to be raked by the enemy to leeward. A leeward fleet has the advantages of serving their lower-deck guns in all weathers ; of being able to retreat at pleasure ; of drawing off without difficulty their disabled ships ; of forming with more readiness the order of retreat, or of continuing the action as long as convenient ; of having it in their power, when superior in number, to double the enemy ; and of can­nonading with great effect the windward ships as they bear down for the attack.

As an engagement between two adverse ships is in some measure an epitome of an engagement between two fleets, we shall first briefly describe the former, as it takes place under ordinary circumstances, and shall then notice the usual manner of conducting a general engagement.

A naval engagement may be divided into three stages, the *preparation,* the *action,* and the *repair.*

When an enemy’s ship heaves in sight, and it is thought advisable to bring her to an engagement, orders are first given to clear for action, which is begun by the boatswain and his mates piping up the hammocks, in order to clear the space between decks, for the more easy management of the guns, as well as to afford the men on the quarter-deck, &c., a better protection against the enemy’s shot, the hammocks being stowed in the nettings above the gunwale and bul­warks. After this the boatswain’s mates go to work to se­cure the yards, which is done by fastening them with strong chains or ropes in addition to those by which they are sus­pended. They likewise get ready such materials as may be necessary for repairing the rigging, if it should be cut away, or otherwise damaged, by the enemy’s shot. In the mean time the carpenter and his mates prepare shot plugs and mauls, to stop any dangerous shot-holes that may be made in the hull near the surface of the water, and provide the necessary iron-work for refitting the chain-pumps, if their machinery should be injured during the engagement; while the gunner and his mates, and the quarter gunners, examine the guns to see that their charges are dry, and provide every thing that may be required for supplying the great guns and small arms with ammunition. The master and master’s mates see that the sails are properly trimmed, according to the situation of the ship, and increase or re­duce them as may be found necessary ; and the lieutenants visit the different decks to see that all is clear, and to take care that the inferior officers do their duty.

When the hostile ships have approached within a proper distance of each other, the drums beat to arms ; the boat­swain and his mates pipe *all hands to quarters.* All the men who are to manage the great guns repair immedi­ately to their respective stations. The crows, handspikes, rammers, sponges, powder-horns, matches, and train-tackles, are placed in order by the side of the guns ; the hatches are immediately closed, to prevent sculkers from getting below ; the marines are drawn up on the quarter-deck, &c., the lash­ings of the guns are cast loose, and the tompions withdrawn. The whole artillery above and below is run out at the ports, and levelled to the point-blank range, ready for firing.

When these necessary preparations are completed, and the officers and crew ready at their respective stations, and when the two ships are sufficiently near each other, in a proper relative situation for the shot to take full effect, the action commences with a vigorous cannonade from the great guns, accompanied by the whole efforts of the swivels and small arms. The firing is seldom performed in vollies, as that would shake the ship too much ; but the guns are loaded and fired one after another, with as much despatch and as little confusion as possible, care being taken to fire only when each gun is properly directed to its object. Dur­ing the firing, the lieutenants traverse the decks, to see that the battle is prosecuted with vivacity, and that the men do their duty ; while the midshipmen second their injunc­tions, and give the necessary assistance where required, at the guns committed to their charge. The youngest of these inferior officers are generally employed to carry orders from the captain. The gunners are all this time employed in the magazines, filling cartridges, which are carried along the decks in boxes by the boys of the ship. When the action has continued so long, or has produced such an effect, that one of the ships must yield or retreat, if the vanquished ship cannot get off, she acknowledges her inferiority by striking or hauling down her colours, when she is, as soon as possible, taken possession of by the victor, the commander of which sends a part of his own crew into the captured ship, and brings away most of her officers and men on board his own ship, as prisoners of war.

The engagement being concluded, they begin to repair. The guns are secured by their breechings and tackles, with all convenient expedition. Whatever sails have been ren­dered unserviceable are unbent, and the wounded masts and yards struck upon deck, to be fished or replaced by others. The standing rigging is knotted, and the running rigging spliced where necessary. Proper sails are bent in the room of those which have been displaced as useless. The carpenter and his mates are employed in repairing the breaches made in the ship’s hull, by shot-plugs, pieces of plank, and sheet-lead. The gunner and his assistants are busied in replenishing the allotted number of charged cart­ridges, to supply the place of those which have been ex­pended, and in refitting whatever furniture of the guns may have been damaged by the action.

A general engagement between two adverse fleets ob­viously involves a greater variety of circumstances, and re­quires greater judgment and more comprehensive skill in the commanding officer.

When the commander of a fleet has discovered an ene­my’s fleet, his principal object, if he be sufficiently strong, is to bring it to action as soon as possible. Every inferior consideration gives way to this important object, and all necessary preparations are immediately made to prepare for such an event. The state of the wind and situation of the enemy will in general regulate his conduct with regard to the disposition of his ships on that occasion. To facilitate the execution of the admiral’s orders, the whole fleet is dis­posed in three squadrons, and each of these classed into three divisions, under the command of different officers. Before the action begins, the adverse fleets are drawn up in two lines, as formerly described. As soon as the admiral displays the signal for the line of battle, the several divi­sions separate from the columns in which they were dis­posed in the usual order in sailing, and every ship crowds sail to get into its station in the wake of the next ahead ; and a proper distance from each other is regularly observed from the van to the rear. The admiral however occasion­ally contracts or extends his line, so as to regulate the length of his line by that of his adversary. This is more par­ticularly necessary, to prevent his being doubled, by which his van and rear would be thrown into disorder. When the hostile fleets approach each other, the courses are com­monly hauled upon the brails, and the top-gallant sails and stay-sails furled. The movement of each ship is regulated chiefly by the main and fore-top sails and the jib ; the mizen-top sail being reserved to hasten or retard the course of the ship, and, by filling or backing, hoisting or lowering it, to determine her velocity. The signal for a general engagement is usually displayed when the fleets are suffi­ciently near each other to be within the range of point­blank shot, so that the guns may be levelled with some certainty of execution. After the battle has commenced, it is carried on much in thc same manner as between two ships, except that each vessel of the fleet, besides attending to her own movements, has to observe the signals made by the commanding officer, and repeated by the frigates on the van and rear. The chief object of the admiral is to keep