Hence, that an admiral may benefit by the ſhifts of the wind that frequently happen, he must in a manner force them; which will not appear ſo extraordinary to officers of any experience, who know what winds reign moſt on the coaſt, or off the head-lands, where they may expect an ene­my ; and though an admiral may be ſometimes out in his conjecture, he alſo as often ſucceeds ſo happily as to gain the advantage of his enemy. The diſposition of projecting head-lands; and the ſetting of tides or currents, alſo contri­bute greatly towards gaining the wind of the enemy.

Again, the fleet to windward ought to keep that to lee­ward as much as poſſible always abreaſt of it ; becauſe, by doing ſo, they will preſerve the advantage they have, unleſs the wind changes much againſt them. They ſhould force them likewiſe to keep their wind, unleſs they think it more prudent not to engage ; but when that is the caſe, they ſhould keep entirely out of sight.

The following obſervations, with reſpect to the ſhifting of the wind, are given by M. Bourde de Villehuet : 1. If the weather fleet be in order of battle, and the wind draw ahead, the lee fleet, if they be ahead and in order of battle, ought to box off on the same tack as before, in order to tack in ſucceſſion in the wake of one another, to reſtore the order of battle@@; drawing at the ſame time a great deal to windward. This manœuvre may even be the means of weathering the enemy, if the wind ſhould ſhift much ; for they have no other method to regain the order of battle, without loſing much ground : though they will always loſe a great deal with reſpect to the poſition of the enemy to leeward.

2. If the lee fleet be aſtern, and the wind ſhifts aft while they are on the contrary tack with the enemy in order of sail­ing on one line, the lee fleet ought to tack or veer altogether, and at the ſame inſtant ; becauſe this ſhift of wind will be ahead for all the ſhips in reſpect to their tacks then on board, and aſtern in reſpect to the order of battle. When the van ſhip is full on the other tack, as well as all the reſt in their former order of battle, ſhe ſhall haul by the wind, while the reſt of the fleet run large on their firſt line of bat­tle as many points as the wind has ſhifted aft, to get into her wake ſucceſſively, and reſtore the order of battle while approaching the enemy; by which they gain the wind of him, or elſe double him if the ſhift has been great ; for the only means they have of reſtoring the line of battle is by the van ſhip hauling by the wind, and the reſt coming into her wake in ſucceſſion. If the ſhift of the wind was four points, the fleet to leeward would be obliged ſtill to perform the ſame manœuvre, that they might go about, after a certain time, ſucceſſively to windward of the enemy, who could only in the mean time have tacked all together, to bring their fleet ſuddenly in a line of battle on the other board.

If, when the wind ſhifts aft, the lee fleet is aſtern in or­der of battle, and the enemy be on the other tack in the order of sailing, the leading ſhip must haul cloſe to the wind immediately, while the other vessels will, in ſucceſſion, bear away as many points as the wind has ſhifted, in order to perform the same manœuvre and reſtore the line of battle. By obſerving this mode of manoeuvring, you will approach the enemy, and gain as much to windward of him as poſſible, or get even the weather-gage of him entirely, if the wind has ſhifted conſiderably. The rear ſhip of the fleet to lee­ward may immediately keep cloſe to this new wind on the ſame board, while all the reſt of the fleet, after having tack­ed together and at the ſame time, will come and place themſelves cloſe by the wind in her wake, where they are again to tack ſucceſſively, in order to follow their rear ſhip, which is now become the leader, and which may break the ene­my’s line, or at leaſt gain the wind of him. But, to be able to go through this evolution, you must have nothing to fear from the enemy ; for the fleet will be obliged to go about twice before the order of battle can be reſtored. The weather fleet ought to keep them wind as cloſe as poſſible, holding the enemy always exactly to leeward of them, by keeping on the ſame tack as he ; and if the wind ſhifts a little, and becomes favourable to the enemy which is to lee­ward, the weather ſhips are then to keep exactly their wind, without caring for the preservation of the line, unleſs the two fleets be very near one another.

*To force the enemy to action.*

**1.** When the enemy has the weather-gage.—When two adverſe fleets are in sight of each other, an engagement is almoſt unavoidable : For since it may be preſumed that the faſteſt ſailing ſhips of the one fleet will sail faſter than the ſloweſt ſailing vessels of the other fleet, hence the fleet that is in purſuit will gain upon the other. The lee fleet, which is wiſhing to bring on an engagement, muſt therefore keep always on the ſame tack with the weather fleet@@; and taking care to keep them ſo exactly abreaſt as to prevent the leaſt danger of loſing sight of them, and hence be ready to take the advantage of the firſt favourable ſhift of wind to make the attack. Night is certainly the time when an al­teration of the course may be beſt attempted. But the lee fleet is to have frigates on the look-out ; which, by signals, will continually give notice of the manœuvre and courſe of the retreating fleet to windward ; which, by theſe means, is always expoſed to be purſued without being able to get off unſeen, and muſt ſooner or later be compelled to come to action, unleſs they can get into ſome port, or a gale of wind ſhould come to reſcue them by diſpersing both fleets, and thus furniſh the means of retreating in a ſtorm.

2. 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 is abreaſt of the enemy, ſhip to ſhip, when they are all together, and at the ſame time, to bear away, and ſteer exactly ſo as to bring their reſpective opponents, in the adverſe line, on the ſame point of the compaſs with them@@; obſerving the principles of chafing, which are to be observed by every chafer to wind­ward. Thus the fleets will be near enough to begin the ac­tion, in preſenting the bow of each ſhip to her opponent in the order of ſailing, which will be eaſily changed for the line of battle, by all the ſhips hauling cloſe to the wind together, in the moment which precedes the beginning of the action.

If the fleet to leeward be inclined to engage, it might bring to, to prevent loſing time ; as, by this manœuvre, leſs time will be requiſite for the weather fleet to join them : then they will fill as ſoon as the action begins, becauſe it is more favourable to a lee line to be advancing ahead ; since, if a ſhip be diſabled in the weather line (which is obliged to follow with the topſails full), ſhe will infallibly drop, and run foul of the next veſſel aſtern of her, covered with fire and ſmoke, which may be productive of great diſorder.

As the lee fleet fills and ſtands on cloſe by the wind, it is neceſſary that the weather-line ſhould be abreaſt and parallel to the other before they bear away to come within the requiſite diſtance for action, in order that the van ſhip of the weather fleet ſhould always keep to windward of the leading ſhip of the lee line, and be guarded againſt ſuch a ſhift of wind as might come ahead ; which would not be the caſe if they were aſtern of the van ſhip in the lee fleet ; which, as well as the reſt of the line, would be able then to double them to windward, by tacking in ſucceſſion.

Another reaſon for the weather line being right abreaſt of the enemy to leeward, and for every ſhip steering on the ſame point in approaching her opponent in the leeward line

@@@[mu] Elements of Rigging and Seamanship, vol. ii.

@@@[mu] Ibid. p. 348.

@@@[mu] Ibid, and Manaeuverer, p. 276.