Sweden, though extremely fond of the Greek tongue, which the made “ the diversion of her leiſure hours, was not re­trained by that from her serious studies ; ſo she called among others Tacitus’s History, ſome pages of which she read constantly every day@@.” Lastly, our late Lord Boling- broke@@, an authority ſurely of no mean rank, calls him, “ a favourite author,” and gives him manifestly the preference to all the Greek and Roman historians.

No author has obtained a more splendid reputation than Tacitus. He has been accounted, and with good reaſon, the most cultivated genius of antiquity ; and we must not ſeek for his parallel in modern times. It is impossible not to admire and recommend his intimate knowledge of the hu­man heart, the ſpirit of liberty which he breathes, and the force and vivacity with which he perpetually expresses himself. The reader of taste is struck by the greatness of his thoughts and the dignity of his narration ; the philoſopher by the comprehensive powers of his mind ; and the politician by the ſagacity with which he unfolds the ſprings of the most ſecret tranſactions. Civil liberty and the rights of mankind never met with a bolder or a more able asserter : ſervitude, debasement, and tyranny, appear not in the wai­tings of any other author in juster or more odious colours. He has been cenſured as obſcure ; and indeed nothing can be more certain than that he did not write for the common mass of men. But to thoſe who are judges of his compositions, it is no matter of regret that his manner is his own, and peculiar. Never were description and ſentiment ſo won­derfully and ſo beautifully blended ; and never were the ac­tions and characters of men delineated with ſo much strength and precision. He has all the merits of other historians, without their defects. He possesses the distinctneſs of Xe­nophon without his uniformity ; he is more eloquent than Livy, and is free from his superstition ; and he has more knowledge and judgment than Polybius, without his affec­tation of reaſoning on every occasion.

One of the best editions of the works of Tacitus was publiſhed at Paris by Brotier, in 4 vols 4to. There have been four translations of his works into Engliſh ; the first by Greenway and Sir Henry Saville, in the reign of Eliza­beth ; the second by Dryden and others ; the third by Gor­don, which is remarkable for affectation of style, though some think it bears a striking resemblance to the original ; and the fourth and best by Murphy, in 1793, in 4 vols 4to.

TACK, a rope uſed to confine the foremost lower cor­ners of the courtes and stay-ſails in a fixed position, when the wind crosses the drip’s courſe obliquely. The same name is alſo given to the rope employed to pull out the lower corner of a studding-ſail or driver to the extremity of its boom.

The main-sail and fore-sail of a ſhip are furnished with a tack on each side, which is formed of a thick rope tapering to the end, and having a knot wrought upon the largest end, by which it is firmly retained in the clue of the sail. By this means one tack is always fastened to windward, at the same time that the sheet extends the sail to the leeward.

Tack, is also applied, by analogy, to that part of any sail to which the tack is uſually fastened.

A ſhip is ſaid to be on the starboard or larboard tack, when she is close-hauled, with the wind upon the star­board or larboard side ; and in this ſenſe the distance which ſhe sails in that position is considered as the length of the tack ; although this is more frequently called *board.* See that article.

*To* tack*,* to change the courſe from one board to ano­ther, or turn the ſhip about from the starboard to the lar­board tack, in a contrary wind. Thus a ſhip being close- hauled on the larboard tack, and turning her prow ſuddenly to windward, receives the impression of the wind on her head-sails, by which she falls off upon the line of the starboard-tack. @@Tacking is also used in a more enlarged ſenſe, to imply that manoeuvre in navigation by which a ship makes an oblique progression to the windward, in a zig­zag direction. This, however, is more uſually called *beating,* or *turning to windward.* See Navigation, Sailing, and *Naval* Tactics*.*

Tack, in Scots law. See Law, n⁰ clxvii.

TACKLE, among ſeamen, denotes all the ropes or cor­dage of a ſhip uſed in managing the sails, &c.

TACKSMAN. See Tenure.

TACTICS, in the art of war, is the method of disposing forces to the best advantage in order of battle, and of performing the ſeveral military motions and evolutions. See War.

Naval TACTICS ;

Or, The Military Operations of Fleets.

NAval tactics is the art of ranging fleets in ſuch order or diſposition, as may be judged most conveni­ent, either for attacking, defending, or retreating, to the greatest advantage ; and to regulate their ſeveral movements accordingly. It is not a ſcience establiſhed on principles abſolutely invariable, but founded on ſuch reaſons as the alte­ration and improvement of arms must necessarily occasion in a courſe of time and experience ; from which alſo will natu­rally reſult a difference in the construction of ſhips, in the manner of working them, and, in fine, in the total diſposition and regulation of fleets and ſquadrons. We ſhall curſorily run through this ſuccession and change of arms, &c. to the preſent improvement of our lines of battle, in order to make us the more sensible of the reaſons which have in­duced the moderns to prefer ſo advantageous a choice as they now follow in the arrangement of their ships.

The ancient galleys were ſo constructed as to carry several banks of oars, very differently disposed from thoſe in our modern galleys, which, however, vary the least of any others from their ancient model. Advanced by the force of their oars, the galleys ran violently aboard of each other, and by the mutual encounter of their beaks and prows, and ſometimes of their sterns, endeavoured to dash in pieces or sink their enemies.

The prow, for this purpoſe, was commonly armed with a brazen point or trident, nearly as low as the surface of the tea, in order to pierce the enemy’s ſhips under the water. Some of the galleys were ſurnished with large turrets, and other accusions of building, either for attack or defence. The ſoldiers alſo annoyed their enemies with darts and slings, and, on their nearer approach, with ſwords and jave­lins ; and in order that their missive weapons might be di­rected with greater force and certainty, the ſhips were equipped with ſeveral platforms, or elevations above the le­vel of the deck. The sides of the ſhip were fortified with a thick fence of hides, which ſerved to repel the darts of their adverſaries, and to cover their own ſoldiers, who there­by annoyed the enemy with greater ſecurity.

As the invention of gunpowder has rendered useless many of the machines employed in the naval wars of the ancients, the great distance of time has alſo consigned many of them to oblivion ; ſome few are, nevertheleſs, recorded in ancient

@@@[mu] Baillet Vie de Des Cartes, tom. ii.

@@@[mu] Study of History, Lecter v.

@@@[mu] Falconer's Marine Dictionary.