

# NAVAL EVOLUTIONS;

A MEMOIR

BY

MAJ.-GEN. SIR HOWARD DOUGLAS, BART.

K.S.C. C.B. F.R.S. &c.

CONTAINING

A REVIEW AND REFUTATION

OF

THE PRINCIPAL ESSAYS AND ARGUMENTS ADVOCATING

MR. CLERK'S CLAIMS,

IN RELATION TO

THE MANŒUVRE OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL, 1782;

AND VINDICATING, BY TACTICAL DEMONSTRATION, AND NUMEROUS AUTHENTIC  
DOCUMENTS, THE PROFESSIONAL SKILL OF

*The British Officers*

CHIEFLY CONCERNED ON THAT MEMORABLE OCCASION.



LONDON:

THOMAS AND WILLIAM BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCXXXII.

## ADVERTISEMENT.



THE reader will perceive by internal evidence in several parts of this Memoir, and particularly at page 19, line 11, that the greater part of it must have been printed-off for a considerable time. The truth is, that these pages were sent to press last year, and would then have appeared, had the Author not been drawn away, by other calls upon him, from attending to the publication.



ERRATUM.

Page 44, line 31, *for* "as his son-in-law writes"—*read* "as an old naval officer writes."

◆  
**Directions to the Binder.**

Place the Plates 1, 2 and 3, facing page 15.  
Plates 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, facing page 16.  
Plate 10, facing page 30.  
The Fac-simile of Sir Charles Douglas' Letter, facing page 52.  
Plates 11, 12 and 13, facing page 59.  
Plate 14, facing page 60.

## NAVAL TACTICS.

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THOSE of my readers who may have perused my former Statements, are requested to bear in mind, and such as come fresh to the subject, are entreated to observe, that my appeals to the public, on the matter which I now, finally, bring before them, arose from what I must be permitted to call a very injudicious attempt made by some friends of the late John Clerk, Esq. to ascribe to that Gentleman the merit of having invented the manœuvre by which the Battle of the 12th of April, 1782, was gained; and of having communicated the discovery, and fully explained the mode of operation, to my Father, after his appointment as Captain of the Fleet under Sir George Rodney, expressly that he, my Father, might take out with him, to the West Indies, (whither Sir George is affirmed to have proceeded,) and there impart the discovery to his Admiral, for execution by the Fleet under his command.

Professional opinion, tactical writers, and the voice of the public, having given to my Father's memory enough of credit and honour to satisfy my solicitude for his fame, I should have had no occasion to take the pen in his behalf, had it not been for these, and certain other assertions and pretensions, which, if not disproved, might hereafter obscure his services, and injure his reputation. Under these circumstances I felt it to be my duty to lay before the public the facts of that celebrated operation, to prove that the breaking of the enemy's line was not put in practice in a deliberate and systematic manner, on *any* premeditated plan, far less on any suggestion of Mr. Clerk's; but on the advice of the Captain of the Fleet, in the heat of action, to take decisive advantage, in a peculiar manner, of an unexpected error committed by a part of the French Fleet, in order of sailing.

Compelled, by some observations in the Quarterly Review, to go further into the facts of execution, than I originally intended, or wished, it would have afforded me much satisfaction, if, in my Second Statement, I could, at the same time, have replied to any fresh matter which the advocates of Mr. Clerk might have it in their power to adduce, in support of their assertion, that to him is due the merit of having

invented and fully explained the manœuvre, by which it is allowed on all hands the victory of that day was owing; but no case, in behalf of Mr. Clerk, having appeared, in time to enable me to take up both points of the matter in controversy at once, I was obliged to reserve myself for a distinct reply to *that* part of the question which relates to Mr. Clerk, until the case in his behalf, which I knew was preparing, should be published. That case appeared in the shape of an article on my Statement of Facts, in a late number of the *Edinburgh Review*,\* at a time when I was absent from England on the public service; since which, till very lately, I have been so much occupied, as not to have had time to prepare for the press the reply which I threw together upon reading that article.

My object having been, to *prove the facts of execution*, I need scarcely contend for more of credit, to the Captain of the Fleet, than the Reviewer allows me to have established in my former Statements. For he admits that I have “proved, beyond all possibility of doubt, by a great mass of evidence, collected from the highest and most honourable sources, the facts of execution to have been,” as I have asserted in the Statements bound up with the *Naval Gunnery*;—that I have “triumphantly vindicated my Father’s claim to the honour of being the immediate adviser of the grand operation by which the battle was gained,” and that “but for his promptitude, energy, and decision the enemy’s line would not, in all probability, have been broken, nor the victory gained;”—that “this distinguished Officer, and this great service, were unduly overlooked in the distribution of honours on that occasion;”—and that “it was fitting for the Son, even at this distance of time, to reclaim for the Father, the honours that had been so long withheld.”

These acknowledgments are so ample, as to the services actually rendered by the Captain of the Fleet, on this great occasion, that they might have satisfied all the obligations which filial duty had imposed upon me, had they not been accompanied by assertions and insinuations, in arguing the other point, which it is quite impossible for me to admit.† But I cannot consent to compromise my Father’s character for his services.—I accept not, therefore, the proffered terms, that,

\* Number 101, April 1830.

† Mr. William Clerk having transmitted to me a copy of the *Review* of my Statements, with a polite letter in which he acquainted me that the article on *Naval Tactics* was drawn up, in great part, on documents furnished to him, but that the arguments and conclusions are the Reviewer’s own, I immediately turned over the leaves of the article to see in what terms the Reviewer had noticed my previous Statements of Facts; and upon reading the above very satisfactory admissions on the point which it had been my great object to establish, I acknowledged the receipt of Mr. Clerk’s letter, in corresponding terms. But when I had time to read the whole article, and to consider it attentively, I found abundant reason to view it with very different sentiments. Many of the Reviewer’s pleadings and conclusions are not only highly prejudicial to my Father’s professional reputation, but injurious to his moral character; and accordingly lay me under the necessity of going further and more fully, into this part of the subject, than I intended at the time I wrote to Mr. Clerk, under the impression which a partial perusal of the article had occasioned; but which I soon found cause to alter.

"whatever may be the facts of *execution*, Mr. Clerk invented, and fully explained, to Sir George Rodney, and to Sir Charles Douglas, the splendid manœuvre which they, advisedly and systematically, put in practice;" because, that were to admit, that these eminent officers availed themselves, discredibly, of a discovery of Mr. Clerk's, and acted, fraudulently, upon plans which they never would acknowledge.

In proceeding to investigate *whether Mr. Clerk was the inventor of the manœuvre*, it is not necessary to go, again, into that part of the question which relates to the facts of execution; for they are admitted, by the Edinburgh Reviewer, to be proved beyond all possibility of doubt: nor is it necessary to distinguish between the Admiral and the Captain of the Fleet, in considering the subject as it relates to Mr. Clerk; for the Reviewer asserts that they acted, in concert, upon his ideas. I shall, therefore, take up these eminent officers conjointly, the one as having suggested, the other as having adopted, the successful manœuvre.—I shall fully vindicate them from the aspersion, that they acted, surreptitiously, on any ideas of Mr. Clerk's, or were less learned and reflecting in nautical war than he;—and I shall prove, likewise beyond all possibility of doubt, that this celebrated battle would have been conducted by the British Admiral and his Flag Captain, and gained by the British Fleet, exactly as it was fought and won, if the author of the "Naval Tactics" had never existed.

Having admitted "that Sir Charles Douglas was the immediate adviser of the operation," it became absolutely necessary for the Reviewer to endeavour, by every means, to "fasten down" on the Captain of the Fleet a knowledge of this manœuvre as a recent discovery of Mr. Clerk's. This the Reviewer labours to do in two ways. First, he asserts "that *if the evidence be allowed to be true*, which attaches that knowledge to Sir G. Rodney, the discovery could not have been unknown to his Captain of the Fleet; and, secondly, that this particular manœuvre, the alleged invention of Mr. Clerk, was communicated, and fully explained by him, to my Father, after his appointment as Captain of the Fleet, as the most direct channel of imparting it to Sir George Rodney.

Now with respect to the first. The case asserted by Mr. Clerk's advocate, is this, "That in January, 1782, that gentleman published a book, containing a full description of his invention of the manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line, with full explanations and demonstrations of its advantages;—that Sir G. Rodney did not leave England till after the book was published, nor meet the enemy till three months after it was out:—that during this interval, Mr. Clerk's book was transmitted to Sir G. Rodney;\*—that Mr. Clerk's invention was more particularly confided to Sir Charles Douglas, who had been appointed Captain of the Fleet, but remained in London for some time after Sir G. Rodney's departure:—and that the manœuvre discovered by Mr. Clerk was put in practice, in a deliberate and systematic manner, in the battle of the 12th of April ensuing, on the plans and explanations contained in that book."

\* Edinburgh Rev. p. 8.

The public have, very generally, been led to believe, that the work now designated "An Essay on Naval Tactics, systematical and explanatory, with Notes by Lord Rodney," is a correct version of the identical tract upon which Lord Rodney *annotated*; and that the tract so "enriched with his Lordship's notes," was a book "*published* before the battle, and did actually contain full explanations of the particular manœuvre by which it was gained." It is, moreover, very generally believed out of the profession, that "*the book*," upon the margins of which those notes were written, is the original copy, said to have been received by Lord Rodney before the battle, of the work as it now appears.

To establish this, the Reviewer appeals (p. 20) to a copy of the book "bearing openly on its title-page the date of the 1st January, 1782, on which Lord Rodney's notes are written," and in which as the Reviewer asserts (p. 19), "*the particular manœuvre*, by which the battle was gained, is fully explained and anxiously recommended:" so that (p. 20) "the noble Admiral could not have failed to learn that the manœuvre had been, not only invented, but fully investigated and deeply considered, before he practised it." Upon this, as "the main and fundamental fact," the Reviewer affirms (p. 30) my Father's "inspirations and suggestions" to have been taken from Mr. Clerk's book, then in his pocket; and indeed, the writer goes so far as to assert (p. 25 and 30), that "both these brave and skilful officers *studied in that book*, on the *very morning of the battle*, the reasons and calculations, upon the strength of which Mr. Clerk, the inventor, had recommended the manœuvre;—that they were generally impressed with a favourable notion of its value and importance, and prepared themselves, accordingly, to carry it into effect."

On these, "as material and indisputable facts," the Reviewer proceeds to argue, that Sir George Rodney is thus proved, and, by his own admission, ascertained, "to have had before him, in that identical tract, on the great occasion in question, directions, fully explaining and teaching the manœuvre, as a prior discovery made by Mr. Clerk;" and, consequently, that his, Lord Rodney's, annotations on the margin of *that* identical book, are admissions and acknowledgments of all the claims and pretensions put forward on behalf of that gentleman.

