surprise, no
ship of the enemy had been detached after her.

57. The similarity of this battle with that of Mr. Byrne, al-
ready described, is so great, that, whether the mode in which
the British made the attack, or the mode in which the French
avoided it, shall be considered, we have no doubt of showing,
that the circumstances in either case were equally exalted by the
principles laid down (Section IV.); but as the importance of
the
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the subject requires that this should be done in the most satisfactory manner, the observations made shall be supported by extracts from the Admiral's letter.

I.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE BRITISH MODE OF ATTACK.

58. That the Admiral by extending his line of battle, in an attempt to stop the van of the enemy, and bring it to action, it may be admitted, that it was with the intent of taking, destroying, or disabling every opponent ship.

59. In this attempt, however, the ships in the van, by the nature of the course they were obliged to take (No. 27. 28.), were exposed, for a long time, to a heavy fire, which they could not return, or did not return.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADMIRAL'S LETTER IN SUPPORT OF THESE OBSERVATIONS.

' The Monmouth likewise suffered exceedingly, by Captain Fanshaw's having bore down in a very gallant manner to stop the van of the enemy's squadron, and bring it to action (e).—And the Suffolk appearing to have received considerable damage in an attack made by Rear-Admiral Rowley upon the enemy's van; (g.)

' The signal was made for the ships to engage and form as they could get up; in consequence of which, the Prince of Wales, the Boyne, and the Sultan, the headmost ships of the British, and carrying a press of sail, were soon fired upon, at a great distance, which they did not return till they got considerably nearer.' (Vid. a.)

Go. That

'The
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60. That by this course, which must have been in the flunting or lasking form (No. 28.), the ships of the van having got far a-head of the rear, were therefore the sooner in with the enemy; but being disabled by the fire they received in coming down, and becoming in a manner immovable, or stationary, compared with the enemy, they were obliged to sustain the continued fire of their whole line, ship by ship, as they passed in succession, without having it in their power to stop the van, as intended, or even to bring a single ship of them to action.

61. That the rear, by the nature of this course also, not from any inferiority in point of sailing, compared with the enemy, being at first left far a- stern by the van (No. 28.), and afterwards, as may be supposed, having met with obstruction from disabled ships a-head, might have been prevented from carrying support to the van, in like manner as was occasioned by the Intrepid in Mr Byng’s action, ships a- stern endeavouring to go to windward of the disabled ship, but some for certain passing to leeward; for how, otherwise, can we account for the situations of the Grafton, Cornwall, and Lion, or for the gallant attempt of Captain Fanshaw to stop the van of the enemy, and bring it to action.

‘The ships that suffered most, were those the action began with, the Grafton, Captain Collingwood, the Cornwall, Captain Edwards, and the Lion, Captain Cornwallis. The spirited examples of Vice-Admiral Barrington, with the former three, exposed them to a severe fire in making the attack; and the latter three happening to be to leeward, sustained the fire of the enemy’s whole line, as it passed on the starboard tack.’ (Vid. d.)

‘Their superiority over us in sailing gave them the option of distance, which they availed themselves of, so as to prevent our rear from ever getting into action.’ (Vid. c.)
II.

Observations on the French mode of receiving the attack.

62. The French, on the other hand, seeing the British squadron coming down to attack them, drew out their line of battle by forming to leeward; of necessity on this occasion, but admirably fitted for their manner of fighting, which peculiarly might be said to consist in an address qualified for saving their own ships, while they should have it in their power to disable those of their enemy. According to this system, then, so soon as the British squadron approached within what might be thought the greatest possible range of cannon-shot, and while it was coming down before the wind, the French, from their whole line, kept up a heavy fire; but, as soon as any of the British ships had brought to, and they, in their turn, began to be annoyed by the British fire, the ships the most exposed bore away, and withdrew from the battle (No. 20.) And whether this was in the van or centre, most probably it was in the

Extracts from Admiral Byron's letter continued.

