neral, that he has observed it. And if he does not thorough­ly understand its meaning, he intimates this by another ge­neral signal. And here it is to be observed, that as soon as the signal is answered by the ships to which it is addressed, it is usual to haul it down, to avoid the confusion which might arise from others being hoisted in the same place. The order remains till executed, notwithstanding that the signal is hauled down.

It may happen that the commander who throws out the signal for any piece of service, sees reasons for altering his plan. He intimates this by a general annulling signal, ac­companying the signal already given. This will frequent­ly be more simple than to make the signals for the move­ments which would be required for re-establishing the ships in their former situation.

All these things are of very easy comprehension, and re­quire little thought for their contrivance. But when we come to the particular evolutions and movements, and to combine these with the circumstances of situation in which the fleet may be at the time, it is evident that much reflec­tion is necessary for framing a body of signals which may be easily exhibited, distinctly perceived and well understood, with little risk of being mistaken one for another. We shall take notice of the circumstances which chiefly contribute to give them these qualities as we proceed in describing their different classes.

1. *Of Day Signals.*

These are made by means of signals of different colours ; but before we proceed to the description of the signals by means of colours, such as flags, banners, or triangular flags, pendants, or vanes, we must take notice of the ostensible distinctions of the various divisions and subdivisions of a fleet, so that we may understand how the same signal may be addressed to a squadron, division, or single ship or ships. We suppose it known that a fleet of ships of war is distri­buted into three grand divisions, which we shall term squad­rons, called the van, centre, and rear. These denomina­tions have not always a relation to the one being more ad­vanced than the other, either towards the enemy or in the direction of their course.

In a land army, the position of every part is conceived from its reference to the enemy ; and the reader, conceiv­ing himself as facing the enemy, easily understands the terms van, centre, and rear, the right and left wing, and so forth. But the movements of a sea army having a neces­sary dependence on the wind, they cannot be comprehend­ed unless expressed in a language which keeps this circum­stance continually in view. The simplest and most easily conceived disposition of a fleet, is that in which it is almost indispensably obliged to form in order to engage an enemy. This is a straight line, each ship directly ahead of its neigh­bour, and close-hauled. This is therefore called the line of battle. In this position, the two extremities of the fleet correspond to the right and left wings of an army. Sup­pose this line to be in the direction east and west, the wind blowing from the north-north-west, and therefore the fleet on the starboard tack ; the ships’ heads are to the west, and the westermost division is undoubtedly the van of the fleet, and the eastermost division is the rear. And it is in con­formity to this arrangement and situation that the list of the fleet is drawn up. But the ships may be on the same east and west line, close-hauled, with their heads to the west, but the wind blowing from the south-south-west. They must therefore be on the larboard tack. The same ships, and the same division, are still, in fact, the van of the fleet. But suppose the ships’ heads to be to the eastward, and that they are close-hauled, having the wind from the south-south- east or the north-north-east, the ships which were the real van on both tacks in the former situation, are now, in fact, the rear on both tacks ; yet they retain the denomination of the van squadron of this fleet, and are under the imme­diate direction of the officer of the second rank, while the other extremity is under the direction of the third officer. This subordination therefore is rather an arrangement of rank and precedence than of evolution. It is, however, con­sidered as the natural order to which the general signals must be accommodated. For this reason, the division which is denominated van in the list of this fleet, is generally made to lead the fleet when in the line of battle on the starboard tack, and to form the weathermost column in the order of sailing in columns ; and, in general, it occupies that station from which it can most easily pass into the place of the leading division on the starboard line of battle ahead. Al­though this is a technical nicety of language, and may fre­quently puzzle a landsman in reading an account of naval operations, the reflecting and intelligent reader will see the propriety of retaining this mode of conceiving the subordi­nate arrangement of a fleet, and will comprehend the em­ployment of the signals which are necessary for re-establish­ing this arrangement, or directing the movements while another arrangement is retained.

This being understood, it is easy to contrive various me­thods of distinguishing every ship by the place which she occupies in the fleet, both with respect to the whole line, with respect to the particular squadron, the particular divi­sion of that squadron, and the particular place in that divi­sion. This may be done by a combination of the position and colour of the pendants and vanes of each ship. Thus the colour of the pendants may indicate the squadron, their position or mast on which they are hoisted may mark the division of that squadron, and a distinguishing vane may mark the place of the private ship in her own division. The advantages attending this method are many. In a large fleet it would hardly be possible for the commander-in-chief to find a sufficient variety of single signals to mark the ship to which an order is addressed, by hoisting it along with the signal appropriated to the intended movement. But by this contrivance one-third part of these signals of address is sufficient. It also enables the commander-in-chief to or­der a general change of position by a single signal, which otherwise would require several. Thus, suppose that the fore, main, and mizen masts, are appropriated, with the pro­per modifications, for exhibiting the signals addressed to the van, the centre, and the rear squadrons of the fleet, and that a red, a white, and a blue flag, are chosen for the dis­tinguishing flags of the officers commanding these squad­rons ; then, if the commander-in-chief shall hoist a red flag at his mizen topgallant mast-head, it must direct the van squadron to take the position then occupied by the rear squadron, the evolution necessary for accomplishing this end being supposed known by the commander of the squad­ron, who will immediately make the necessary signals to the squadron under his particular direction. In the same manner, the distinguishing signal for the leading ship of a squadron being hoisted along with the signal of address to the whole fleet, and the signal for any particular service, will cause the three or the nine leading ships to execute that order.

All that has been said hitherto may be considered as so many preparations for the real issuing of orders by the com­mander-in-chief. The most difficult part of the language remains, viz. to invent a number of signals which shall cor­respond to that almost infinite variety of movements and services which must be performed.

Distinctness, simplicity, and propriety, are the three es­sential qualities of all signals. A signal must be some ob­ject easily seen, strongly marked, so that it may be readily understood, with little risk of its being mistaken for another. When made by flags, banners, or pendants, they must be of the fullest colours, and strongest contrasts. The ships are frequently at a very great distance, so that the inter­