Now, if the reader will refer to any copies of the work containing those notes,\* he will discover, with much surprise, that *no* annotations whatever appear, on the only part of "*the book*" which has any thing at all to do with breaking the line, or relating to the manœuvre in question! To reconcile this very remarkable omission on the part of the noble annotator, with the assertion "that the original tract, upon which Lord Rodney annotated, did, nevertheless, contain a full demonstration and explanation of the manœuvre which he put in practice," and perceiving all the fundamental importance of explaining why Lord Rodney should have omitted to write notes on the only parts of the book which related to *the point* which the Reviewer wishes to establish, namely, the priority of Mr. Clerk's discovery, (any acknowledgment

\* Appendix I.

of having previously seen which, would have been so much in Mr. Clerk's favour,) the Reviewer, with vast ingenuity, pleads,\* that "the omission of any direct or specific notice, which appears in the notes with which Lord Rodney *enriched* his *own* copy of the Naval Tactics, is a complete admission of his obligation to Mr. Clerk for having taught him this manœuvre; and a conclusive proof of consciousness that he, the Admiral, had been anticipated, by the learned civilian, in this, the most brilliant conception and achievement of his, Lord Rodney's, professional life;" for that† "it is not to be conceived that he would sit down quietly to write annotations and remarks upon the author's various speculations, without once noticing the miraculous coincidence between his practice and the precept then before him; and, *if the fact had been so*, of asserting his own separate originality, and collecting evidence to dispute a claim, which, if the book had not contained that invention, and full directions for carrying it into effect, would, obviously, have laid Mr. Clerk's pretensions open to suspicion;" and that, therefore, the circumstance of the Admiral not having made annotations on *that* part of the tract, which is asserted to have *proved* Mr. Clerk's priority of invention, is the most conclusive proof of his claims. But what becomes of the Reviewer's "material and indisputable fact," and all the reasoning and special pleading contained in pages 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 30, and 32, upon this *hypothesis*, when the public are informed that no such facts exist? What becomes of the attempt to "fasten down the knowledge of the discovery on the Admiral and his Captain of the Fleet," conjointly, through the instrumentality of "*the book*," when we find that neither the original tract, nor the "identical copy" upon which the Admiral annotated, contained any such discovery or observations as those now standing in the first part of the Naval Tactics?—nor any such matter, *positively*, as that upon which, to support this vain pretension, Lord Rodney is surmised to have admitted such a want of candour and generosity, and, moreover, to have been unjust to the chief executive officer of his fleet. By the Clerk hypothesis, and the manner in which the Reviewer uses it, reckless of all but his client's case, the writer not only places Sir C. Douglas in a situation to compel me again to come forward; but, by such a surmise, he places Lord Rodney's character for justice and generosity in a most ignoble and disingenuous position,‡ as well in regard to Mr. Clerk, as with respect to my Father, for the *real* share he is proved to have had in advising and urging the operation. But the clouds which such an hypothesis would cast on the professional transaction, and the shades which it would throw on personal character, are at once dispelled,—all the "grievous perplexities of the case"‡ disappear;—and all the opprobrium with which Lord Rodney, in particular, would be covered, are cleared, by the fact, that there was no such "peg to hang a note upon" as that asserted by the advocates of Mr. Clerk, to have stood in that book, in the shape of a "full explanation," nor any explanation or earnest recommendation, whatever, of the manœuvre by which he, Lord Rodney, had some years before

\* P. 19. † P. 20. ‡ P. 32.



gained that battle. If such had been the contents of "*the book*," and Lord Rodney had been conscious that the victory of the 12th of April was owing to any suggestions contained in it, or if such information had been communicated in any way by its author, he, Lord Rodney, could not have failed to have expressed this, distinctly and manfully, while annotating, thus deliberately, on *a book*, which is alleged to have contained precepts which he practised; and, likewise, to have noticed the assertion as to the communication said to have been made to him, through Mr. Atkinson, *if that assertion too had stood in "the book,"* or had that name been therein mentioned. The advocates of Mr. Clerk ground their arguments entirely on the existence of such a book, and on its competency to teach and explain the manœuvre which Rodney practised. Upon this the Reviewer founds his case; and even the House of Clerk appeals to the book, "the margins of which are covered, from beginning to end, with notes in SIR GEORGE RODNEY'S handwriting," as if he had been in possession of that identical work, previously to the 12th of April, 1782; and "attached high importance to the valuable information it contained," as to laying down the particular manœuvre. Now to this I reply, that it is *ascertained* "the book" contained nothing relating to, much less explanations and demonstrations of, any such class of operation, or description of manœuvre, as that by which the battle was gained. It is wholly denied, by Lord Rodney's family and friends, that he was in possession of any such suggestions, as those which have since his death been asserted to have been communicated to him, viz. observations on the attack from the leeward; and it is certain that *Sir George* Rodney never annotated on the book; for the notes with which "the margins of the book now in Pennycuick library are covered," were written by *Lord* Rodney in 1789 or 1790! The Reviewer indeed says, p. 21, that they were probably written in 1788 or 1789: but whether they were written at that time or not, is of no importance; for Mr. Clerk did not receive them till after the first edition of his work was published in 1790. Mr. Clerk understands his own case best, and *he* says, p. 273, *Naval Tactics* (edition 1827); "that the copy of the *Naval Tactics*, which contains a number of valuable marginal notes in his (*Lord Rodney's*) own hand-writing, came too late to be introduced, though particularly relating to part first of this work (on the attack from the windward, mind,) when reprinted and published in 1790." The reader will be able to judge for himself what importance *Lord Rodney* attached to any matter or information contained in that tract, or how far he admitted that it taught him and his Captain of the Fleet the manœuvre practised on the 12th of April—or what possible practical utility that tract could have been on that occasion, by referring to the summary I have given at pages 15 and 16, of the matter contained in the original tract, and to the notes written by *Lord Rodney*, on the copy sent to him, in 1790—copies of which I have given in the Appendix; or the reader may consult the first part of the *Essay on Naval Tactics*, with reference to the preceding observations, and to the very important fact, which I shall now establish, that the observations on the attack

from the leeward, were interpolated into Part I. after Lord Rodney's notes were written.

Let us see now, with what reason the Reviewer complains (p. 8), that "no public impeachment of Mr. Clerk's originality, or claim, should have been made by the other parties, to a share in the discovery, at the time the second edition of his *Naval Tactics* was published," when, it is believed, "most of the parties concerned were alive." To ascertain with what justice such a complaint may be made, in the behalf of Mr. Clerk, it will be necessary to go a good way back, to inquire, who was the originator of this controversy;—what were the circumstances under which Mr. Clerk's claim to any share of credit in having treated of the manœuvre, was first distinctly stated;—and the precise period at which such claim was brought before the public. To investigate this, it will be necessary to scrutinize very closely the dates and nature of Mr. Clerk's claims, as stated by himself.

So much confusion appears in the dates and matter contained in the several tracts, books or works, whether MS. printed or published, to which the Reviewer appeals and refers; so many contradictory arguments are used, in advocating the claims that have been advanced; and so many remarkable circumstances attend their progress, from the very slender grounds upon which they rest, that I find it necessary to go into the whole of this matter, from its very origin. I shall therefore present to the reader, an exact summary of the matter which Mr. Clerk really did first print, or publish;—show at what period the "other Observations" relating to the manœuvre, first made their appearance;—prove, by Mr. Clerk's own showing, that they were published in 1790 for the first time, as a commentary on what had passed, and professedly not to teach;—and, lastly, I shall investigate Mr. Clerk's system of *Naval Tactics* as they now are, so far as they relate to such a manœuvre as that by which the battle was gained—to ascertain what title he has to the pretension of having made any "magnificent discovery in naval tactics," or of being "more learned and reflecting in nautical war" than the professional men who did the glorious deed, under circumstances, which, in point of fact, he did not contemplate—never rightly understood, or soundly treated; and, without comment of my own, I shall fearlessly submit to the country, and to the naval profession in particular, whether, in the battle-scene of the 12th of April, the "enlightenment," or the "thunder," was Mr. Clerk's?

The *first* edition of Mr. Clerk's book was not published till 1790; and then, only, appeared, for the first time, before the public, the part upon the attack from the windward, of which, as the author informs us in his advertisement to the first edition, dated January, 1790, "a few copies, about 50, were printed in 1782, and handed about among a few friends." That the tract then printed contained nothing on the subject of breaking the line, or any thing relating to such a manœuvre as that put in practice on the 12th of April in that year, the reader will find distinctly admitted at page 119 of the edition of 1827, intended to explain the very singular circumstance of having interpolated into that division of the subject, (which treated only of an

oblique attack upon two or three of the rear ships of an enemy to leeward, desirous of avoiding battle,) some "additional observations," which have nothing to do with that part, and which did not stand in the original tract, nor in that on which Lord Rodney annotated.

In the reasons given for then and there introducing those "observations," we find the first mention made in Mr. Clerk's works, of such a class of manœuvres; and here it is essential to remark, that the very note which states, vaguely, that he had *formed* those and other ideas for improving naval tactics, declares *distinctly*, in 1790, that none relating to the attack from the leeward were "*advanced*:"

"With respect to the above observations, it seems necessary to mention that they made part of a former description of this battle of the 27th July, 1778, written soon after, and then put into the hands of a few friends; that the author being in London, in 1780, many discussions were held, at the desire and in the presence of the same friends, as well for improving upon, as for the communicating of these and other ideas on naval tactics, and particularly on one occasion, by appointment, with an officer of most distinguished merit. That they were afterwards intended to be inserted in the first edition of this essay, printed 1st January, 1782, as being applicable to the two similar rencounters of Lord Rodney of the 15th and 19th May, 1780, as well as to this of the 27th July, where the adverse fleets had passed each other on contrary tacks. *But it was thought afterwards proper to omit them*, as it was conceived it might be prejudicial to the other parts of the subject to *advance* any thing doubtful, no example of cutting an enemy's line, in an attack from the leeward, before that time, having been given."—*Naval Tactics*, p. 119, note.

The reader will remark, that the author does not here, in 1790, advance what he brought forward, for the first time, in 1804, "that when in London in 1780, he communicated his ideas on the subject of naval tactics to Mr. Atkinson, the particular friend of Sir G. Rodney." He merely says, that "discussions were held in the presence of some friends; and particularly, on one occasion, by appointment, with an officer of most distinguished merit." If by this my Father were meant, *he* could make no reply, for he died in 1789; and, in 1804, when Lord Rodney was, for the first time, named, as having received the communication through Mr. Atkinson, (but which the family of Rodney utterly deny, and which Mr. Atkinson never affirmed,) his Lordship was dead too! The circumstance of its being generally understood and firmly believed, that the edition on which Lord Rodney annotated, contained the author's preface, in which he asserts the communication by Mr. Atkinson to have been made to Sir George Rodney, but which preface was not published till the second edition appeared in 1804, has raised a very strong impression in favour of Mr. Clerk's claim; for, as in the case of the alleged intentional omission on the part of Lord Rodney, in not having annotated on the "explanations" teaching the manœuvre, which are asserted to have stood in "the book," so it appears strange, that, when making notes upon a tract said to contain a declaration as to how, when, and by whom, that suggestion had been conveyed to him, his Lordship should not, if this were not so, have denied it in a specific note. But here again the reader will perceive that there were no such explanations upon which to annotate. It

was not until 1804, when both Lord Rodney and Mr. Atkinson, as well as my Father, were dead, that this preface, or any such declaration, appeared. I declare that I mean no charge against Mr. Clerk, in noticing these discrepancies; but when the Reviewer complains that "no impeachment of *Mr. Clerk's* originality, or claim, should have been made" by the other parties, at the time the *second* edition of his *Naval Tactics* was published, when, as the Reviewer asserts, "most of the parties concerned were alive," I must be permitted to show the reader, that this declaration of Mr. Clerk's did not appear till twenty-two years after the battle; and so far from the "parties chiefly concerned being then alive," they were all dead! I beg, then, to say, that it is the other party—the claimant party—to whom, only, such a reproach applies; but I *make* none—I only repel that made against me.

Mr. Clerk's declaration as to the assumed communication by Mr. Atkinson, was brought before the public for the first time in 1804, in the Author's Preface to the second edition, dated May 19, published in that year. It is in these words:—

"In January, 1780, when I was in London, being fully impressed with the importance of the naval ideas which long had been working in my imagination, and in consequence of the strictures on Lord Keppel's engagement, sent the year before, some appointments, for the purpose of further communication on this subject, were made by my friends. Among the first of these was an appointment with Mr. Richard Atkinson, the particular friend of Sir G. Rodney, who was then in London, and was immediately to set out to take the command of the fleet in the West Indies. At this meeting, the whole of my acquisitions on the subject of naval tactics, for many years back, was discussed. I communicated to Mr. Atkinson the theories of attack both from windward and leeward, &c. I also produced the strictures on Lord Keppel's rencounter of 27th July, which contained all my ideas on the subject of naval tactics. All this Mr. Atkinson undertook to communicate to Sir G. Rodney, which he could have no difficulty in doing, as I left with him sketches made according to my usual method of demonstration, together with the necessary explanations."

