consequent on this manœuvre, will still more endanger the stemmost ships, or will bring on a general and close action. Again, if F attempts to haul off, beginning with his sternmost ship G, and then runs to leeward, as at fig. 61, he will expose his ships to a raking fire from B, and still endanger his stemmost ships, by get­ting too far to leeward for their support ; or if the headmost ships at H, fig. 62, veer first, to be followed by the rest astern, the danger would be still greater. Thus it appears that, in every assignable case, a fleet to lee­ward, avoiding an attack from an equal or superior to windward, as here advised, by preserving the line, will risk the loss of three or more of their stemmost ships.

Now, let us suppose that F, while standing on a line on the larboard tack, when threatened with an attack on his rear from B, veers and passes on opposite tacks to leeward (see fig. 63). The consequence of this will be, that his headmost ships will be forced to lee­ward by B, and compelled to engage under disadvantageous circumstances ; and the disadvantage to F will be much the same, whether he again veers and re­sumes his former position, as at G, fig. 64, or stands on before the wind, as at P, fig. 65.

We have hither­to supposed that the wind has been fixed in one point; but let us suppose it to shift, and let us inquire what will be the effect of such a circumstance on the two lines F and B. While the fleets are in the former posi­tion, F in line, and B in four divisions, B, B, B, A, steering east, with the wind at north, fig. 66, let the wind shift to the west. The only consequence of this will be, that F will be thrown still farther to leeward, to its greater disad­vantage. But let the wind shift to east, so as to be ahead, as in figs. 67 and 68 ; still, if the admiral of B manages pro­perly, and care­fully watches the motions of F, this change will produce no ad­vantage to the latter. For B has nothing to do but veer as the wind comes round, so as to bring his ships to windward of the three stern- most ships of F, and to leeward of the rest of his line, so as to cut off the three stemmost ships.

If the wind should be supposed to veer from point to point all round the compass, so that the fleet F, maintain­ing the weather-gage of B, shall make a circuit round B to leeward; still, if B act cautiously, F will lose the three threat­ened ships.

Lastly, suppose the wind should instantly shift to a point opposite to what it was at the commencement of the attack, as from north to south. Before it can be ascertained whether such a change will be to the advantage or disad­vantage of F, the relative situations of the two fleets must be considered. Suppose that the van and centre be sepa­rated at some distance from his rear, and that in conse­quence this fleet shall have taken such a position as is shown at fig. 69. Though in this case he will have got to wind­ward, his three ships can never be regained or preserved from the attack of B. The most favour­able situation for F would be when the fleets were in the position de­noted by fig. 66, as then he could not only support his three ships with advantage, but even threaten and cut off a part of B’s detachment. In attempt­ing this, however, he incurs the risk of coming to a close engagement, which we have supposed him to be sedulously avoiding.

Besides this method of attack from the windward by de­tachments from the main fleet, Mr Clerk shows how a successful attack may be made by a fleet *to leeward,* by its breaking the enemy’s line, and this either near the rear, near the centre, or not far from the van, of which cases the two former will be most likely to prove successful. The enemy’s line can only be cut when the two hostile fleets veer on opposite tacks. The most simple method of ef­fecting this is for the van ship of the attacking squadron, instead of ranging parallel to that of the enemy, and to lee­