'...The enemy getting the breeze of wind about that time, drew out their line from the clutter they were lying in, by bearing away and forming to leeward on the starboard-tack, which showed their strength to be very different from our Grenada intelligence; for it was plainly discovered they had 34 sail of ships of war, 26 or 27 of which were of the line, and many of these of great force. However, the general chase was continued, and the signal made for close engagement; but our utmost endeavours could not effect that, the enemy industriously avoiding it, by bearing up when our ships got near them.' (Vid. b.)
the manner as represented in Plate IV. fig. 1. the alternate ships should withdraw, while intermediate ships should be left to fill up the intervals, and support the line, (No. 49.); while the rear, to avoid every possibility of being forced into action, kept bearing away (as at H, fig. 3. Plate VII.) in like manner as before described (No. 39. and Plate V. fig. 3.)

63. And now again taking advantage of the disorded condition of the British squadron, (for, at that time, several of the headmost ships, from the severe fire received in coming down, lay crippled, while the Grafton, the Cornwall, and the Lion, having got considerably to leeward with the intention of covering their friends, were therefore the more exposed) the French, I say, laying hold of the opportunity, and without delay, or remaining till they might be disabled themselves (No. 48.), made sail, and ship by ship, as many as could reach in passing, threw in upon the above ships the whole of their fire, when, having formed again, for the second time, to leeward, they were prepared again and again to play the same manœuvre, so often as the like attack should be repeated. (No. 21. 22. 48. and 49.)

64. Whether it might, or might not have been practicable to cut off either of these

... From the very smart and well-directed fire kept up by these ships, meaning the Prince of Wales, the Royal, and the Sultan, and afterwards the Grafton, the Cornwall, and the Lion, with the Monmouth and others that were engaged, I am convinced they did the enemy great damage, although their masts, rigging, and sails, appeared less injured than ours, the four ships last mentioned, with the Fame, being so disabled in their masts and rigging, as to be incapable of keeping up with the rest of the fleet; and the Suffolk appearing to have received considerable damage,’ &c. (Vid. f.)

... The Grafton and Cornwall stood toward us, and might have been weathered by
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65. The damage received by the French ships must have been but trifling; for, otherwise, the British Admiral would not have had reason to express an apprehension that they might be able to double upon him and cut off his transports, which were, at the time, a considerable way to windward.

66. On this occasion, the whole of the French system seems to have been as completely followed out as in the former affair, that of Mr Byng; they preserved their own ships entire, while they disabled those of their enemy; and so intent were they in keeping their main object in view, the making themselves masters of the island, that they cautiously avoided every chance that could lead them into a scrape, which a close engagement possibly by the French, if they had kept their wind, especially the Cornwall, which was farthest to leeward, and left her main top main, and was otherwise much disabled; but they persevered so strictly in declining every chance of close action, notwithstanding their great superiority, that they contented themselves with firing upon these ships, when passing, barely within gun-shot, and suffered them to rejoin the squadron, without one effort to cut them off.' (Vid. 4.)

'I took in the signal for chase, but continued that for close engagement; formed the best line which circumstances would admit of; and kept the wind, to prevent the enemy from doubling upon us, and cutting off the transports.' (Vid. 6.)

'The French squadron tucked to the southward, and I did the same to be in readiness to support the Grafton, Cornwall, and Lion, that were disabled, and a great way astern; but the Lion being likewise much to leeward, bore away to the westward, and having lost her main and mizen topsails, and the rest of her rigging and masts being cut in a most extraordinary manner, the bore away to the westward, when the fleets tucked; I
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possibly might have been, even when opportune offered, apparently fortunate, because the cutting off the transports, or the capture of those fore-mentioned ships, the Gironde and Cornwal, or the Lion.

and, to my surprise, no ship of the enemy was detached after her.

For although it was evident, from their conduct throughout the whole day, that they were resolved to avoid a close engagement, I could not allow myself to think, that, with a force so greatly superior, the French Admiral would permit us to carry off the transports unmolested. *Vide §.*

66. But besides the cautions mentioned for retarding the rear of a fleet to windward, from getting into action with a fleet to leeward, there is another, which, being a manœuvre of course, may therefore have taken place on this occasion, although not taken notice of by Mr Byron in his letter.—For illustration's sake,—If the opponent fleet to leeward, as extended in line of battle, shall lie up but one single point to the wind (No. 29.) the vans of the two fleets must mutually approximate, and get within fighting distance; while the two rears, of consequence, may still be some miles asunder; and the more numerous the two fleets are, and the more they are extended, each of them in their proper line of battle, the greater will this proportional distance be:

For, if two squadrons, consisting of twelve ships each, (as represented in Plate V. fig. 3.), shall make this distance between the two rears amount to one mile and a half; in this engagement of Mr Byron's, where the two squadrons, each of them, consisted of 21 ships, even the least numerous, it follows, that the distance between the two rears, according to the same ratio, might,
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might, by this reason alone, have amounted to 1620 yards, or 2½ miles.