Such are the nature and dates of Mr. Clerk's own declarations; yet, in the face of these, and of the fact that he never publicly brought forward such claims as have since his death been asserted, and that the *first* edition of his book was not published till the year after my Father's death, the Reviewer says, that "Mr. Clerk's claim was distinctly stated by Mr. Clerk himself, in the preface to the *second* edition, published when most of the parties concerned were alive; and when, so far as he, the Reviewer, was aware, no public impeachment of his originality, or claim by any one else, to a share in his discovery, had ever been made!" Mr. Clerk did not even *assume* such a communication to have been made till twenty-two years after the battle, and never did more than infer, that it had been made. He never brought forward one particle of proof upon the subject; and nothing short of producing the very papers alluded to, (for as to *the book* I have disposed of it)—nothing but Mr. Atkinson's declaration as to whether he did, and how he did, make the communication, which Mr. Clerk only says "he

engaged to do:"—nothing but PROOF who the officer of distinguished merit was, whom Mr. Clerk never ventured to name, when doing so would have brought the question to issue, (my Father, observe! having publicly declared, as I have shown, that he was not one of the persons to whom such an allusion might be supposed to attach)—nothing but proof that the "additional observations" and the Diagram Plate XIV. upon the attack from the leeward, (interpolated into Part I, and which Mr. Clerk admits, page xlii. Author's Preface, was not finished at the time "the attack from the windward was got ready with as great speed as possible by the 1st of January, 1782,") were actually in the possession of these officers, and did regulate the proceedings of the battle—nothing but the production of such documents, and such proof, can confirm Mr. Clerk's assumption that the communication was made, or give him the remotest possible share in the credit of having previously thought of such a manœuvre as that which had been practised. It is quite inconceivable that such papers, sent in every direction to ministers and admirals, can all have been lost or destroyed. Mr. Clerk, in the passages quoted from his work, "founds," in law language, certain claims upon *those papers*; and no other proof but the production of those identical documents, would, or could be allowed to him, in any court of justice; and none surely will be admitted in a court of honour, in which the character of the profession, and the reputation of gallant officers are concerned. I have carefully and faithfully searched all my Father's papers in the order in which they were found after his sudden and unexpected death, and evidently put up as they were received, to ascertain whether any official correspondent, scientific acquaintance, or brother officer, had made any mention of, or allusion to any papers, propositions, plans or suggestions, either from Mr. Clerk, or any other person, on naval tactics in general, or on any particular mode of operation; or if any thing could be traced, in the vast number of letters which were received by my Father from public characters after the battle, which might show whether any such communication had been received by, or was known to them in any way. I find numerous letters congratulating my Father on his appointment as Captain of the Fleet; and a greater number still, congratulating him on the great and peculiar share he had in the successes and glories of that day; but no mention whatever of any such papers, nor the remotest allusion to any such person as Mr. Clerk, or to the receipt of any suggestions for the improvement of Naval Tactics. Yet among these letters I find some from those very ministers, to whom, in proper course, such communications should have been addressed, and whose peculiar duty it was to consider, report upon, and, if approved, transmit to the fleet, for execution, all such communications as might be considered deserving of any attention.

If papers containing any real discovery in nautical warfare, or proposing any new and useful mode of attack, had been transmitted to the Naval Administration, or sent to the *most distinguished naval officers* of the time, some notice or knowledge of such a discovery or proposition must have appeared in the correspondence of such men

as Lord Howe—Lord Keppel, the First Lord of the Admiralty—Lord Sandwich, the preceding First Lord of the Admiralty—Captain Adam Duncan, afterwards Lord Duncan—Sir John L. Ross—Mr. Stephens, Secretary of the Admiralty—The Honourable (I believe) Robert Duff—General Smith—General Skene, commanding at Jamaica—Admiral Thomas Graves\*—Captain (Admiral) Hughes—The Duke of Queensbury—Admiral Ogle—Sir John Jervis—Sir Charles Middleton, the Comptroller of the Navy—Admiral E. Gower—Admiral G. Darby—Sir R. Hughes, &c. &c.? Letters from all these persons, and about ten times as many from others of inferior distinction, now lie before me? I shall enumerate some few of these, arranged in two divisions:—*first*, those congratulating my Father on his appointment as Captain of the Fleet.

Lord Keppel, private, London, Dec. 6, 1781.

Captain Adam Duncan, Gosport, Dec. 9, 1781.

R. Hughes, Harley Street, Dec. 7, 1781.

Duke of Queensbury, Piccadilly, Jan. 7, 1781.

C. Ogle, Dec. 25, 1781.

Sir Charles Middleton, several.

Sir John Jervis, Plymouth Dock, Dec. 19, 1781.

E. Gower, Dec. 2, 1781.

G. Darby, Cavendish Square, Dec. 6, 1781.

R. J. Hughes, Downs, Dec. 7, 1781.

Sir John L. Ross, Dec. 17, 1781.

These, and many other letters, congratulating my Father on his having been selected for the appointment, express in various terms—and particularly that from Lord Keppel—confidence “that my Father would execute the important trust and duty reposed in him to his own honour, and to the advantage and glory of his country;”—they notice the critical state of the war—the necessity of making a great exertion, &c. &c. and “the opportunity which his situation would afford *him* of introducing *his* improvements in naval science, which were so much wanted;” but not one word or allusion appears, in any of these letters or papers, to any such suggestions or propositions, as those stated to have been sent in by Mr. Clerk; or to any other reliances, hopes, or expectations, than the professional talents and experience of those to whom the fleet was intrusted, with the fullest dependance on these, and on these only.

The following are extracts of a few of the many and strong letters of congratulation which my Father received on the great share he had in the success and glory of the day.

Lord Howe writes, (Victory, St. Helen's, 30 June, 1782.)

“I would denominate your celebrated battle, the battle *of the Saints*, but that I know not how to reconcile the appellation with the *infernal* fire, whereunto you are said to owe your victory on that occasion. I have the pleasure

\* I take the names from the signatures to the letters, and may be wrong as to the rank I have assigned to the writers at the time.

to see that the desire to do you justice, in a point of such national consequence, is universal."

Lord Keppel writes, (Admiralty, May 29, 1782.)

"You will believe me sincere in my congratulations to you upon the great and glorious victory obtained by Sir George Rodney over that of France, on the 12th of April, 1782, off Dominique. Sir George Rodney by it establishes his name and greatness as a sea admiral, over all Europe. He endears himself to his brother citizens, and he has a right to claim comfort and indulgence, with pride and happiness, the rest of his life. He has, and ever will have, my warmest friendship and assistance. The share your situation gave you in the important services mentioned, you have well profited of, by the assistance you afforded to Sir George in the great calls he must have had for officers about him of such knowledge, experience, and zeal, as is possessed by you."

Lord Sandwich writes, Hertford Street, May 26, 1782.

"Though I am no longer entitled to write to you upon business relative to the naval department, I cannot avoid thanking you for the letter with which you have favoured me, and congratulating you upon the late glorious successes of the British fleet, and the considerable share you have had in the honours obtained to this country in the best fought battle, and the most decisive victory, that has ever graced the annals of England. I most heartily wish you a continuance of successes wherever you are employed, though I fear that, by the unaccountable recall of Sir George Rodney, your present career is stopped; you have, however, gained glory enough to satisfy any reasonable man, and I am persuaded that, whenever you have a fresh opportunity of signalizing yourself, it will not be neglected."

Captain Duncan writes, Chatham, June 22, 1782.

"Amongst the many congratulations which your great conduct and successes will receive from a grateful country, give me leave to add my mite; which, like the widow's, though small, I hope will not be the less acceptable, as it is from the heart it comes. I particularly trouble you with this, as my friend Crauford, in a letter, expresses himself, under many obligations to you for your attention, and thinks it is on my account, which at all times I shall be happy to acknowledge to you. I dare say you will not forget my young friend Craigie, who I am much interested for, and who writes to me you have taken notice of him—I recommended him to Admiral Pigot before he sailed. I am now fitting out the Blenheim here, but we are in great want of men, many ships ready, but stopped on that account. I shall at all times rejoice at any great fortune that attends you."

Sir John L. Ross writes, Edinburgh, September, 1783.

"I am this day returned from Ross-shire. Sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you before you left Edinburgh to have congratulated you in person on the signal services done your country, and the honour you have acquired against our enemies on your late service in the West Indies, in which I, amongst the rest of your friends, feel much satisfaction in your having so great a share in the honour done to the navy on the 12th April.

The ministers and others are not named to whom Mr. Clerk is said to have transmitted his papers; but the utter silence—the obvious ignorance of the writers of the letters I have cited, as to any such

having been received by them, must be considered conclusive, that neither the naval administration, nor the distinguished officers I have named, received, or had any knowledge of, such papers; and there can be no doubt that if any communications which Mr. Clerk may have made, could be discovered, they, like "the book," would be found to contain nothing new,\* and positively nothing in the shape of a suggestion, explanation, or demonstration of such a manœuvre as that practised on the 12th of April.

The Reviewer, however, asserts, that the Admiral and his Captain of the Fleet, actually laid their plans, systematically and deliberately, upon "the book," and put in practice, accordingly, the manœuvre which it taught and explained. Now, what I have said will be enough to show, and of this the reader may soon satisfy himself, that the Admiral and his Captain of the Fleet could not possibly have been "studying or preparing a deliberate plan for breaking the line from" any "explanations, directions, or sketches of Mr. Clerk's,"† even if it had been admitted, (which it is not, by either of the executive parties,) that his tract was in their possession; for no such matter, positively, was in "the book." The figure, then, by which it is meant to charge an officer, who, in another part of the article, is characterized "a pure, high-minded, and honourable man," with having acted as one who should steal an important and "beautiful idea from a book then in his possession, printed with another man's name,"‡ and use that discovery, surreptitiously, as his own, is as unfeeling, as it is unfounded. I regret that the writer's pages should have contained such an observation: I regret that he should have been so inconsiderate of the feelings of others, and I marvel that he should be so ignorant of his client's case, as not to have taken advantage of the notice I fairly gave, in my first statement, page xxxviii, and note, page xxxix, that I *knew* the *idea* was not printed in *that* "man's book," nor in *any* book of his, until eight years after the battle; and that the claim was never brought before the public, until the death of the person who, no one can now doubt, has been deprived of much of his due, by the belief which the public has been led to give to the assertions which Mr. Clerk's advocates have hazarded, that the idea was *written in that* book, and that Sir George Rodney *admitted* this whilst annotating upon it. This (namely, in 1790) is what the Reviewer calls "taking the first opportunity" after the battle, of "explaining, historically, how that event was connected with his speculations." Lord Rodney was living in 1790, though my Father was dead; and if Mr. Clerk had, even then, advanced his pretensions in the shape of such "full explanations" as those, which the Reviewer asserts were before Lord Rodney when he wrote his annotations,—

\* Professor Playfair confirms this. He declares, page 461, vol. iii. of his works, that the contents of the book and the papers were alike; for that "the papers which had been circulated, more than a year before the printing of the book, among Mr. Clerk's friends, were copies of the book."

† Edinb. Review, p. 25.

‡ Edinb. Review, p. 31.

