der of battle be kept, and the ſleet more eaſily manœuvered. A large ſhip is not so ſoon diſabled as a ſmall one ; and in the case of a three-decker, although the upper deck ſhould happen to be confuſed with the wreck of broken maſts, yards, &c. and hence it being ſcarcely poſſible to work the guns on that deck, yet if the weather be not tempeſtuous, the guns on the other two decks may be worked. If boarding ſhould be deemed practicable, it is evident that the large ſhip, upon account of the height of her side, as well as for other reasons, will have greatly the advantage over one of a leſs ſize. Large ſhips are also ſor the moſt part more able to encounter a ſtorm than ſmall ones ; and in a gale of wind large ſhips have commonly the advantage in point of ſailing. Hence it is obvious, that a ſleet compoſed of large ſhips may have greatly the advantage over a fleet conſiſting of leſs ſhips, though much more numerous.

As in a naval engagement the two fleets are drawn up cloſe-hauled, on two lines parallel to each other, one of theſe fleets is therefore to the windward of the other. The wind­ward fleet has ſeveral advantages not poſſessed by the fleet to leeward, and the leeward fleet has alſo advantages over the weather fleet. The advantages and diſadvantages of each of theſe fleets are as follow :

The fleet to windward may approach the leeward fleet at pleaſure, and can therefore determine the time of commence­ment of the action. If the weather fleet is more numerous, it may send down a detachment of ſhips on the rear of the leeward fleet, and thereby put it into confuſion. If any of the ſhips of the fleet to leeward ſhould be diſabled, the fleet to windward may with great eaſe send down their fire-ſhips upon them, or send a detachment after any part that gives way. The weather fleet may board if the admiral thinks proper; and it is ſcarcely incommoded with the ſmoke, which is carried off by the wind to the fleet to leeward.

The diſadvantages of the fleet to windward are, an inabi­lity to quit the fight when once engaged, without being obliged to paſs through the enemy’s line, which is extreme­ly dangerous ; becauſe the ſhips being already very much in­jured before they are obliged to fly, they muſt expect to be ſtill more ſo ; and as they have it no longer in their power to form the order of retreat, this manœuvre is abſolutely a deſperate one. If the fleet to windward tack altogether, in order to get off, the line to leeward may do the same, after having raked the weather ſhips in ſtays, and follow them on the other tack, with the advantage of having gained the wind of the centre and rear diviſions of the flying line. If it blow freſh, it is ſeldom that weather ſhips have their lower deck guns ſufficiently elevated ; whence it reſults, that the ſhip being a little inclined on the lee side, the guns of­ten run out again at their ports after being fired, which very much retards the ſervice of the artillery, ſince the guns are obliged to be bowſed in again every time for loading ; and oftentimes they can make no uſe at all of their lower tier. Again, ſuch of the ſhips as are ſo diſabled as to be obliged to quit the line, cannot easily do it, becauſe in veer­ing, for want of being able to tack, they fall between the two lines, where they are raked ahead, and by that means completely put in disorder : but ſhould they be fortunate enough to be able to finiſh their evolution, it is ſtill very difficult for them, diſabled as they are, to get to windward of their line, and very often they fall foul of the next ſhips aſtern of them, which have it ſcarcely in their power to prevent the accident on account of the fire and ſmoke, eſpecially if the line is much contracted ; and ſhould theſe perceive it, and try to avoid being run foul of by fall­ing back on their next ſhip aſtern, and ſo on thus ſucceſſively, it might happen, that from one to the other a great part of the fleet being obliged to manœuvre, their fire would leſſen, and very often ceaſe, by their covering each other; when, if the enemy take the advantage of this critical mo­ment, the diſorder increaſes, and all is lost. But theſe inconveniences may be partly prevented by having the diſ­abled ſhips quickly towed out of the line by the boats of the fleet, which for that purpose ſhould always be hoiſted out from each ſhip before the engagement begins. Otherwiſe, if the ſhips in the weather line, not being too dole, have the necessary ſpace to obſerve what passes ahead of them, and to manœuvre, they ought to range themſelves to leeward of the diſabled ſhip, in order to cover her, and ap­proach nearer to the enemy ; all the other ſhips bearing up alſo together to preſerve the line.

The ſhips in the line to leeward have the advantage of ſerving with facility and effect their lower deck guns in all weathers proper for fleets to come to action: they can quit the engagement at pleaſure : their diſabled ſhips can without difficulty quit their stations when neceſſity requires it : they can form the order of retreat with more readineſs, or continue the action as long as convenient : in ſhort, the lee line of battle, if ſuperior in number, can alſo double the enemy, by making ſome of the ſhips in the van or rear to tack, and put one of the extremities of the enemy’s line be­tween two fires ; and if they are formed in time, they may cannonade the enemy while bearing down to the attack.

The diſadvantages of the fleet to leeward are, its being very much annoyed by the ſmoke, and a continued ſhower of fire from the wads falling on board, repelled by the wind, which if not attended to may be productive of dreadful conſequences. The ſhips of the line to leeward cannot attempt to board thoſe of the other whatever may be their inclina­tion for it ; they can hardly do more than accept the battle, without being able to determine either time or diſtance : it is even with great difficulty that they can avoid being board­ed, or prevent their line from being broken, if the weather ſhips are bent upon doing it ; and their fire-ſhips are very ſeldom of uſe.

A general rule for the adoption of either the weather or lee gage cannot be laid down. Sometimes the one is pre­ferable, and ſometimes the other ; and very often the com­mander in chief has it not in his power to make an option.

Having proceeded ſo far with reſpect to the line of battle, it may not be improper to introduce in this place an account of a naval engagement, with the conduct to be obſerved pre­vious to, and during the time of, its continuance.

The engagement will not begin till the admiral makes the lignal, unleſs an action is inſenſibly brought on by ſome unavoidable circumſtances in the line, or poſition of the van or rear of both fleets in forming or approaching each other. The admiral in ſuch case will make the proper signal for the van or rear, by the diſtinguiſhing flag of either of theſe di­viſions, which will undoubtedly regulate the neceſſary ma­nœuvres of the rest of the fleet throughout the whole line.

During the time of an engagement the greateſt ſilence is to be obſerved in each ſhip ; no one muſt quit his poſt upon pain of death ; and ſhould any one happen to refuse obey­ing an officer, he ſhall be put to death on the ſpot ; the ſame alſo ſhall be done to any one who ſhall hide himſelf, or feign to be wounded. The wounded muſt be carried or conducted to the ſurgeon by thoſe who have been appoint­ed by the captain for that purpoſe. Should any one diſcover an advantage to be taken, he ſhall inform the offi­cer who stands neareſt him. No kind of rigging what­ever is to be touched without an order. Should any dange­rous ſhot be received at the water line of the ſhip, ſuch of the calkers, or carpenters, or any other perſon who perceives it, ſhall inform in private the captain with it, without ſaying a word of the ſame to any one elſe upon pain of death,