67. Again, should the ships in the rear of the fleet to leeward, at the same time, keep bearing away, (as represented in Plate V. fig. 3. at L and M, or in Plate VII. fig. 3. at G and H), and which undoubtedly they did in this engagement, then the space between the two rears will be still more increased.

68. From all which, the several advantages which a fleet to leeward has over an extended fleet making an attack from the windward, as formerly enumerated, are so fully confirmed, that in recapitulating them, we are obliged to make use of almost the same words as are made use of by Mr Byron himself in his letter.

69. 1st. By their superiority of fire, the ships in the van were disabled in coming down to the attack; and, before they were brought to, in a situation from whence they could annoy the enemy, (No. 33.)

70. 2dly, By being to leeward, the enemy, he says, did great damage to our masts and rigging, while our shot could not reach them, by being thrown into the water. (No. 34.)

71. 3dly, The Cornwall and Lion, part of the van, from being separated and unsupported, or being farther to leeward, as he says, suffered most, having sustained the fire of the enemy's whole line as it passed to leeward. (No. 35.)
72. *Ad*ly. And is it not evident, as well from his letter, as from the description, that the enemy, from their leeward situation, laid hold of that advantage, by stealing away at pleasure? (No. 36.)

73. *Ad*ly. From the letter it is clearly demonstrated, that the difficulty of getting the rear of the fleet brought into action, did arise from the nature of the attack itself, not from any abatement of spirit in the seamen, nor from any defect of the shipping on the one side, or even from any degree of superiority on the other.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM ADMIRAL ARBUTHNOT, 20TH MARCH 1781, LINNEHAVEN BAY.

74. 'On the 16th, at fix A. M. the Iris made the signal for discovering five strange sail, to the N. N. E. and soon afterwards hailed, that they were large ships steering for the Capes of Virginia, and supposed to be distant about three miles. I immediately concluded it must be the enemy I was in search of, and accordingly prepared the squadron for battle, by forming the line a-head a cable's length afunder, on a wind which was then fresh, and proceeding towards them with a press of sail. At this time Cape Henry bore S. W. by W. distant about 14 leagues, wind at West; the French bearing from us, N. N. E. the weather so hazy, that the length of the British line could scarcely be discerned.

'At a quarter of an hour after eight A. M. the wind veered to N. W. by W. and soon after to N. by W. which gave the enemy the advantage of the weather-gage. About this time several of the enemy's ships were discovered to windward, manoeuvring to form their line.'
At twenty-five minutes after eight, the Guadalupe ranged up under our lee, bringing the same intelligence with that already given by the Iris, and was ordered to make fail, and endeavour to keep fight of the enemy.

At thirty-five minutes after eight, I directed the Iris, by signal, to make fail a-head, and keep fight of the enemy, as the haze appeared to thicken. The British line was by this time completely formed, and close hauled on the larboard tack.

At twenty minutes after nine, the headmost of the French ships tacked, as did the rest in succession, and formed the line on the starboard tack.

At thirty-five minutes after nine, the weather being very equally, I formed the line a-head, at two cables length asunder.

At a quarter of an hour after ten, I made the signal for the squadron to tack, the headmost and weathermost first, and gain the wind of the enemy.

At a quarter of an hour after eleven, the headmost of the French line tacked; but one of them having missed stays, the roll wore, and formed the line on the larboard tack.

At forty minutes after eleven, I re-formed my line, at one cable's length asunder.

At
At twelve o'clock, there being a prospect of the van of my line reaching the enemy, the whole of my line tacked by signal, the van first, and the leading ship continued to lead on the other tack.