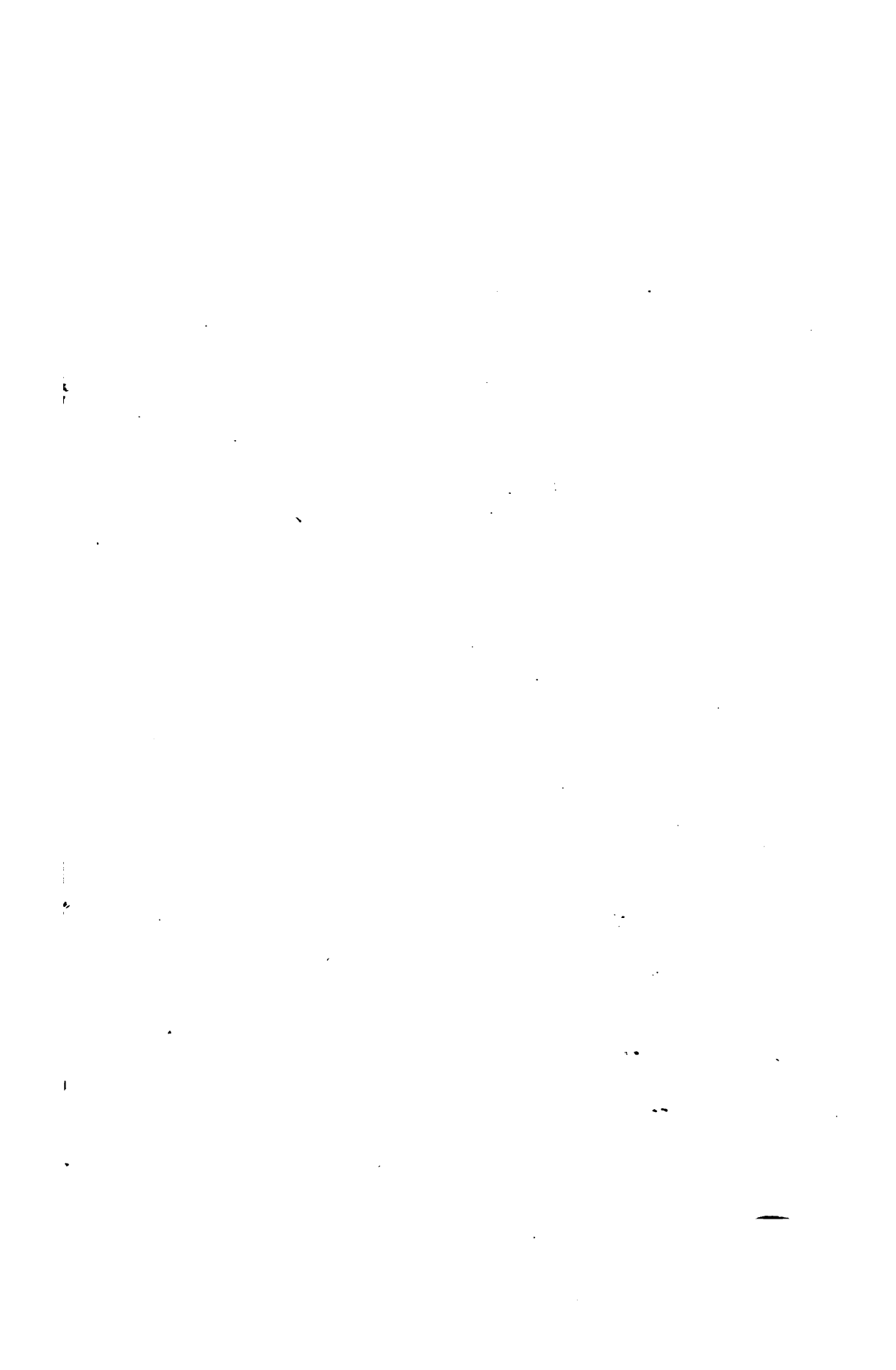


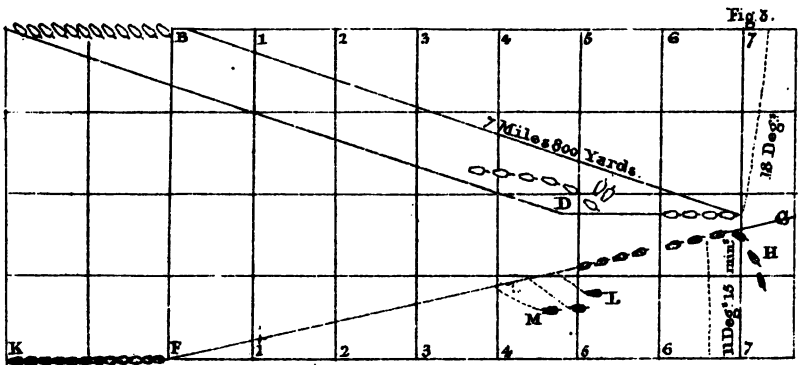
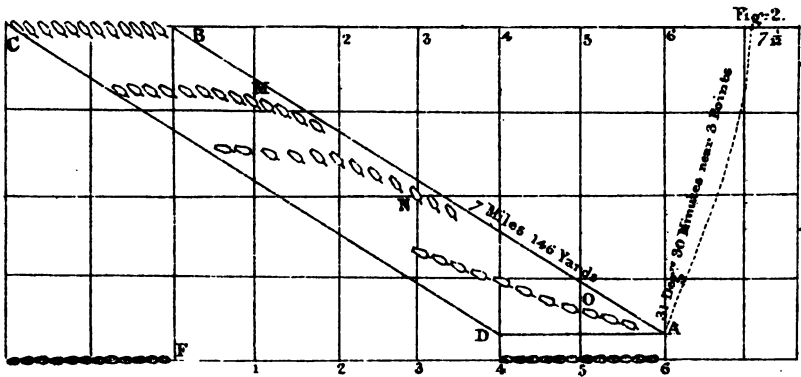
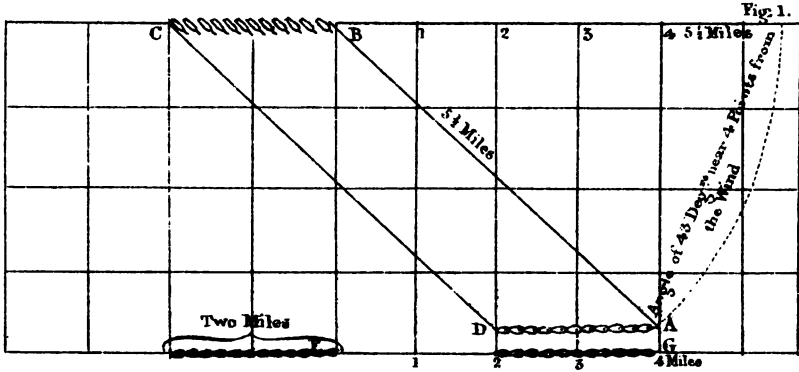
if, in the first edition (1790) Mr. Clerk had *named* Lord Rodney, and Mr. Atkinson, as he did in that of 1804, when he, for the first time, brought forward the claim of having communicated the idea through Mr. Atkinson, who was dead also; or if the "other observations," page 119,\* had stood in the tract that was submitted to Lord Rodney, he, at least, would have had a distinct opportunity of making annotations upon Mr. Clerk's whole claim. But no!—not until 1804, twenty-two years after the event, when Lord Rodney and my Father, and most of the parties were dead, was any distinct claim asserted in the behalf of Mr. Clerk, to the merit of having invented and suggested the manœuvre by which the battle was won; whilst the terms in which Mr. Clerk had rather *inferred* or insinuated, than *asserted* this, evince, not only that he could not distinctly claim the merit, but a consciousness of not being the inventor of the manœuvre; for he states, page xliv. Author's Preface, 1804, "I may also here be permitted to observe, that although Sir G. Rodney should be supposed to have had the merit of adopting the manœuvre by which he gained the victory of the 12th of April, without any previous suggestion or knowledge of my ideas on the subject, still it is impossible to deny the efficacy of the method; and that, had it not been for my work, the system on which it proceeded might have remained unknown or unexplained." This, I observed, see page xx, first Statement, "would not be generally admitted; for that the system was taught and explained by Paul Hoste, in his *Traité des Evolutions Navales*, in 1727."

It should here be observed, that my Father's letter, denying all previous knowledge of Mr. Clerk's book, or "system," as it is called, was in reply to verbal rumour, which had *surmised* my Father to be one of those "distinguished officers" to whom Mr. Clerk's tract is stated to have been handed, or sent; for neither in it, nor in any other publication, did Mr. Clerk *name* my Father, or publicly assert, what has been advanced since his death. It was surely incumbent upon Mr. Clerk, as the asserter, to bring before the public, in distinct, express, and nominal terms, at the time, any claims he might think he had to the merit of having invented and suggested the manœuvre:—not having done so, his, surely, is not the party which has any right to use reproach, that claims had not been "impeached till after the death of the parties concerned."

I am sorry to take up so much of the reader's time:—he will bear with me,—I am not only vindicating my Father's professional claims, and defending his character, but I undertake, too, the vindication of the British Navy in what they consider, and I feel, to be a subject of great professional interest. To go to the very root of this matter, I shall leave no fact, which can be got at, unexplored or undisplayed, that may explain, beyond all possibility of doubt, the real circumstances of this extraordinary pretension:—and first, it will be necessary to present the reader with an accurate summary of the matter really contained in "*the book*," which the Edinburgh Reviewer asserts to

\* Naval Tactics.





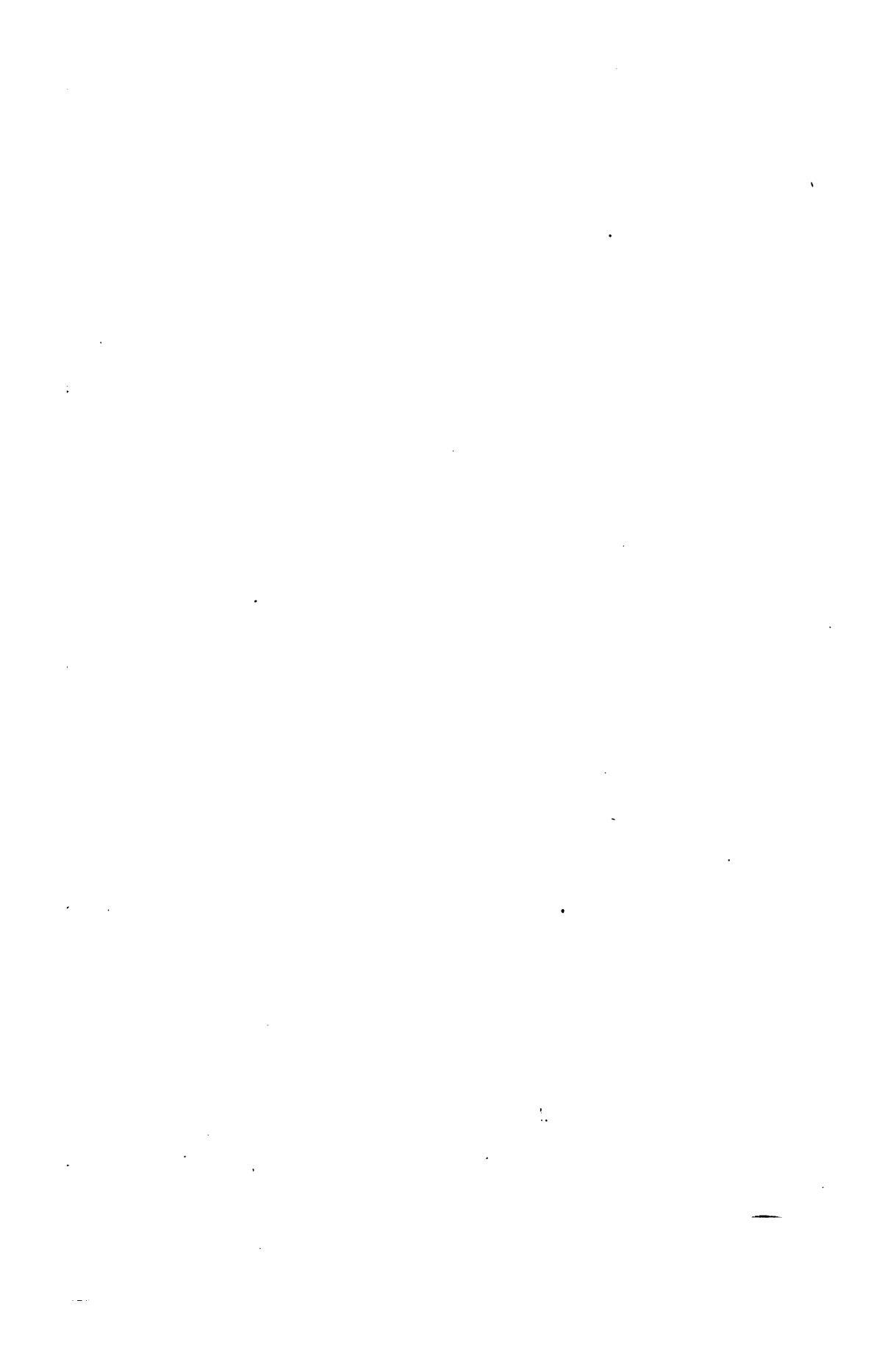


Fig. 1.

