tion as to be able, without much danger on her side, to deſtroy the enemy in a very short time. But whether the moſt advantageous evolution is to double the van or the rear, is neceſſary to be conſidered ; for there is ſo conſiderable an advantage attending each of theſe evolutions, that either of them may in a very little time determine the fate of the battle.

As, in the preſent case, the enemy is ſuppoſed to be to windward, either their van or rear may be doubled ; but the van may with the greateſt facility, becauſe, if they are engaged by the ſhips abreaſt of them, thoſe which are advanced ahead will be able, by making all sail, to get on the perpen­dicular to the direction of the wind with the van of the enemy, and tack in succeſſion to gain the wind of them on the other board, thus keeping them to leeward ; and when they are come ſufficiently to windward, they are again to go about, in order to keep the two headmoſt ſhips of the enemy’s line continually under their fire. If there be two or three ſhips to tack in succeſſion and gain the wind of the enemy, they may edge down on the van of the weather line at pleaſure, keeping themſelves a little to windward of it ; and as that van is already engaged by the other ſhips abreaſt on the other side, ſhe muſt neceſſarily be ſoon diſabled. If they bear away, they muſt drop upon the line with which they are engaged to leeward, while the ſhips to windward ſtill continue to can­nonade them. If they attempt going about, in order to at­tack more cloſely the ſhips to windward, they will be raked, while in ſtays, by their opponents to leeward and to wind­ward, who enfilading them with whole broadſides, which they cannot return, muſt abſolutely complete their diſorder. If they make sail, in order to fruſtrate the deſign of the ſhips inclined to double, thoſe with which they are engaged abreaſt to leeward have only to perform the ſame manœuvre, and keep them under their fire; while the others, after having haraſsed them as much as poſſible, will do their best to per­form the ſame manœuvre on the ſucceeding ſhips.

The captains deſtined to double the enemy ought to be men of known ability, as well as of approved courage. They ſhould not be ordered upon that ſervice but in weather fit for sailing at the rate of three knots an hour at leaſt ; and, for the greater promptitude and certainty of succeſs, none but the best going ſhips are to be employed.

If any of the ſhips in the van of the weather-line happen to be diſabled in their maſts or yards, as will moſt probably be the caſe after having been between two fires, they will drop aſtern and run foul of the next which follows, and theſe again of their ſubſequent comrades ; at laſt, diſorder will be­come prevalent, by ſhips running foul of each other, or ma­noeuvring to avoid the ſame accident : ſo that the order of battle will be broken ; while, on the other hand, the line to leeward is preſerved with all the advantage poſſible. The ſhips which have gained the wind of the enemy will, by continuing their manœuvre, augment the confuſion ; enga­ging, however, no more than they like ; and if, by chance or misfortune, they ſhould be crippled, it will not certainly be an eaſy matter for them to extricate themſelves. But as they may, on the other tack, drop aſtern to windward of the ene­my’s line, or veer again like him, they muſt extricate them­ſelves as well as they can, and always advantageouſly enough if, by doubling the van, they are able to throw it into diſorder.

If the rear of the lee fleet be extended beyond the ſternmoſt ship of the weather line, they will be obliged, if they want to double the rear of the enemy to windward, to make sail and tack in succeſſion ; in which manœuvre the headmoſt ship of thoſe deſtined for this ſervice is to go about firſt ; then, continuing to keep up a briſk cannonade as they come to the wind, they will go and heave about again a little to windward of the rear of the enemy, in order to bring their ſtern ſhips between two fires: and ſhould they have the good fortune to oblige them to bear away, they muſt go on succeſſively from one ship to another, as long as they find they ſucceed in forcing them to give way. Should diſorder take place in the rear of the weather fleet, it will not be near ſo prejudicial to the enemy as if it had happened in the van ; on the contrary, it may turn out to be of ſome advantage to them. But the veſſels combating to windward can eaſily withdraw from the fight, by backing aſtern when they find themſelves too hard preſſed.

2. When an enemy is to leeward.—The ſhips of the wea­ther-line having extended their van beyond that of the lee­line, are to veer, in order to bring the headmoſt ſhips of the enemy’s line between two fires. But, let them do as they will, there never can reſult ſo much advantage from this ma­nœuvre as when doubling a fleet to windward, becauſe the diſabled ſhips can always veer with facility@@. True it is, they cannot fail becoming at the ſame time the prey of the ene­my; for both thoſe which have doubled them, and thoſe with which they are engaged abreaſt in the weather-line, will al­ways have it in their power jointly to press as close as they think proper.

If the ſhips which have doubled the van of the lee fleet, with which they are engaged, be diſabled, they will be obliged, as they cannot make sail, to paſs along the lee-line; and they cannot eſcape being totally deſtroyed if they do not bear away before the wind, to get out of gun-ſhot ; du­ring which manœuvre they cannot avoid being ſtill in a very diſagreeable ſituation.

Should the ſternmoſt ſhips of the weather fleet be diſabled in doubling the enemy’s rear, they have only, if they want to extricate themſelves, to drop aſtern, and let the two fleets advance ahead ; and after having refitted themſelves, they will reassume their ports.

*To avoid being doubled.*

1. The enemy being to windward.—For this purpoſe, it has been proposed to extend the line, by leaving a greater interval between the ſhips towards the centre than in the van or rear ; but in this caſe the line runs the risk of being divided, unleſs prevented by a corps de reserve, conſiſting of a few ſhips of the line and fire-ſhips. It has alſo been propoſed as a general rule, that the flag-officers of the lee fleet ſhould oppoſe themſelves to thoſe of the enemy ; by which means ſeveral of the enemy’s ſhips will be rendered useleſs in the in­tervals. This method has, however, its inconveniences ; as ſometimes the van and rear of each diviſion may be expoſed to the fire of two ſhips at the same time : nor is the laſt di­viſion out of danger of being doubled. In order to remedy theſe defects, the larger ſhips ought to be placed in the van and rear of each diviſion ; and the whole fleet muſt regulate its sailing in ſuch a manner that the rear of the enemy may not be aſtern of the rear of the laſt diviſion.

Other methods have been propoſed to avoid being dou bed; as, that each ſquadron of the lee fleet ſhould attack its correſponding ſquadron in the weather fleet ; each diviſion of the lee fleet, however, extending its line far enough to prevent the enemy from leaving any ſhips aſtern of it, but rather ahead. It has alſo been propoſed, that the lee fleet ſhould extend its line as long as the enemy’s line. This method will be advantageous for the lee fleet, provided it is compoſed of ſhips of ſuperior force, though fewer in num­ber, than the enemy. In other cases, it is probably the worſt method that can be followed by the lee fleet, as it gives the enemy’s fleet all the advantage it can deſire of exerting its whole force upon the inferior line.

2. When the enemy is to leeward.— The weather fleet is to keep aſtern of the enemy, ſo that the van of the weather fleet may be oppoſed to and attack the enemy’s centre :

@@@[mu] Ibid, p. 388.