At one o'clock, the French squadron having completed their form in a line a-head, consisting of eight two deckers, bore E. by S. the British line close hauled, steering E. S. E. wind at N. E.

76. At half an hour after one o'clock, the enemy being very apprehensive of the danger and inconvenience of engaging to windward, from the high sea that was running, and squally weather, wore, and formed their line to leeward of the British line.

77. At two o'clock, the van of my squadron wore in the line; and, in a few minutes, the Robust, which led the fleet, and afterwards behaved in the most gallant manner, was warmly engaged with the van of the enemy. The ships in the van and centre of the line were all engaged by half an hour past two, and by three o'clock the French line was broke; their ships began soon after to wear, and to form their line again, with their heads to the South-east into the ocean.

78. At twenty minutes after three, I wore, and stood after them. I was sorry to observe the Robust, Prudent, and Europe, which were the beaimost ships, and received the whole of the enemy's
enemy's fire at their rigging, as they bore down, so entirely disabled, and the London's main-top sail yard being carried away, the two first unmanageable, lying with their heads from the enemy, as to be incapable of pursuit, and of rendering the advantage we had gained decisive.

79. 'At half an hour after four, the haze came on so very thick, as entirely to intercept the enemy from my view. The Medea joined me soon after, which I directed to follow, and observe the route of the enemy, while I proceeded with the squadron to the Chesapeake, in the hope of intercepting them, should they attempt to get in there.'

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THE DESCRIPTION OF ADMIRAL ARBUTHNOT'S BATTLE OFF THE CHESAPEAKE, 16TH MARCH 1781 *

1. (Plate VIII. fig. 1.) 'The French fleet to windward, formed in line of battle, on the larboard tack.

B. The British fleet to leeward, on the same tack, at twelve o'clock, and in hopes that their van would be able to reach the enemy, (No. 75.)

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* British, eight ships and three frigates.
French, eight ships and four frigates.
ARBUTHNOT'S ENGAGEMENT.

F. (Fig. 2.) The French fleet now formed to leeward, at half after one, having quitted their windward position G, from an apprehension of the danger and inconvenience there would be in engaging to windward, from the high sea that was running, and the equally weather. (No. 76.)

B, The British fleet in chase, keeping their wind.

F. (Fig. 3.) The French extended in line of battle, and receiving the attack, by firing upon the van of the British, as they came down before the wind.

B, The British, who had wore at two o'clock, left their position at C; are now attempting to stop the van, and steering every ship upon his opposite of the enemy.

Mr Arbuthnot says, 'At two o'clock, the van of my squadron were in the line; and, in a few minutes, the Robust, which led the fleet, and afterwards behaved in a most gallant manner, was warmly engaged with the van of the enemy.'

(Fig. 4.) The ships in the van A, and the centre B, of the line, were all engaged by, half past two, and by three o'clock the French line was broke at FF.

Their ships began soon after to wear, and form their line again, with their heads to the south-east, into the ocean, as at G, Fig. 4. (No. 77.)

80. (Fig. 5.) 'At twenty minutes after three, I wore and flood after them, (as at B, Fig. 5); but was soon sorry to observe the Robust,
NAVAL TACTICS.

Robust, Prudent, and Europe, which had been the headmost, now the sternmost at A, as they had received the whole of the enemy's fire at the rigging, as they bore down, so entirely disabled, as was also the London, who had her top-sail yard carried away, that we were incapable of pursuit. (No. 78.)

* *

OBSERVATIONS.

81. Mr Arbuthnot, by this battle, having defeated his first attempt of the enemy to acquire a footing in the Chesapeake; and having relieved us of our apprehensions for the little army under General Arnold, that is, having had the singular merit of accomplishing, in the fullest manner, the principal object of his destination, it is much to be regretted, that an equal degree of praise is not due to the action itself. For, by this mode of attack. (Section IV.), as well, as by the attempt to stop the van of the enemy, his headmost ships were so disabled, that they could neither get into close action, nor pursue; whereas, on the other hand, the enemy being unhurt, and perceiving the disorder of the British fleet, that they were disabled from following them—to avoid the effects of their fire, made sail, wore, and formed a new line of battle to leeward, (No. 77.), where they were prepared to receive a new attack, should the British Admiral attempt