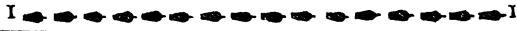
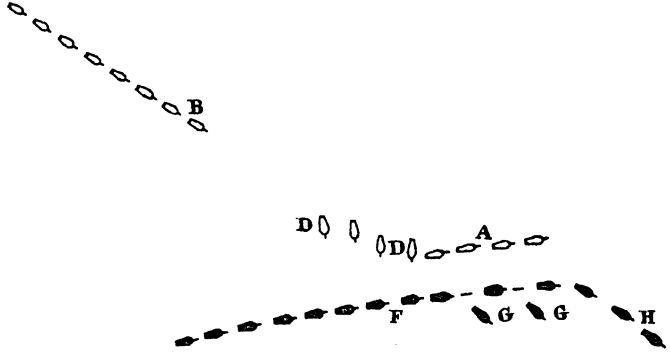
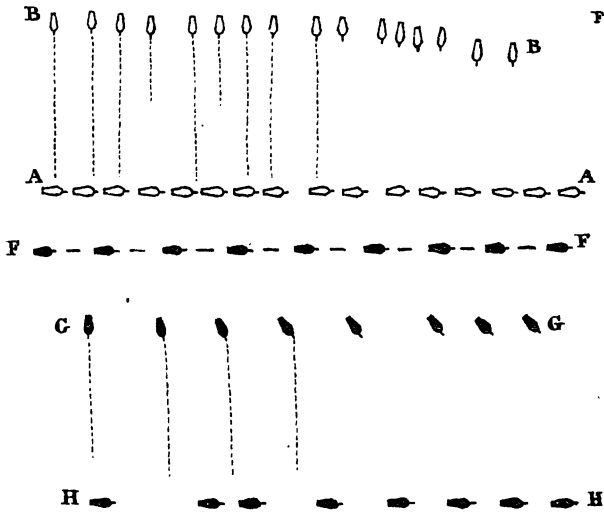
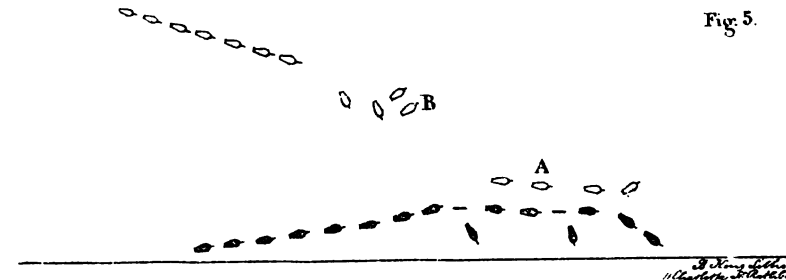
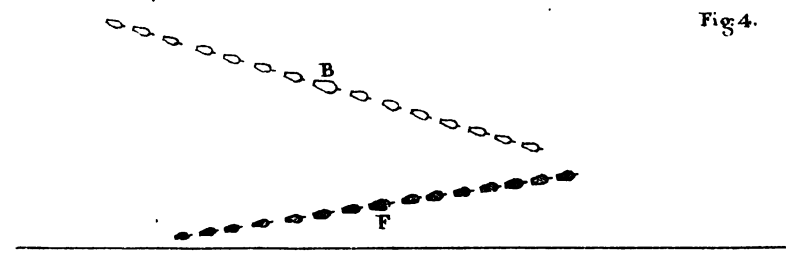
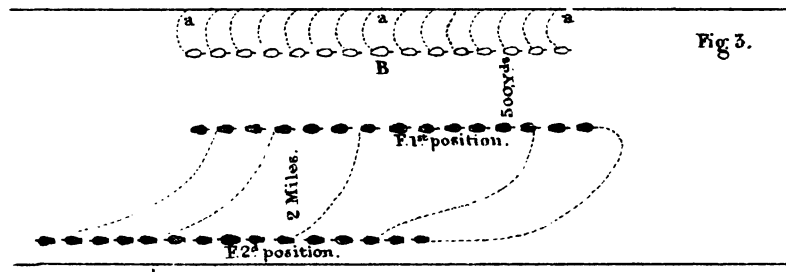
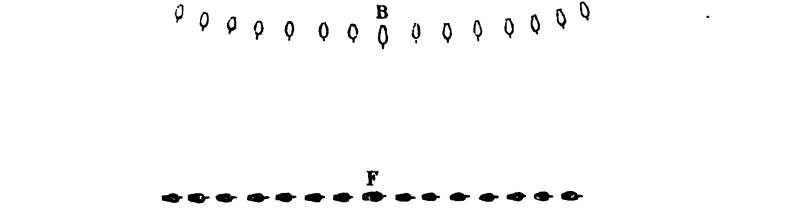
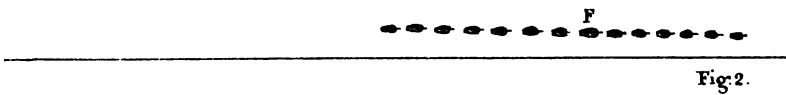
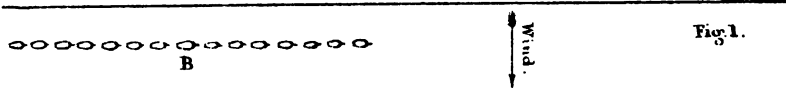


Fig. 2.







J. H. ...  
11/2/18/18

have been "studied by the Admiral and his Captain, on the very day of the action," and to have "contained sketches and plans, explaining the text."

The "book," a few copies of which are stated by Mr. Clerk himself, (in his Advertisement to the first edition, dated Edinburgh, Jan. 1790,) to have been "printed in 1782, and handed about among friends," is declared by him to have been only on the attack from the windward; and accordingly, "the mode of attack proposed" in that tract, was confined to that class of operation. That the author had no intention of treating upon the attack from the leeward, at that time, is put beyond all doubt, by the declaration, page xlii. Author's Preface, and in article 193, page 158. (Edinb. 3d edit. 1827,) "*a further prosecution of demonstrations which are likely to lead us on to the attack from the leeward, we think proper to decline for the present. (1782) It is a new subject, and, of itself, requires a separate discussion.*"

The Introduction, "by a Naval Officer," which the reader will find in the present edition of the Naval Tactics, and to which so much importance has been attached by the Reviewer, was written for the second edition in 1804. The officer who wrote that Introduction, must have imagined, or have been led to believe, that the original tract did fully explain the manœuvre, or he could not have asserted, page xxiii. "that Rodney's practice was taken from that book,"—a passage which, the Reviewer cites, page 2, "as an acknowledgment, made in the name, and on the behalf, as it were, of the profession, that Clerk was the inventor of the operation, and taught the British navy how to execute it, before it had been thought of, or practised, by any other person." In my Father's name, and for the credit of the profession, I deny, and will disprove this vain assumption of the Reviewer.

The *Author's* Preface was written for the second edition in 1804, and is dated Edinb. May 19, 1804.

The First Section, on the "mode of attack proposed," is in the case of single ships.

The Second Section is, on the comparative effects of shot directed against the rigging, and those produced by directing them against the hull. (Upon this, as a case of gunnery, I shall observe hereafter.)

Section Third, which is announced to be on bringing Great Fleets to action, treats, in four pages only, of the distance which one line must be from another to admit of any one ship, in line of battle, being exposed to the fire of three, or more ships, at the same time.

Section IV. is on the attack from the windward, by a fleet desirous of fighting, on a fleet to leeward wishing to avoid battle. This is illustrated by three Plates, of which Plates 1, 2, 3, of this are exact copies.

I exhibit fac-similes of all the plates explaining the text, as the best and fairest way of showing the mode of attack proposed by Mr. Clerk. In this section there are some observations on gunnery cases,



which I shall have occasion to notice. Then come Five Sections of "examples of engagements in former wars;" and lastly, "the new mode of attack proposed."

Section I. Attack from the windward upon the enemy's rear; in 1½ page; the text explained by Fig. 1 and 2, Plate 4 of this (Plate 17 of Clerk.)

Section II. Attack upon the enemy's three sternmost ships, in 2 pages; the text explained by Fig. 2, Plate 4 (17 of Clerk.)

Section III. The enemy's attempt to support his three sternmost ships by tacking; 2 pages; the text explained by Fig. 3, 4, 5, Plate 4, and Fig. 6, Plate 5 (17 and 18 of Clerk.)

Section IV. The enemy's attempt to support his three sternmost ships by wearing; 3 pages; the text explained by Fig. 2, Plate 4, and Fig. 7, 8, 9, Plate 5 (17 and 18 of Clerk.)

Section V. The lee fleet endeavouring to avoid the attack from the windward, by wearing; 2 pages; the text explained by Fig. 10, Plate 5, Fig. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, Plate 6, and Fig. 16, 17, 18, 19, Plate 7 (18, 19, and 20 of Clerk.)

Section VI. is on the effects of shifts of wind on the preceding operations, Plate 8 (21 of Clerk.)

Section VII. on partial breezes of wind.

Section VIII. of winds blowing in contrary directions.

Section IX. Other opinions "on how the attack from the windward should be conducted;" about 4 pages; the text explained by Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4, Plate 9 (26 of Clerk.)

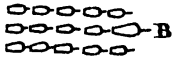
Section X. conclusion, with general observations, 1 page; in which there is not the most distant allusion to any other "mode of attack" than that of the attack from the windward upon the rear ships of a fleet to leeward; and not one word about breaking the line.

Lastly, an Appendix to Part I., on the attack from the windward and "On the curve of pursuit from the windward."

If "the book," upon which Lord Rodney annotated, contained all this, certain it is that it contained no more. Neither the description of Sir George Rodney's actions of May, 1780; nor Plates XI. and XII., see Clerk's book as it now stands, page 103, third edition; nor the account of "Keppel's battle of July, 1778, nor Plates XIII. and XIV.; nor the "other observations," page 119, stood either in the tract printed in 1782, nor in the copy upon which Lord Rodney annotated in 1789 or 1790.

The reader will now have assured himself, that the whole reasoning of the Edinburgh article is constructed upon an erroneous hypothesis; and that "*the book*" (which the reviewer acknowledges\* is the *only* part of Mr. Clerk's work as it now stands, which the Admiral and his

\* p. 25.



Mode of Attack proposed.

Fig. 1.  
N°166.

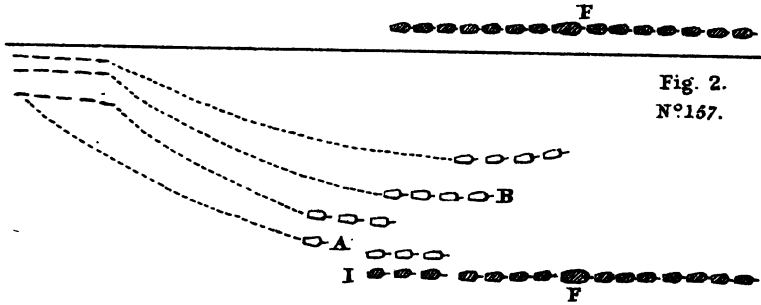


Fig. 2.  
N°167.

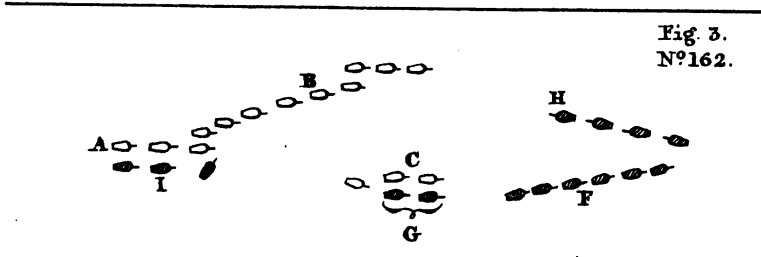


Fig. 3.  
N°162.

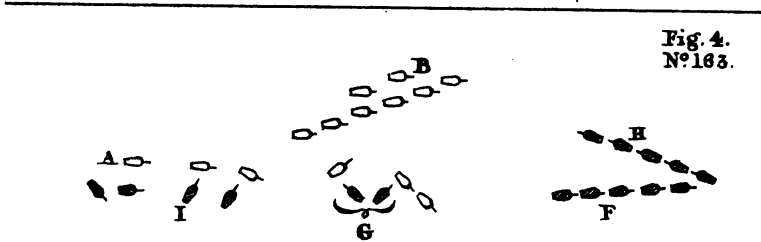


Fig. 4.  
N°163.

