unable to prevent it, his ſhips being diſabled, ſeparated, and therefore unſupported. 4. That F will alſo have a greater facility of withdrawing from battle the whole or any one of the diſabled ſhips of his line.

If then, after a proper examination of the late @@(d) ſea-engagements or rencounters, it ſhall be found that the French admirals have never once ſhown a willingneſs to riſk the ma­king of the attack, but invariably have made choice of, and earnestly courted, a leeward poſition; if invariably, upon fee­ing the Britiſh fleet diſabled, they have made ſail, and demoliſhed the van in palling ; if invariably, upon feeling the effect of the Britiſh fire, they have withdrawn at pleaſure either a part or the whole or their fleet, and have formed a new line of battle to leeward ; if the French repeatedly have done this upon every occaſion :—and, on the other hand, if it ſhall be found that the Britiſh, from an irreſiſtible deſire of making the attack, as constantly and uniformly have court­ed the windward poſition ; if, uniformly and repeatedly, they have had their ſhips ſo diſabled and ſeparated, by ma­king the attack, that they have not once been able to bring them to cloſe with, to follow up, or even to detain one ſhip of the enemy for a moment—ſhall we not have reaſon to be­lieve, that the French have adopted and put in execution ſome ſyſtem which, if the Britiſh have diſcovered, they have not yet profited by the diſcovery ?

Our author therefore, inſtead of the uſual mode of attack, which, by being made principally on the van, ſeems to be the reſult of a groundleſs expectation of being able to *take, destroy,* or *diſable* the whole of the enemy’s line, propoſes

A new mode of Attack from the Windward upon the Rear of the Enemy.

Suppoſe, says he, a fleet of ten, twenty, or more ſhips, extended in line of battle at F (fig. 79.), endeavouring to avoid a cloſe engagement, but at the same time keeping un­der an eaſy ſail, with the intention of receiving the uſual attack from another fleet of equal number, three or four miles to windward at B, ſailing in any form, but let it be in three lines or diviſions ; it is required by what method ſhall B make the attack on F with advantage ?

The improbability, or rather impoſſibility, of attacking and carrying the enemy’s whole line of ſhips, having been demonſtrated by every action which has been fought at ſea, the next conſideration will be, how many ſhips may be attacked and carried with advantage ? Let it be ſuppoſed that the three ſternmoſt ſhips only, and not exceeding the fourth, are poſſible to be *carried;* let a ſufficient ſtrength A be ſent down to force an attack upon theſe three ſhips, dispoſed and ſupported according to the judgment of the admiral, while in the mean time he keeps to windward with the rest of his fleet, formed into ſuch diviſions as may best enable him to attend to the motions of the enemy and the effect of his at­tack ; being himſelf ſo far diſengaged ſrom action, as to be able to make his obſervations, and give his orders, with some degree of tranquillity.

By placing the fleet B in ſuch diviſions as repreſented in the figure, when the attacking ſquadron comes up with the reer of the enemy, the whole will be ſo dispoſed, and ſo connected together, as to be able to give the ſupport and attention that may be required to any ſhip, or any part of the fleet, and in preference to a long extended line of six or ſeven miles in length, where it must be impracticable to give the neceſſary ſupport to ſuch ſhips as may be diſabled. The ſhips of the fleet F may, in general, be better ſailers than the ſhips of the fleet B ; but it is not conceivable but that the ſwifteſt ſhips of B muſt come up alongſide of the ſtern- most and dulleſt ſailing ſhips of the enemy F ; while, at the ſame time, F, by attempting to outſail B, must be thrown into the diſorder of a downright flight : Therefore, of courſe, it must be admitted, that if the enemy F continues going off in line of battle, and endeavouring to avoid a cloſe engagement, it will be impoſſible to prevent the fleet making the attack from getting into the poſition BA. But by this poſition, it is evident that the three ſhips at I of the fleet F will be in the power of the admiral of B ; for, by keeping ſo many ſhips to windward, he will be enabled to ſend down freſh ſhips from time to time, either for the ſupport, or to ſupply the ſtation, of any of those that may be disabled in making the attack, while it may be imagined that the three ſhips in queſtion, by being diſabled, or being de­prived or the wind now taken out of their ſails by the ſhips to windward, will be prevented from following their friends. Hence the enemy ahead muſt either abandon his three ſtern­moſt ſhips, or he muſt double back to ſupport them ; which muſt be done either by tacking or veering. But let it be first examined what is naturally to be done by tacking ; and for the greater ſatisfaction, let every poſſible caſe that can happen be examined separately.

First, let us ſuppose that the enemy at F, fig. 80. has continued to protract his courſe in line of battle upon the ſame tack, and that the headmoſt ſhip H, with the three next aſtern of her, have tacked to windward, and that the whole remaining ſhips intend to tack the ſame way, but in ſucceſſion ; is it not evident that F has then left his three ſternmoſt ſhips at I in the power of the ſhips at A ; that he must alſo leave expoſed his fourth and fifth ſhip G to ano­ther attack from another diviſion of B at C, which will alſo be on equal terms as with his three ſternmoſt: at J ; and laſtly, if he proſecutes his intention of ſupporting his three ſhips, he will be obliged to begin a diſadvantageous attack upon the admiral, with the main body of the fleet lying ready to receive him ? The conſequence of all which muſt be, that he will not only lose his three ſternmoſt ſhips, but in all probability the fourth and fifth alſo, as at G ; and will be forced to begin an attack, and cloſe and mix ſhip with ſhip on equal terms ; a situation which he at all times, with the greatest anxiety hath avoided, and which B with equal anxiety has always courted.

Again, ſuppoſe that his three ſternmoſt ſhips have been attacked, and that he has ordered his fleet to tack all at one time, as in fig. 81. The conſequences will then be, that this movement, having required ſome time and ſome length of courſe, will have produced a conſiderable diſtance between his main body and his three ſhips ; or, in other words, that theſe three ſhips have been defected ; for it will not be in their power to tack with the reſt of their friends. He muſt alſo, in bringing his ſhips heads round, expoſe the ſhips neareſt his enemy to be raked by a dreadful cannonade ; beſides running the riſk of having his fleet thrown into a ge­neral diſorder, by many of his ſhips missing stays, veering, and running to leeward. Laſtly, upon a ſuppoſition that his ships have all tacked, and none of them missed stays, still

@@@(D) This was written during the American war, and before Lord Rodney’s deciſive victory on the 12th of April 1782. That action, as well as the ſtill more brilliant one of Lord Howe on the 1st of June 1794, we have heard the author distinguiſh from thoſe battles which, with great propriety, he *calls sea-rencοunters,* and do ample juſtice to the ſcientific manœuvres of both the noble admirals.