82. This engagement, however, is distinguished from the two former, by a manœuvre peculiar to itself; and must be of some weight
weight in support of what has been advanced with respect to French ideas. For, quitting the windward situation, which they were possessed of, and assuming their post to leeward, as they did, (No. 76.), they plainly showed, that they were confident in their superior knowledge in naval tactic; that they relied on our want of penetration; and, getting to leeward, that they trusted our irresistible desire would hurry us on to make the customary attack, (Intro. page 20.) though at a disadvantage almost beyond the power of calculation; by which, the British Admiral, having his ships crippled in the first onset, never after was able to close with, follow up, or even detain one single ship of them for one moment. (No. 37.)

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EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM VICE-ADmiral Graves, AUGUST 31st 1781, OFF SANDYHOOK.

82. 'I beg you will be pleased to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that the moment the wind served to carry the ships over the bar, which was buoyed for the purpose, the squadron came out; and Sir Samuel Hood getting under sail at the same time, the fleet proceeded together, on the 31st of August, to the southward.

K 2
The cruisers which I had placed before the Delaware could give me no certain information, and the cruisers off the Chesapeake had not joined. The wind being rather favourable, we approached the Chesapeake the morning of the 5th of September, when the advanced ship made the signal of a fleet. We soon discovered a number of great ships at anchor, which seemed to be extended across the entrance of the Chesapeake, from Cape Henry to the middle ground: They had a frigate cruising off the Cape, which stood in and joined them; and, as we approached, the whole fleet got under sail, and stretched out to sea, with the wind at N. N. E. As we drew nearer, I formed the line tête-à-tête, and then in such a manner as to bring his Majesty's fleet nearly parallel to the line of approach of the enemy; and, when I found that our van was advanced as far as the shoal of the middle ground would admit of, I wore the fleet, and brought them upon the same tack with the enemy, and nearly parallel to them, though we were by no means extended with their rear. So soon as I judged that our van would be able to operate, I made the signal to bear away and approach, and, soon after, to engage the enemy close. Somewhat after four, the action began amongst the headmost ships, pretty close, and soon became general, as far as the second ship from the centre, towards the rear. The van of the enemy bore away, to enable the centre to support them, or they would have been cut up. The action did not entirely cease till a little after sun-set, though at a considerable distance; for the centre of the enemy continued to bear up as it advanced; and, at that moment,
GRAVES'S ENGAGEMENT.

seemed to have little more in view, than to shelter their own van, as it went away before the wind.

His Majesty's fleet consisted of nineteen sail of the line; that of the French formed twenty-four sail in their line. After night, I sent the frigates to the van and rear, to push forward the line, and keep it extended with the enemy, with a full intention to renew the engagement in the morning; but, when the frigate Fortune returned from the van, I was informed, that several of the ships had suffered so much, that they were in no condition to renew the action until they had secured their masts; we, however, kept well extended with the enemy all night.

We continued all day, the 6th, in sight of each other, repairing our damages. Rear-Admiral Drake shifted his flag into the Alcide, until the Princess had got up another main-top mast. The Shrewsbury, whose Captain lost a leg, and had the first Lieutenant killed, was obliged to reef both top-masts, shifted her top-fail yards, and had sustained very great damage. I ordered Captain Colpoys of the Orpheus to take command of her, and put her into a state for action.

The Intrepid had both top-fail yards shot down, her top-masts in great danger of falling, and her lower masts and yards very much damaged, her Captain having behaved with the greatest gallantry to cover the Shrewsbury. The Montague was in great danger
NAVAL TACTICS.

danger of losing her masts; the Terrible so leaky as to keep all her pumps going; and the Ajax also very leaky.

In the present state of the fleet, and being five sail of the line less in number than the enemy, and they having advanced very much in the wind upon us during the day, I determined to tack astern, to prevent being drawn too far from the Chesapeake, and to stand to the northward.

THE DESCRIPTION OF ADMIRAL GRAVES'S ENGAGEMENT OFF THE CHESAPEAK, THE 5TH OF SEPTEMBER 1781. *

84. (Plate IX. fig. 1.) The French fleet at anchor, and extended across the entrance of the Chesapeake, from Cape Henry to the middle ground, who, as soon as they perceived the British fleet approaching, got under sail, and stretched out to sea upon the larboard tack, as at G.