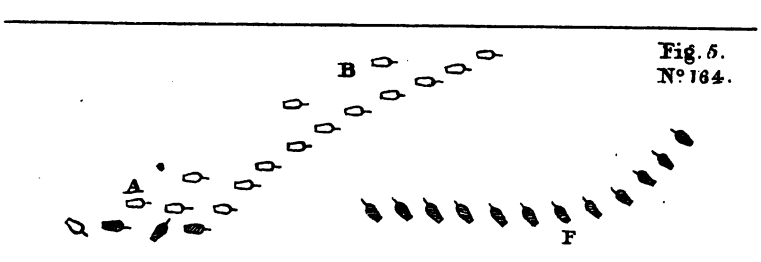
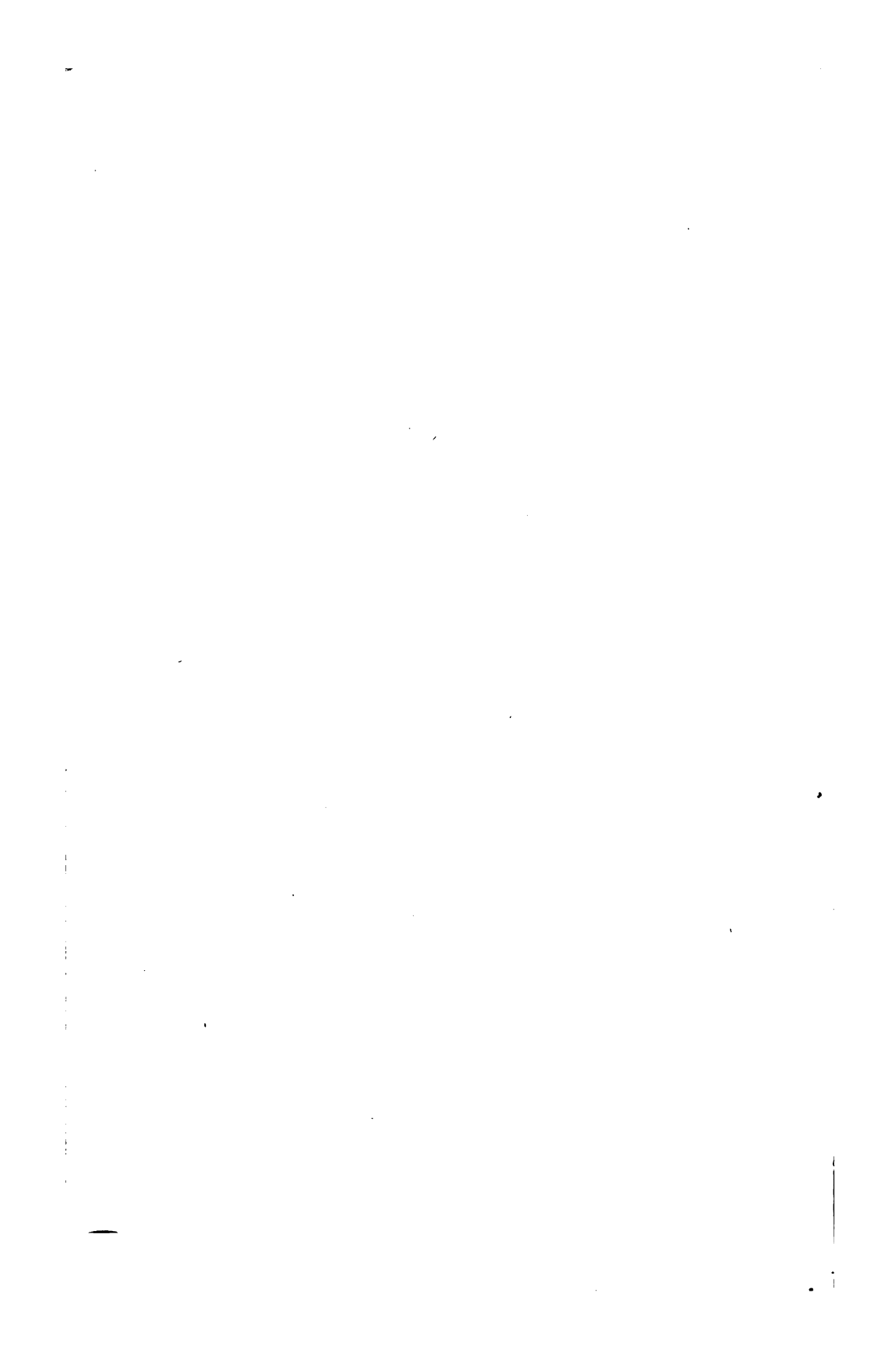


Fig. 5.  
N°164.



Mode of Attack proposed

Fig. 6.  
N° 166.

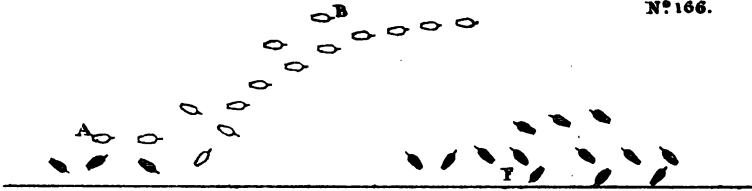


Fig. 7.  
N° 168

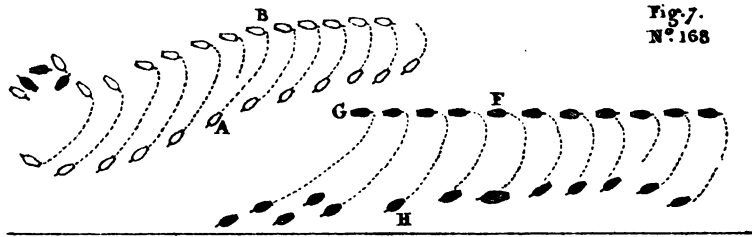


Fig. 8.  
N° 169

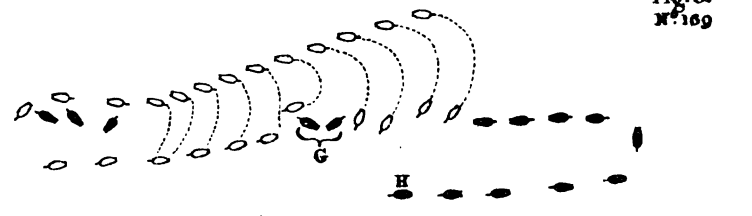


Fig. 9.  
N° 170.

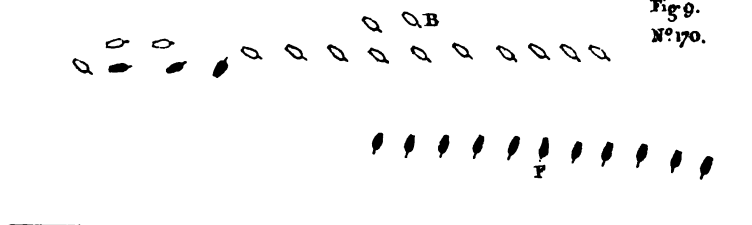
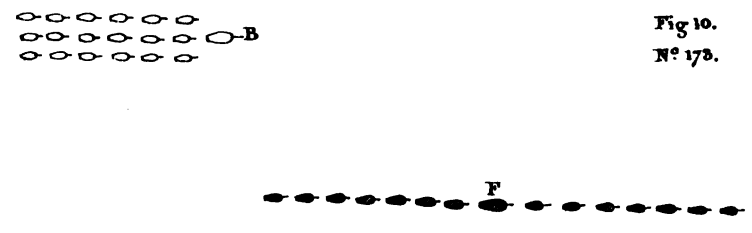


Fig. 10.  
N° 173.





Mode of Attack proposed

Fig. 11.  
N° 174.

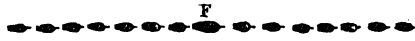


Fig. 12.  
N° 174.

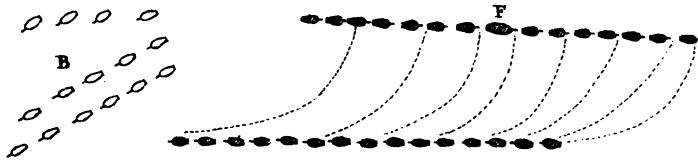


Fig. 13.  
N° 176

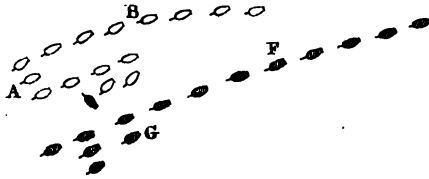


Fig. 14  
N° 178.

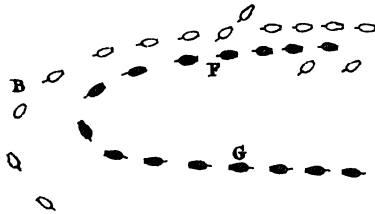
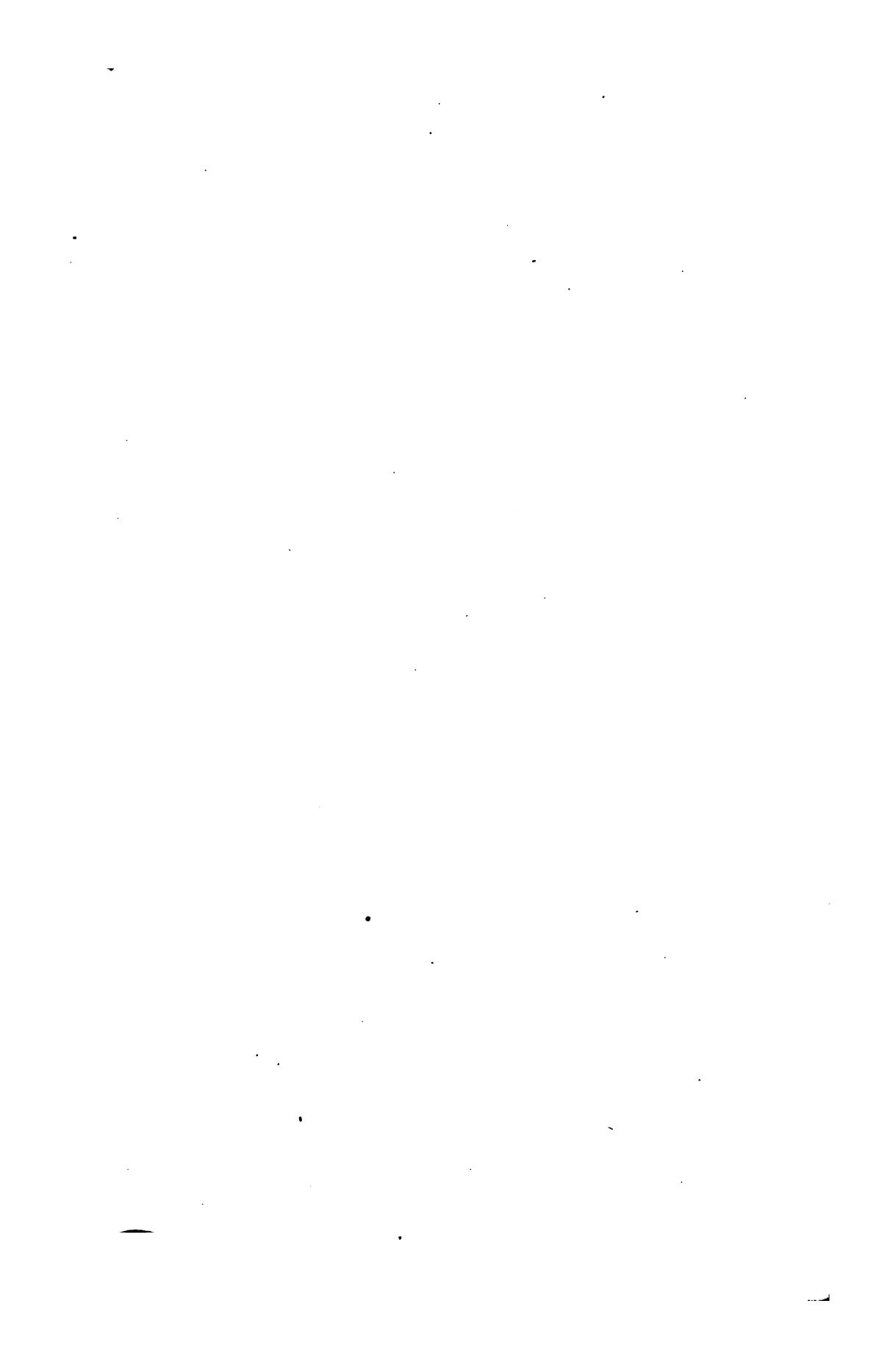


Fig. 15.





