selves. True it is, that Colbert, the great and justly celebrated minister of Louis XIV. created a navy tor his ambi­tious and vain-glorious master, and gave it a constitution which may be a model for other nations to copy. By his encouragement, men of the greatest scientific eminence were engaged to contribute to its improvement ; and they gave us the first treatises of naval evolutions. But it must ever be remembered, that our accomplished, though mis­guided sovereign, was then residing at the court of Louis ; that he had formerly acted in concert with the French as a commander and flag officer, and was at this very time aiding them with his knowledge of nautical affairs. In the memorable day at La Hogue, the gallant Russel, observing one of Tourville’s movements, exclaimed, “ There, they have got Pepys@@l amongst them.” This anecdote w∙e give on the authority of a friend, who heard an old and respec­table officer, Admiral Clinton, say, that he had it from a gentleman who was in the action, and heard the words spo­ken ; and we trust that our readers will not be displeased at having this matter of general opinion established on some good grounds.

It was on this occasion, then, that the Duke of York made the movements and evolutions of a fleet the object of his particular study, reduced them to a system, and com­posed that System of Sailing and Fighting Instructions, which has ever since been considered as the code of disci­pline for the British navy, and which has been adopted by our rivals and neighbours as the foundation of their naval tactics. It does great honour to its author, although its merit will not appear very eminent to a careless surveyor, on account of the very simplicity which constitutes its chief excellence. It is unquestionably the result of much saga­cious reflection add painful combination of innumerable cir­cumstances, all Of which have their influence ; and it is remarkable, that although succeeding commanders have improved the subject by several subordinate additions, no change has to this day been made in its general principles or maxims of evolution.

Till some such code be established, it is evident that sig­nals can be nothing but arbitrary and unconnected hiero­glyphics, to be learned by rote, and retained by memory, without any exercise of the judgment ; and the acquisition of this branch of nautical skill must be a more irksome task than that of learning the Chinese writing. But such a code being once settled, the character in which it may be ex­pressed becomes a matter of rational discussion.

Accordingly, the sailing and fighting instructions of the Duke of York were accompanied by a set of signals for di­recting the chief or most frequent movements of the fleet. These also were contrived with so much judgment, and such attention to distinctness, simplicity, and propriety, that there has hardly been any change found necessary ; and they are still retained in the Britsh navy as the usual signals in all cases when we are not anxious to conceal Our movements from an enemy.

Notwithstanding this acknowledged merit of the Duke of York’s signals, it must be admitted that great improve­ments have been made on this subject, considered as an art. The art military has, in the course of a century past, become almost an appropriate calling, and has therefore been made the peculiar study of its professors. Our rivals the French were sooner and more formally placed in this situation ; and the ministers of Louis XIV. took infinite and most judicious pains to make their military men superior to all others by their academical education. A more scientific turn was given to their education, and the assistance of scientific men was liberally given them ; and all the nations of Europe must acknowledge some obligations to them for information on everything connected with the art of war. They have attended very much to this subject, have greatly improved it, and have even introduced a Dew principle into the art; and by this means have reduced it to the most simple form of reference to the code of sailing and fighting instructions, by making the signals immediately expressive, not of orders, but of simple numbers. These numbers being prefixed to the various articles of the code of instructions, the officer who sees a signal thrown out by the admiral, reads the num­ber and reports it to his captain, perhaps without knowing to what it relates. Thus simplicity and secrecy, with an unlimited power of variation, are combined. We believe that M. de la Bourdonnais, a brave and intelligent officer, during the war 1758, was the author of this ingenious thought.

We do not propose to give a system of British signals. This would evidently be improper. But we shall show our readers the practicability of this curious language, the ex­tent to which it may be carried, and the methods which may be practised in accomplishing this purpose. This may make it an object of attention to scientific men, who can improve it ; and the young officer will not only be able to read the orders of the commander-in-chief, but will not be at a loss, should circumstances place him in a situation where he must issue orders to others.

Signals may be divided into,

1. Day Signals.
2. Night Signals ; and,
3. Signals in a Fog.

They must also be distinguished into, First, Signals of Evolution, addressed to the whole Fleet, or to Squadrons of the fleet, or to Divisions of these squadrons ; secondly, Signals of Movements to be made by particular ships ; and, thirdly, Signals of Service, which may be either general or particular.

The great extent of a large fleet, the smoke in time of battle, and the situation of the commander-in-chief, who is commonly In the midst of the greatest confusion and hottest fire, frequently makes it very difficult for the officers of dis­tant ships to perceive his signals with distinctness. Frigates, therefore, are stationed out of the line, to windward or to leeward, whose sole office it is to observe the admiral’s sig­nals, and instantly to repeat them. The eyes of all the signal officers in the private ships of war are directed to the repeating frigates, as well as to the admiral ; and the officers of the repeating frigate, having no other duty, observe the admiral incessantly, and, being unembarrassed by the action, can display the signal with deliberation, so that it may be very distinctly seen. Being minutely acquainted with the substitutions which must be made on board the admiral when his masts and rigging are in disorder, his perhaps im­perfect signal is exhibited by the repeating frigate in its proper form, so as to be easily understood. And to facili­tate this communication, the commanders Of the different squadrons repeat the signals of the commander-in-chief, and the commanders of division repeat the signals of the com­manders of their squadron.

Every evolution signal is preceded by a signal of adver­tisement and preparation, which is general, and frequently by a gun, to call attention ; and when all the signals have been made which direct the different parts of that evolution, another signal is made, which marks the close of the com­plex signal, and divides it from others which may immedi­ately follow it : And as the orders of the commander-in- chief may relate either to the movements of the whole fleet, those of a single division, or those of certain private ships, the Executive Signal, which dictates the particular move­ment, is accompanied by a Directive Signal, by which these ships are pointed out, to which the order is addressed.

The commander of a ship to which any signal is address­ed, is generally required to signify by a signal, which is ge­

@@@1 Pepys was secretary to the Duke of York.