The British fleet advancing to the middle ground, but not till after the French had left it, formed in a line nearly parallel to that of the French at G.

B. (fig. 2.) The British fleet, after having advanced as far as the fleet upon the middle ground, as per course A, wore; and having

7 frigates. French, 24 ships. Frigates.
GRAVES'S ENGAGEMENT.

having stood after the enemy, are now upon the larboard tack, extended in line of battle a-head, and almost a-breast of them.

(Fig. 3.) Mr Graves says: 'So soon as I judged that our van would be able to operate, I made the signal to bear away, and approach as at B; and, soon after, to engage the enemy close.'

(Fig. 4.) 'Somewhat after four, the action began amongst the headmost ships, pretty close, and soon became general, as far as the second ship from the centre, towards the rear. The van of the enemy bore away, as at C, 'to enable their centre to support them,' as at F, fig. 4, 'or they would have been cut up.'

'The action did not entirely cease till after sunset, though at a considerable distance; for the centre of the enemy continued to bear up as it advanced; and, that moment, seemed to have little more in view than to shelter their own van, as it went away before the wind.'

85. Mr Graves might have added, that the French fleet, by making this movement, not only covered their own van as it went off, but they completely disabled the van of the British, now separated and unsupported, and who had been before greatly hurt in their rigging, by making the attack as they did, insomuch, that hardly a ship was able to stand after, and prevent the enemy from forming a new line to leeward. (No. 16, to 37, inclusively.)
The fleets continued in sight of each other for five days successively, and, at times, were very near; but ours had not speed enough, in so mutilated a state, to attack them, and they showed no inclination to renew the action; but they generally maintained the wind of us, yet did not make use of that power.

87. The anxiety of the French to avoid a battle on this occasion, and their manoeuvres in consequence, that they might not again be prevented in their designs upon the Chesapeake, in which they had been disappointed by Mr Arbuthnot, are so much alike to what has already been described in two engagements, the one with the unfortunate Admiral Byng, and the other with Admiral Byron off Grenada, that the observations then made being equally applicable in this case, it will be unnecessary to repeat them.

V.

* Certain French Officers on board their own fleet, it is said, having received an invitation from the Admiral to dine with him, on seeing the British squadron approaching the Chesapeake in the morning, and dreading they might be attacked before they could be prepared for action, pleasantly said to a gentleman, then prisoner on board, We have received an invitation from the Admiral to dine with him to-day, but it must have been from your Admiral, not our own;—expressing, by this, an apprehension that they might lose their ship, and be taken prisoners.
V. Sir George Bridges-Rodney's engagement with the French fleet off the west end of Martinique, April 17, 1780.

Extract of a letter from Admiral Sir George Bridges-Rodney, 26th April 1780, off Fort-Royal, Martinique.

88. In this situation both fleets remained till the 15th instant, when the enemy, with their whole force, put to sea in the middle of the night; immediate notice of which being given me, I followed them; and, having looked into Fort-Royal Bay, and the road of St Pierre's, on the 16th we got sight of them, about eight leagues to leeward of the Pearl Rock. A general chase to the north-west followed; and, at five in the morning, we plainly discovered that they consisted of twenty-three sail of the line, one fifty gun ship, three frigates, a lugger, and a cutter. When night came on, I formed the fleet in a line of battle a-head, and ordered the Venus and Greyhound frigates to keep between His Majesty's and the enemy's fleets, to watch their motions, which was admirably well attended to by that good and veteran officer Captain Ferguson.

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* The
NAVAL TACTICS.

' The manoeuvres the enemy made, during the night, indicated a wish to avoid battle, which I was determined they should not, and therefore counteracted all their motions.