Mode of Attack proposed.

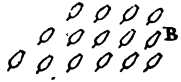


Fig. 16.  
N° 180.



Fig. 17.

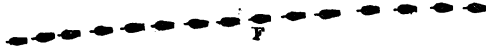
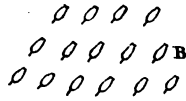


Fig. 18.

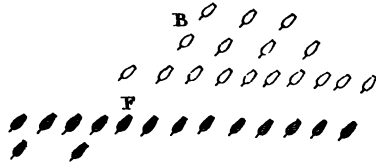
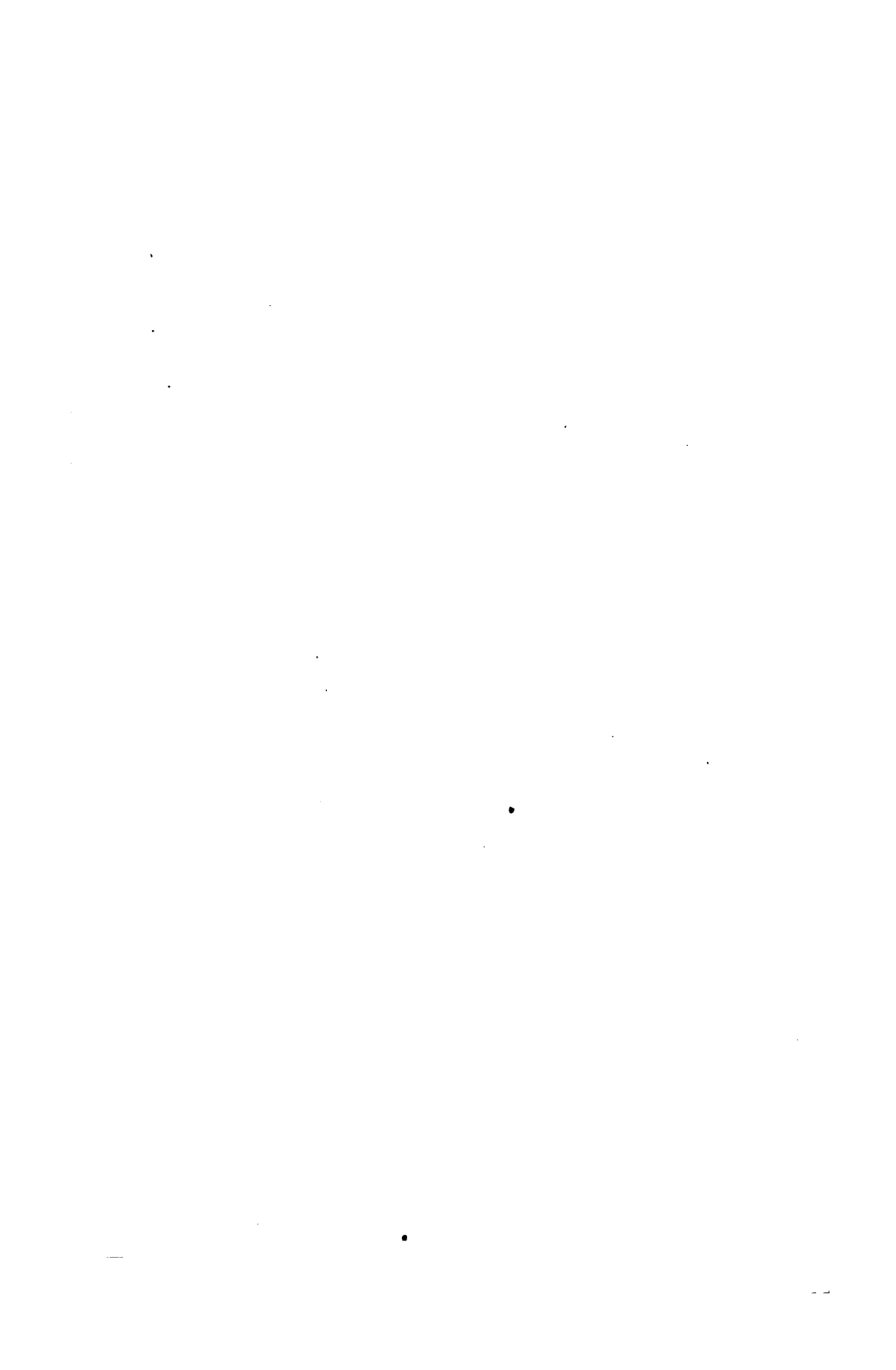
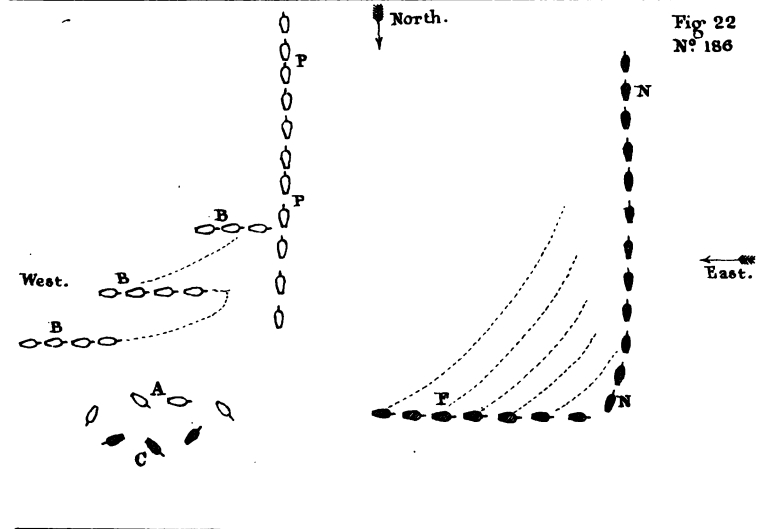
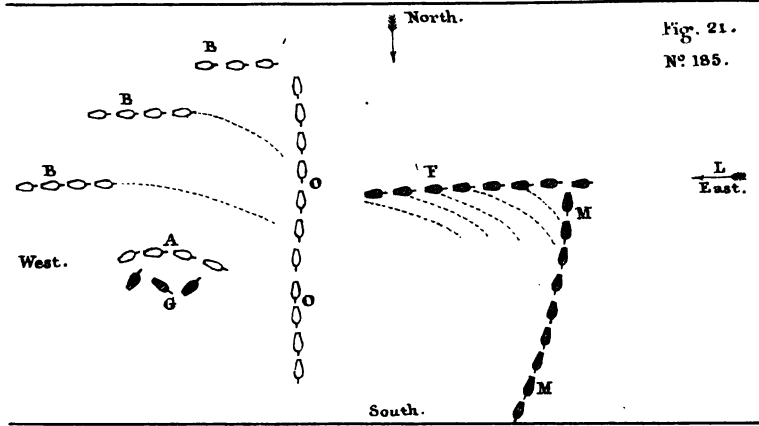
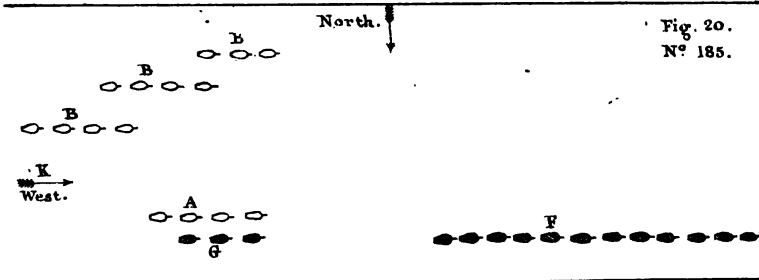


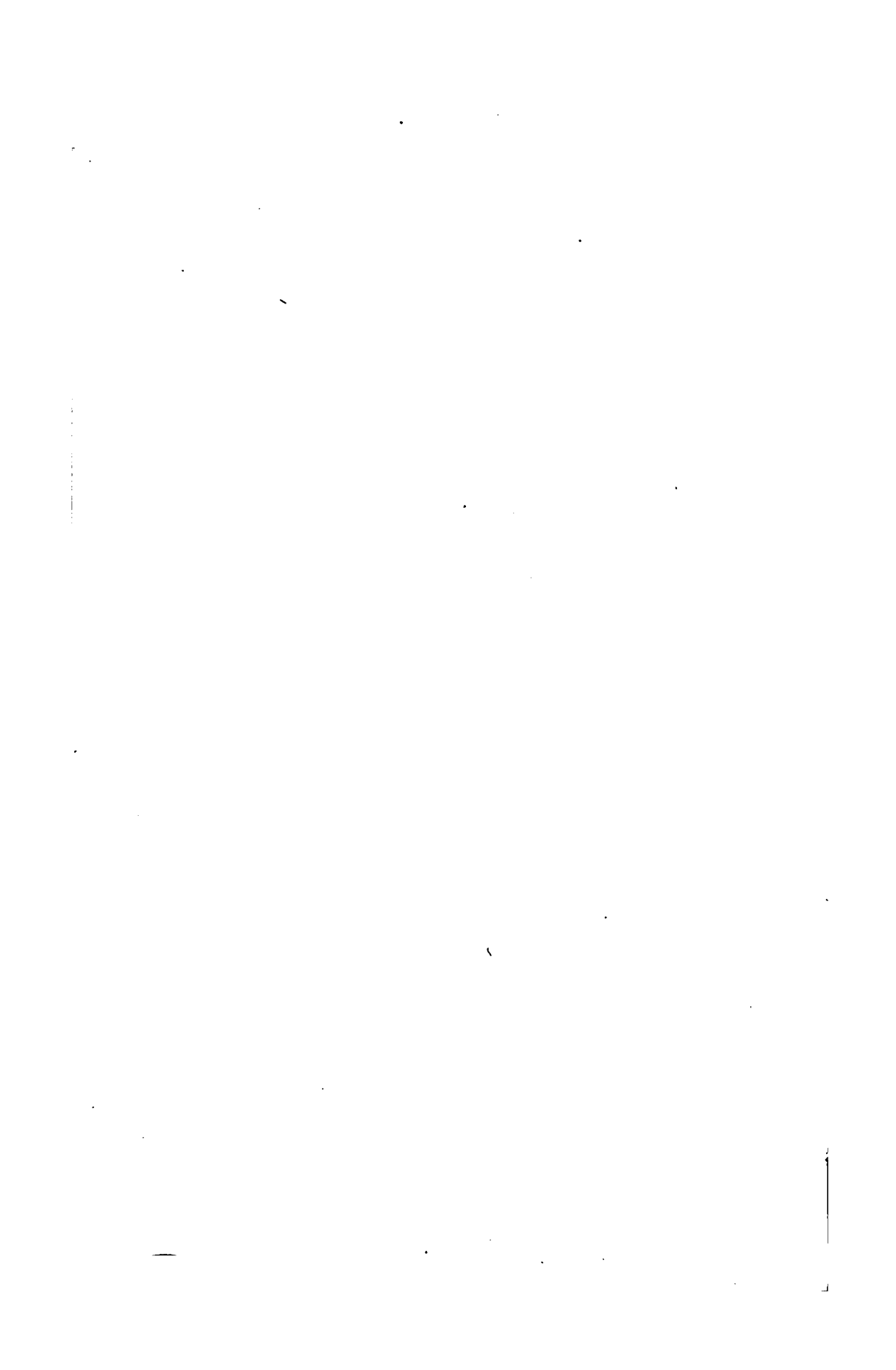
Fig. 19.











Mode of Attack proposed.



Fig. 1.  
N° 209.

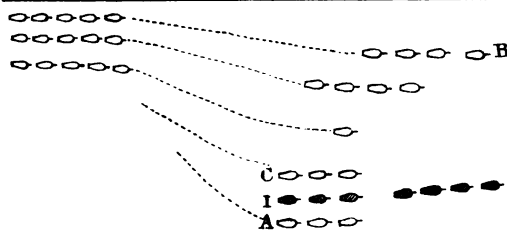
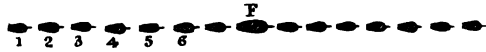


Fig. 2.  
N° 210.

