thoſe of certain private ſhips, the Executive Sig­nal, which dictates the particular movement, is accom­panied by a Directive Signal, by which theſe ſhips are pointed out, to which the order is addreſſed.

The commander of the ſhip to which any ſignal is addreſſed, is generally required to ſignify by a ſignal (which is general) that he has obſerved it. And if he does not thoroughly underſtand its meaning, he in­timates this by another general ſignal. And here it is to be obſerved, that as ſoon as the ſignal is anſwered by the ſhips to which it is addreſſed, it is uſual to haul it down, to avoid the confuſion which might ariſe from others being hoiſted in the same place. The order re­mains till executed, notwithſtanding that the ſignal is hauled down.

It may happen that the commander who throws out the ſignal for any piece of ſervice, sees reaſons for al­tering his plan. He intimates this by a general An­nulling ſignal, accompanying the ſignal already gi­ven. This will frequently be more ſimple than to make the ſignals for the movements which would be required for re-eſtabliſhing the ſhips in their former ſituation.

All theſe things are of very eaſy comprehenſion, and require little thought for their contrivance. But when we come to the particular evolutions and movements, and to combine theſe with the circumſtances of ſitua­tion in which the fleet may be at the time, it is evi­dent, that much reflection is neceſſary for framing a body of ſignals which may be eaſily exhibited, diſtinctly perceived, and well underſtood, with little risk of be­ing miſtaken one for another. We ſhall take notice of the circumſtances which chiefly contribute to give them theſe qualities as we proceed in describing their different claſſes.

I. *Of* Day Signals.

These are made by means of the ſhip’s sails, or by colours of various kinds.

Thoſe made with sails are but few in number, and are almoſt neceſſarily limited to the ſituation of a fleet at anchor. Thus,

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *The following Signals* | *uſually signify,* |
| Main top-gallant ſtayſail hoiſted | Officers and men belong­ing to the ſhip to come on board. |
| Fore top-ſail looſe | To prepare for sailing. |
| Main top-ſail looſe | To unmoor. |
| Main top-ſail ſheets haul­ed home | To weigh. |
| Main top-ſail ſheets clew­ed up, and the yard hoiſted | Annul the former ſignal, and the ſhip to come to an anchor. |
| Top-gallant sails looſe, and the ſheets flying | Diſcovering ſtrange ſails. |
| Main top-gallant sail looſe and hoiſted. Topſail- yard down | Recal ſhips in chaſe. |
| Mizen top-sail hoiſted, and the ſheets clewed up | Moor. |

Before we proceed to the deſcription of the ſignals by means of colours, ſuch as flags, banners (or trian­gular flags), pendants or vanes, we muſt take notice of the oſtenſible diſtinctions of the various diviſions and

ſubdiviſions of a fleet, ſo that we may underſtand how the ſame ſignal may be addreſſed to a ſquadron, diviſion, or ſingle ſhip or ſhips. We ſuppose it known that a fleet of ſhips of war is diſtributed into three grand divisions (which we ſhall term *quadrons),* called the *van, centre,* and *rear.* Theſe denominations have not always a relation to the one being more advanced than the other, either towards the enemy, or in the direction of their course.

In a land army, the poſition of every part is concei­ved from its reference to the enemy ; and the reader, conceiving himſelf as facing the enemy, eaſily underſtands the terms *van, centre,* and *rear,* the *right* and *left wing,* &c. But the movements of a ſea army having a neceſſary dependence on the wind, they cannot be comprehended unleſs expreſſed in a language which keeps this circumſtance continually in view. The ſimpleſt and moſt eaſily conceived diſpoſition of a fleet, is that in which it is almoſt indiſpenſably obliged to form in order to engage an enemy. This is a ſtraight line, each ſhip directly a-head of its neighbour, and cloſe hauled. This is therefore called the *line oſ battle.* In this poſition, the two extremities of the fleet correſpond to the right and left wings of an army. Suppose this line to be in the direction eaſt and west, the wind blow­ing from the north-north-weſt, and therefore the fleet on the ſtarboard tack ; the ſhips heads are to the west, and the weſtermoſt diviſion is undoubtedly the van of the fleet, and the eaſtermoſt diviſion is the rear. And it is in conformity to this arrangement and ſituation that the list of the fleet is drawn up. But the ſhips may be on the ſame eaſt and west line, cloſe hauled, with their heads to the west, but the wind blowing from the ſouth-ſouth-weſt. They muſt therefore be on the lar­board tack. Tlre ſame ſhips, and the ſame diviſion, are ftill, in fact, the van or the fleet. But ſuppoſe the ſhips heads to be to the eaſtward, and that they are cloſe hauled, having the wind from the ſouth-ſouth-eaſt or the north-north-eaſt, the ſhips which were the real van on both tacks in the former ſituation are now, in fact, the rear on both tacks ; yet they retain the deno­mination of the *van ſquadron* of this fleet, and are under the immediate direction of the officer of the second rank, while the other extremity is under the direction of the third officer. This subordination therefore is rather an arrangement of rank and precedence than of evolution. It is, however, conſidered as the natural order to which the general ſignals muſt be accommodated. For this reaſon, the diviſion which is denominated *van* in the lift of this fleet, is *generally* made to lead the fleet when in the line of battle on the ſtarboard tack, and to form the *weathermost* column in *the order of sailing in co­lumns ;* and, in general, it occupies that ſtation from which it can moſt eaſily pass into the place of the lead­ing diviſion on the ſtarboard line of battle ahead. Al­though this is a technical nicety of language, and may frequently puzzle a landſman in reading an account of naval operations, the reflecting and intelligent reader will ſee the propriety of retaining this mode of concei­ving the ſubordrnate arrangement of a fleet, and will comprehend the employment of the ſignals which are neceſſary for re-eſtabliſhing this arrangement, or directing the movements while another arrangement is re­tained.

This being underſtood, it is eaſy to contrive various