' At day-light, in the morning of the 17th, we saw the enemy distinctly beginning to form the line a-head. I made the signal for the line a-head, at two cables length distance. At forty-five minutes after six, I gave notice, by public signal, that my intention was to attack the enemy's rear with my whole force; which signal was answered by every ship in the fleet. At seven A. M. perceiving the fleet too much extended, I made the signal for the line of battle at one cable's length asunder only. At thirty minutes after eight A. M. I made a signal for a line of battle a-breast, each ship bearing from the other N. by W. and S. by E. and bore down upon the enemy. This signal was penetrated by them, who discovered my intention, wore, and formed a line of battle on the other tack; I immediately made the signal to haul the wind, and form the line of battle a-head. At nine A. M. made the signal for the line of battle a-head, at two cables length, on the larboard tack.

' The different movements of the enemy obliged me to be very attentive, and watch every opportunity that offered of attacking them to advantage.

' The manoeuvres made by his Majesty's fleet will appear to their Lordships by the minutes of the signals made before and during the action. At eleven A. M. I made the signal to prepare.
RODNEY'S ENGAGEMENT

...pare for battle, to convince the whole fleet I was determined to bring the enemy to an engagement. At fifty minutes after eleven A M, I made the signal for every ship to bear down, and steer her opposite in the enemy's line, agreeably to the 21st article of the additional Fighting Instructions. At fifty-five minutes after eleven A M, I made the signal for battle, a few minutes after, the signal that it was my intention to engage close, and, of course, the Admiral's ship to be the example. A few minutes before one P M, one of the headmost ships began the action. At one P. M., the Sandwich in the centre, after having received several fires from the enemy, began to engage. Perceiving several of our ships engaging at a distance, I repeated the signal for a close action. The action, in the centre, continued till fifteen minutes after four P. M., when Moniteur Guichen in the Couronne, in which they had mounted ninety guns, the Triumphant and Fendant, after engaging the Sandwich for an hour and a half, bore away. The superiority of the fire from the Sandwich, and the gallant behaviour of her officers and men, enabled her to sustain so unequal a combat, though, before attacked by them, she had beat three ships out of their line of battle, had entirely broke it, and was to leeward of the wake of the French Admiral.

At the conclusion of the battle, the enemy might be said to be completely beat; but such was the distance of the van and rear from the centre, and the crippled condition of several ships, particularly the Sandwich, who, for twenty-four hours, was with difficulty kept above water, that it was impossible to...
pursue them that night without the greatest disadvantage. However, every endeavour was used to put the fleet in order, and I have the pleasure to acquaint your Lordships, that, on the 20th, we again got sight of the enemy’s fleet, and, for three successive days, pursued them, but without effect, they using every endeavour possible to avoid a second action, and endeavoured to push for Fort-Royal, Martinique: We cut them off. To prevent the risk of another action, they took shelter under Guadaloupe.

As I found it was in vain to follow them with His Majesty’s fleet in the condition they were in, and every motion of the enemy indicating their intention of getting into Fort-Royal Bay, Martinico, where alone they could repair their shattered fleet, I thought the only chance we had of bringing them again to action, was to be off Fort-Royal before them, where the fleet under my command now is, in daily expectation of their arrival. I have despatched frigates to windward and to leeward of every island, to give me notice of their approach.

89. F, (Plate X. fig. 1.) The French fleet to leeward, at daylight, distinctly seen forming the line a-head, and upon the starboard tack.

B, The British fleet to windward, thirty minutes after eight, formed in line of battle a-bread, advancing down on the enemy, and after Sir George had given orders, by public signal, that his intention was to attack the enemy's rear with his whole force, which signal was answered by every ship in his fleet. (Vid. a.)

F, (fig. 2.) The French fleet in the act of wearing, and forming upon the larboard tack, having penetrated Sir George's signal. (Vid. b.)

B, The British fleet still in line a-breast, bearing down.

B, (fig. 3.) The British fleet formed in line of battle a-head, at two cables length astound, on the larboard tack, the signal to haul the wind being previously made at nine o'clock.

F, The enemy lying-to to receive the attack.

* British, 20 ships of the line, 1 fifty, and 4 frigates.
French, 25 ships & frigates.
B, (fig. 4.) The British fleet, fifty minutes after eleven o’clock, every one of which bearing down, and steering for her opposite in the enemy’s line, agreeable to the 21st article of the additional Fighting Instructions, according to the signal made for that purpose, (vid. c.) and after Sir George’s signal to prepare for battle, which was intended to convince the whole fleet that he was determined to bring the enemy to an engagement. In five minutes after, the signal for battle was given; and, in a few minutes after this last, the signal that it was his intention to engage close, and, of course, the Admiral’s ship, B, to be the example. (Vid. d.)

