the fleet ; and when we reflect that here are no messengers ready to carry his orders to ships of the squadron at the distance of miles from him, and to deliver them with pre­cision and distinctness, and that even if this were possible by sending small ships or boats, the vicissitudes of wind and weather may render the communication so tedious, that the favourable moment may be irretrievably lost before the order can be conveyed. When we think of all these cir­cumstances, our thoughts are bewildered, and we are ready to imagine that a sea battle is nothing but the unconnected struggle of individual ships ; and that when the admiral has once “ cried havoc, and let slip the dogs of war,” he has done all that his situation empowers him to do, and he must leave the fate of the day to the bravery and skill of his captains and sailors.

Yet it is in this situation, apparently the most unfavour­able, that the orders of the commander can be conveyed, with a dispatch that is not attainable in the operations of a land army. The scene of action is unincumbered, so that the eye of the general can behold the whole without, inter­ruption. The movements which it is possible to execute, are few, and they are precise. A few words are sufficient to order them, and then the mere fighting the ships must always be left to their respective commanders. This sim­plicity in the duty to be performed has enabled us to frame a language fully adequate to the business in hand, by which a correspondence can be kept up as far as the eye can see. This is the language of *signals,* a language by writing, ad­dressed to the eye, and which he that runneth may read. As in common writing certain arbitrary marks are agreed on to express certain sounds used in speech, or rather, as in hieroglyphics, certain arbitrary marks are agreed on to ex­press certain thoughts, or the subjects of these thoughts ; so here certain exhibitions are made, which are agreed on to express certain movements to be executed by the com­mander to whom they are addressed, and all are enjoined to keep their eyes fixed on the ship of the conductor of the fleet, that they may learn his will.

It is scarcely possible for any number of ships to act in concert, without some such mode of communication between the general and the commanders of private ships. We have no direct information of this circumstance in the naval tac­tics of the ancient nations, the Greeks and Romans ; yet the necessity of the thing is so apparent, that we cannot suppose it to have been omitted by the most ingenious and the most cultivated people who have appeared on the great theatre of the world ; and we are persuaded that Themisto­cles, Conon, and other renowned naval commanders of Athens, had signals by which they directed the movements of their fleets. We read, that when Ægeus sent his son Theseus to Crete, it was agreed on, that if the ship should bring the young prince back in safety, a white flag should be displayed. But those on board, in their joy for revisit­ing their country after their perilous voyage, forgot to hoist the concerted signal. The anxious father was every day expecting the ship which should bring back his darling son, and had gone to the shore to look out for her. He saw her, but without the signal agreed on ; on which the old man threw himself into the sea. We find, too, in the his­tory of the Punic wars by Polybius, frequent allusions to such a mode of communication ; and Ammianus Marcellinus speaks of the *speculatores* and *vexillarii,* who were on board the ships in the Adriatic. The coins both of Greece and Rome exhibit both flags and streamers. In short, we can­not doubt of the ancients having practised this hieroglyphi­cal language. It is somewhat surprising that Lord Dudley, in his *Arcano del Mare,* in which he makes an ostentatious display of his knowledge of every thing connected with tire naval service, makes no express mention of this very essen­tial piece of knowledge, although he must, by his long resid­ence in Italy, have known the marine discipline of the

Venetians and Genoese, the greatest maritime powers then in Europe.

In the naval occurrences of modern Europe, mention is frequently made of signals. Indeed, as we have already observed, it seems impossible for a number of ships to act in any kind of concert, without some method of communi­cation. Numberless situations must occur, When it would be impossible to convey orders or information by messen­gers from one ship to another, and coast and alarm signals had long been practised by every nation. The idea, there­fore, was familiar. We find, in particular, that Queen Eli­zabeth, on occasion of the expedition to Cadiz, ordered her secretaries to draw up instructions, which were to be com­municated to the admiral, the general, and the five coun- scllors of war, and by them to be copied and transmitted to the several ships of the navy, not to be opened till they should arrive in a certain latitude. It was on this occasion, says our historian Guthrie, “ that we meet with the first regular sets of signals and orders to the commanders of the English fleet.” But till the movements of a fleet have at­tained some sort of uniformity, regulated and connected by some principles of propriety, and agreed on by persons in the habit of directing a number of ships, we may with con­fidence affirm that signals would be nothing but a parcel of arbitrary marks, appropriated to particular pieces of naval service, such as attacking the enemy, landing the soldiers, and the like ; and that they would be considered merely as referring to the final result, but by no means pointing out the mode of execution, or directing the movements which were necessary for performing it.

It was James II. when Duke of York, who first consider­ed this practice as capable of being reduced into a system, and who saw the importance of such a composition. He, as well as the king his brother, had always showed a great predilection for the naval service ; and when appointed ad­miral of England, he turned his whole attention to its im­provement. He had studied the art of war under Turenne, not as a pastime, but as a science, and was a favourite pupil of that most accomplished general. Turenne one day point­ed him out, saying, “ Behold one who will be one of the first princes and greatest generals of Europe.” When admiral of England, he endeavoured to introduce into the maritime service all those principles of concert and arrangement which made a number of individual regiments and squadrons com­pose a great army. When he commanded in the Dutch war, he found a fleet to be little better than a collection of ships, on board of each of which the commander and his ship’s company did their best to annoy the enemy, but with very little dependence on each other, or on the orders of the general ; and in the different actions which the English fleet had with the Dutch, everything was confusion as soon as the battle began. It is remarkable that the famous pen­sionary De Witt, who from a statesman became a navigator and a great sea commander in a few weeks, made the same representation to the States General on his return from his first campaign.

In the memoirs of James II. written by himself, we have the following passage: “ 1665. On the l5th of March, the Duke of York went to Gunfleet, the general rendezvous of the fleet, and hastened their equipment. He ordered all the flag officers on board with him every morning, to agree on the order of battle and rank. In former battles, no order was kept, and this under the Duke of York, was the first in which fighting in a line and regular form of a battle was observed.” This must be considered as full authority for giving the Duke of York the honour of the invention. For whatever faults may be laid to the charge of this unfortu­nate prince, his word and honour stand unimpeached. And we are anxious to vindicate his claim to it, because our neighbours the French, as usual, would take the merit of this invention, and of the whole of naval tactics, to them-