his line as complete as possible, by ordering ships from those in reserve to supply the place of such as may have been disabled, and to annoy the enemy as much as possible, both by strengthening the feeble parts of his own line, and, if circumstances admit of it, by sending down fire-ships upon that of the enemy. When the engagement draws near a close, either by the defeat of the enemy, or by the disabled state of either fleet, signals are made from the admiral to take possession of such of the enemy’s ships as have struck, to tow his own disabled ships into a place of security, and either to chase the remainder of the enemy’s squadron, or, if that be impracticable, to draw off his own ships to be refitted.

Such are the general incidents attending an engagement at sea, modified of course by numerous circumstances, of which a general description can convey no idea. There are however various movements and evolutions connected with a naval engagement, which it will be necessary for us to notice.

Where the weather-gage is deemed of sufficient import­ance, it is often an object with two fleets to dispute it with each other. When the enemy is to windward, and it is wished to gain the weather-gage of him, the fleet to lee­ward should avoid extending itself the length of thc enemy’s line, in order to oblige them to edge down upon theirs, if they intend to attack them ; which will be the means, if they still persist in doing so, of losing the advantage of the wind. It is impossible for a fleet to leeward to gain to windward, so long as the enemy keep the wind, unless a change hap­pens in their favour ; and therefore all that a fleet to leeward can do must be to wait with patience for such a change, of which they will undoubtedly avail themselves, as well as of any inadvertency the enemy may commit in the mean time. And as long as the fleet to leeward does not extend its line the length of the enemy’s, it will be impossible for the latter to bring them to action without running the hazard, by bearing down, of losing the advantage of the wind, which both fleets will be so desirous of preserving. That an admiral may take advantage of such shifts of wind as occasionally happen, he must endeavour to get his ships into situations where these shifts most frequently take place. It is well known to experienced naval officers, that particular winds reign most on certain coasts, or off certain headlands. Here therefore the admiral should await the approach of the enemy ; and though by this plan he may sometimes be unsuccessful, he will more frequently gain a material advantage. The disposition of projecting head­lands, and the setting of tides and currents, often contribute materially towards gaining the wind of the enemy. The fleet to windward should keep that to leeward as much as possible abreast of it ; and thus, unless the wind changes considerably, they will preserve the advantage which they have gained. They should also force them to keep their wind, unless they think it prudent not to engage, in which case it would be better to keep altogether out of sight.

When the enemy appears desirous of avoiding an ac­tion, there are various methods of attempting to force him to engage ; as, first, when he has the weather-gage. In this case the lee fleet, wιhich is desirous of bringing on an en­gagement, must keep always on the same tack with the enemy to windward, taking care to keep their own ships so exactly abreast of the enemy as to prevent losing sight of them ; and hence be ready to take advantage of the first favourable shift of wind to make the attack. An alteration of the course may be best attempted in the night. Thc lee fleet must have frigates on the look-out, and these must continually give notice by signal of the manœuvres and course of the retreating fleet to windward. Thus the weather fleet is always exposed to pursuit, without being able to escape unseen ; and hence must sooner or later be compelled to engage, unless they can get into some friendly

port, or should be favoured by a gale of wind sufficient to disperse both fleets, and thus prevent the possibility of a general engagement.

Secondly, when the enemy is to leeward. If the lee fleet keep close to the wind in the order of battle, the fleet to windward is to stand on in the same manner till it be abreast of the enemy, ship to ship, and at the same time to bear away, and steer so as to bring their respective opponents on the same point of the compass with themselves. Thus the adverse fleets will be sufficiently near each other to begin the action, by each ship’s presenting her bow to the ship abreast of her in the order of sailing, which may be easily changed for the order of battle, by all the ships hauling together close to the wind in the moment which precedes the action. If the fleet appear inclined to engage, it may bring to, to prevent losing time, and after this they will fill as soon as the action commences, because it is of advantage to a lee line to be advancing ahead. As the lee fleet fills and stands in close by the wind, the weather line should keep abreast before it bears away, to come within the re­quisite distance, that the van ship of the weather fleet may always keep to windward of the leading ship of the lee line, and be guarded against any shift of wind ahead.

If the lee fleet bear away four points to move their order of battle on the other tack, and avoid the action, filing off in succession in the wake of the van ship, the weather line, by bearing away all together eight points, cannot fail, as both fleets are supposed to sail equally, to pass through the middle of their line, and force them to fight with disad­vantage, if their extent be double the distance between the two fleets. If the extent of the fleet be less than the above limitation, then the weather fleet will divide the lee fleet more unequally ; and if the distance between the fleets be considerable, the weather fleet will be able to break through the line. If the lee fleet bear away four points all together, being of equal extent with the fleet to windward, and their distance from each other equal to that of the length of one of the lines, should the weather fleet bear away at the same time eight points, they will approach very near the sternmost of the retreating fleet, but they will not have it in their power to cut off any part of that fleet, even with an equality of sailing ; so that the only advantage gained by this manoeuvre will be an ability of attacking the rear, and bringing it to action.

If the van ship and the rest of the weather fleet had a sufficient velocity to keep the centre ship of the lee line on the same point of bearing, in that case thc leading ship may break through the enemy’s line about the middle ship of the centre division ; for, supposing the fleets in the order of battle, on the starboard tack, steering east, with the wind at south-south-east, being at two leagues distance from each other, both the lines being four leagues in extent, then the lee line bearing away all together four points, will run north-east, while the fleet to windward, bearing away all to­gether eight points, will steer north, the van ship of which will keep the centre division of the lee line in the point of bearing north-west. As she is supposed to be able to con­tinue in this position, it follows that the van of the weather line must close the centre of the flying line to leeward after having run four leagues. The time and distance ne­cessary to cut off a retreating fleet may always be known according to the last supposition. If the lee fleet should get on the other tack, and run large, still in the order of battle, they will be sooner forced to action by the weather fleet, who have only to bear away eight or nine points on the same tack, or run right before the wind.

As in forcing a fleet to action, there are two principal cases in which a fleet may avoid an action, where circum­stances are not sufficiently favourable; first, when the ene­my is to windward, and, secondly, when he is to leeward. In the former case, the lee fleet should form the order of