A, The British fleet extended in line of battle. A few minutes before one o’clock, one of the headmost ships at D began the action, and at one, the Sandwich, the Admiral’s own ship, after having received several fires from the enemy, began to engage at C.

F, The enemy lying-to as before.

(Fig. 5.) The action continued above three hours, when Monf. Guichen in the Couronne, mounting ninety guns, the Triumphant, and the Fendant, after engaging the Sandwich, B, for an hour and a half, bore away, as at F, the superior fire from the Sandwich enabling her to sustain so unequal a combat, though, before she was attacked by them, she had beat three ships, G, out of the line of battle, had entirely broke it, and was to leeward of the wake of the French Admiral. At the conclusion of the battle, the enemy might be said to be completely beat. But such was the distance of the van D, and rear A B, from the centre, and
and the crippled condition of several ships, particularly the Sandwich, that we could not pursue the enemy.

90. Though Sir George had the merit of great personal courage upon this occasion, yet, it must be admitted, that the attack, as put in execution, being the same, was, of course, attended with the like want of effect, which, unfortunately, has uniformly marked all our other sea-battles. For, notwithstanding all that has been said, he could not prevent the wary Frenchman from sliding away from him almost unhurt, (in like manner as described in No. 23. 24. and Plate IV. fig. 1. and 2.); while he got his ships so greatly disabled that he could not follow up, or even detain a single ship of the enemy for one moment. It is in vain, therefore, to lay the blame of this miscarriage upon the supposed distance of the van and rear; for, if both had been completely closed with the centre, from our hypothesis, as well as from the examples given, we have a right to conclude, that the van and rear of the French fleet might, as usual, have slid away with the same ease as the centre had done (vid. ε), as soon as they perceived themselves in any danger of being hurt.

91. Sir George has first told us, that he had given notice, by public signal, that his intention was to attack the enemy’s rear with his whole force (vid. ơ); and then he afterwards says, at eleven o’clock, A. M. I made the signal for every ship to bear down, and steer for her opposite in the enemy’s line. (Vid. ε.) Why did Sir George change his resolution?
92. Had he carried the intention of his first signal into execution *, it is more than probable that he might have, taken or destroyed six or eight ships at least of the enemy's rear †; but, by causing down his whole line, every ship steering upon his opposite, according to the intention of the last signal; from the experience of former engagements, he might have been assured of getting every ship so disabled by the raking fire of the enemy, as to be incapable of any future pursuit.

93. That the Sandwich, the Admiral's own ship, in particular, was crippled, is not surprising; for, after having beat three other ships of the enemy, she had obliged the Couronne, the Triumphant, and the Fendant, to bear away and withdraw from battle. But, in the manœuvre of these six ships of the enemy quitting the line, as they did on this occasion, it is impossible not to perceive a resemblance to what has been before explained in the case of the alternate ships, &c. (No. 24. Plate IV. fig. 1. and 2.) or in the case of the Grafton, the Cornwall, and the Lion, in Mr Berton's action, where, with similar gallantry, getting to leeward to cover their friends, they were constrained to sustain the fire of the enemy's whole line, as they passed them to leeward.

Having now given five examples where the British, in display of their innate desire of making the attack, having always attained

* It has been said, that the French Admiral, upon perceiving the approach of the British fleet, according to the first intention, broke out with an exclamation, That I, or two, of his ships were gone!

† "Mode of Attack proposed."
ed the windward position, and where they have made this attack in an extended line, where each ship was steer'd down upon her opposite of the enemy, and where an idea has generally prevail'd, of making the attack upon the enemy's headmost ships, in preference to an attack upon the sternmost; the consequence of which has been, that the ships making such attack could not be supported but with difficulty: and likewise, where the French, on the other hand, as earnestly courting and attaining the leeward situation, have always disabled the British fleet: We now proceed to give other examples, where the French, by their anxiety in keeping to windward, have clearly shown their dislike, as well of making the attack themselves, as of suffering the British fleet to approach them, while in this windward situation.