represents a fleet put­ting before the wind, each ship intending, when brought to at a determined dis­tance at *A,* to take up her particular an­tagonist in the line of the enemy F to leeward ; and let F be supposed at rest, without any motion ahead. It is easy to conceive, that while the alternate ships of F’s line, under cover of the smoke, with­draw from battle to GGG, the intermediate ships left behind them in the line will be sufficient to amuse even the whole of B’s fleet, till the ships G shall form a new line H as a support from the leeward. In such case B, after being disabled, and not having foreseen the manœuvre, will neither be able to prevent the intermediate ships with which he is engaged from bearing away to join their friends, nor, were he able, would it be advisable to follow them ; for the same manœuvre, with equal success, can again and again be repeated.

To explain the relative motion of these two fleets, let F, fig. 55, repre­sent a fleet of twelve ships in line of battle, a cable’s length asunder, and suppose the length of each ship from the end of the jib- boom to the stern to be 362/3 fathoms. The whole fleet will occupy a space of two English miles ; and if it be supposed to sail in the direction FG, at the rate of four knots an hour, it will in an hour have moved to G, four miles from its former position.

Now let there be an opposite fleet B, also twelve ships, situated four miles to windward, and let the point A be a quarter of a mile right to windward of the point G. Then, if B, by bearing away in the direction BA, gain the point A at the same time that the leeward fleet F has arrived at G, B will have moved nearly at the rate of 5½ miles an hour, and the angle contained between the direction of its line of bearing and its present course will be nearly four points.

Secondly, in fig. 56, if F, by carrying more sail, move at the rate of six miles an hour from F to G, then B, with a more slanting course, will have more difficulty in keeping the line abreast while coming down to the at­tack, owing to the additional obstruction which will attend each succeed­ing ship in such a slanting course. Again, if the leeward fleet shall lie up one point high­er, as FG, fig.

57, the rears of the two fleets will be remov­ed to a much greater dis­tance, and the van A must be sooner up with the enemy’s van, and of course so much farther from support, while F, bringing up his ships in suc­cession, may disable the van of A, and afterwards bear away at pleasure with little injury, as at H. Now B being sup­posed disabled, and having his rear D distracted, will be unable to prevent F from escaping.

From these considerations, it appears that a fleet to wind­ward, by extending its line of battle with a view to stop and attack the whole line of an enemy’s fleet to leeward, must labour under considerable disadvantages, and will scarcely succeed in the attempt.

On these principles Mr Clerk explains the reason why the French fleets so repeatedly escaped from the British without any serious defeat or loss, viz. by avoiding a ge­neral engagement, and disabling the British van as it bore down to attack them. He therefore recommends a differ­ent mode of attack from the windward, which we shall pro­ceed to illustrate by proper diagrams.

Let F (fig. 58) represent a fleet in line of battle, under easy sail, willing to avoid an action, but ready to receive an attack, in the usual way, from another fleet B, three or four miles to windward, arranged in three columns. How shall B make the attack on F, so as, without aiming at the im­probable advantage of taking or destroying the greater part of this fleet, they may secure three or four of the stemmost ships ? Mr Clerk advises that a sufficient strength be de­tached to secure these ships, while the admiral keeps aloof with the rest of his fleet, disposed as in the figure, ready to make the necessary observations, and give the requisite support to the detached ships. If F continues to avoid an action by standing on in line, the detachment, coming into the position BA, will secure the three ships at I ; and if the headmost ships of F were to tack, and be followed by the rest in succession, as at fig. 59, not only the three ships at I will be left at the mercy of the ships detached from B, but two more, as G, will be exposed to an attack from an­

other squadron of B at C. If all the ships of F tack to­gether, as in fig. 60, the delay, and probably the confusion,