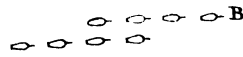


Fig. 3  
N° 211

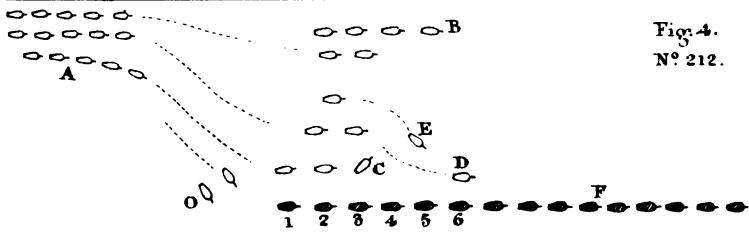
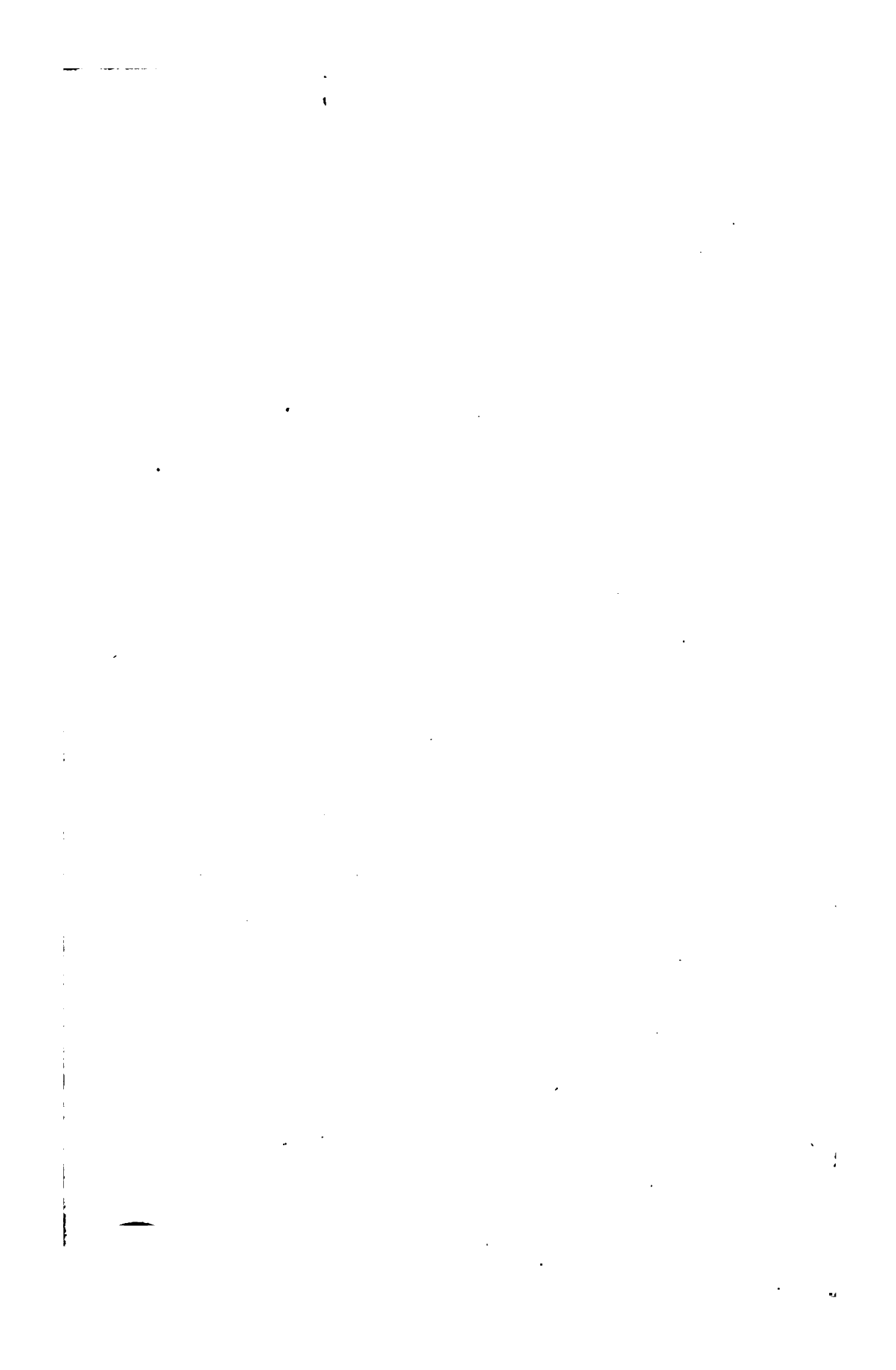


Fig. 4.  
N° 212.



Captain of the Fleet had to study) contained *no* explanations, illustrations, or demonstrations, whatever, of the manœuvre by which the battle was gained.

These important facts clear up a great deal of the difficulty, and complexity, in which this case has been involved. It is from the public having laboured under the error of believing, that the grand secret was disclosed, and taught, in "*the book*," that so much credit has been, hypothetically, ascribed to Mr. Clerk. All the hearsay and inference, which the writer has drawn into the article—all the letters—all the conversations, in which reference is made to "*Clerk's book on Naval Tactics*," refer to nothing more than to the matter contained in "*the book*" printed in 1782, which the public has been led to believe, contained some "*magnificent discovery in nautical warfare*," and to have fully explained the very manœuvre which Rodney practised; but which contained, as I have proved, nothing more than some insignificant operations, from the windward, on the *rear ships of a fleet to leeward, running away, on the same tack!* Thus, referring to "*the book*" which is supposed to have taught all this, Lord Rodney is stated to have spoken of a Scotch gentleman who had written an admirable book. Again, he is stated by Mr. Playfair to have "talked very unreservedly to Lord Melville of the Naval Tactics, and of the use he had made of the system, in his action of the 12th of April."\* And again, General Ross says, "that meeting Lord Rodney at the table of Sir John Dalling, he heard his Lordship distinctly state, that he owed his success in the West Indies to the manœuvre of breaking the line which he learned from *Mr. Clerk's book*."† And then we are told of

\* P. 15.

† The Literary Gazette, and another extremely respectable journal, (the Caledonian Mercury,) called the public attention, and mine in particular, some time ago, to the following extract, stated to have been taken, verbatim, from Mr. Price Gordon's Memoirs, vol. i. pages 135, 136.

"This year, 1782, Rodney fought his celebrated battle in the West Indies. He arrived in England soon after this glorious affair, and landed at Kingroad. Our Race-Horse was at anchor there, when the Admiral ordered one of our boats to convey him to Bristol, and, requesting some officer to accompany him, I offered my services, which were accepted."

"The Admiral landed at Pill, as it was feared the tide, which runs at a furious rate in this river, might fail him. He politely gave me a seat in his chaise, and begged I would conduct him to the best inn. I mentioned the *Bush* as being celebrated for its larder, so we drove thither. The landlord, Weeks, a well-known character, received his Lordship with all possible honours, and a most superb entertainment was put before him, to which I had the honour of being invited; and two officers in his suite made it *une partie carrée*."

It is further stated in those journals, that whilst thus accompanying and dining with Lord Rodney, the conversation relative to Mr. Clerk, which Mr. Gordon reports on recollection, took place.

It would appear from this account, as if Lord Rodney had come home in a merchant vessel. But knowing, by a letter from his Lordship to my Father, written "at sea," that Lord Rodney came home in a line-of-battle ship, attended by a frigate; and being desirous of ascertaining from what extraordinary contingencies the officers and equipages of those ships should be so circumstanced, as, in violation of the regulations, customs, and all the *étiquettes* of the service, to be obliged to relinquish the honour of landing their gallant Admiral on such an occasion, and to devolve that honour on a

his Lordship's candid and generous out-breakings in praise of the *Naval Tactics*.\* Again, "Lord Rodney dined one day with Colonel

\* p. 16.

boat's crew and the marine officer of the Race-Horse sloop, which happened to be lying at Bristol—I made reference to official documents in my possession—and some professional and literary gentlemen have addressed to me numerous extracts of others—from which it appears, that Lord Rodney sailed from Port Royal, Jamaica, in his Majesty's ship Montagu, on the 23d of July, 1782, the Flora frigate in company; and the log-books of these ships show that they came to anchor off the Holmes, in the Bristol Channel, on the 21st of September, 1782; that on the 22d (nautical time) Lord Rodney shifted his flag to the Flora, and sailed in her on the same day towards Bristol. The Flora's log then shows that the Admiral landed from her that night at Bristol, in his barge, attended by Captain Marshall, the captain of that ship, leaving her in charge of another officer, Captain Manly, in order to accompany Lord Rodney. The log-book of the Race-Horse, extracts of two of which have been sent to me, state—"Sloop Race-Horse, Sept. 22d, 1782, in Kingroad, Bristol, arrived H. M. S. Flora with Admiral Rodney." The other—"arrived here H. M. S. Flora with Admiral Rodney."

Then as to the point of landing, and the house to which Lord Rodney went, and at which he remained whilst at Bristol—the following is a copy of a minute made, at the time, by Samuel Bowden, Esq. "Admiral Rodney, in the Montagu of 74 guns, arrived in Kingroad, came up to Bristol in the evening, slept that night at Mr. Tindal's, in the fort. A large party from the Bush Inn went with torches, and paid their respects to him." Another account states "Sir George Rodney did not land at Pill, as can be proved by the evidence of the four following pilots residing at Pill: John Chafey, Richard Musto, John Musto, and John Bowles."

The following extracts, confirming this, have been transmitted to me by a literary gentleman from the British Museum, with the following minute. "One Bristol and several London newspapers announce, as follows, the landing of Lord Rodney, and show that his Lordship was rowed in his own barge to Bristol; slept on Saturday night the 22d, the only night he remained at Bristol, at Thomas Tindal's Esq. at the fort; and that his Lordship does not appear ever to have been at the Bush Inn."

*Farley's Bristol Journal, published weekly, Saturday, Sept. 28th, 1782.*

"Saturday last his Majesty's ship Montagu, (which brought Lord Rodney from the West Indies,) and the Flora frigate, arrived in Kingroad, and the same evening, about 6 o'clock, the noble Admiral came to this city, and alighted at Mr. Tyndal's, at the fort. The news spread immediately over the town, and excited the utmost joy; the bells began ringing and continued to a late hour that night. A considerable party of respectable citizens proceeded in the evening from the Bush Tavern, each with a lighted torch, and accompanied by a band of music, and an incredible number of the inhabitants, to pay their respects to the gallant veteran. Soon after their admission into the inner gates of the fort, the brave old man, attended by his honoured host, Mr. Tyndal, and some naval officers, appeared upon the steps outside the door; but it being understood that he was not sufficiently elevated there to be seen by all his visitors, he went up stairs and expressed from one of the windows (as well as gesture could express) the sense he entertained of their attachment to his person, and their intention of honouring him on his arrival. The most vociferous repetitions of applause were, after a moderate stay, succeeded by a very orderly retreat, from whence they paraded through Queen Square, and the principal parts of the city, and returned in procession to the Bush Tavern, which Mr. Weeks (the proprietor) had elegantly illuminated; and so much was he elated at the appearance of a man in this city, who had done such essential service to his country, that he for that evening bid all his guests *freely* welcome; and liberally treated the populace with liquor without doors. Sunday morning, about 7 o'clock; his lordship left the city, amidst the acclamations of multitudes, whom the day could not restrain from uttering their vociferations. The shortness of his Lordship's stay

Fullarton in Berkley Square, in the year 1786 or 1787, where, being very communicative, he declared that he had followed the plans and principles recommended in *Clerk's Naval Tactics*, a work to which Lord Rodney gave the highest praise.\* These, and all the other allusions made to "*the book on Naval Tactics*," refer to "*a book*" which the reader now knows contained not one word about breaking the line, nor any conception or illustration of the way in which it was, or could have been, effected on the 12th of April. Lord Rodney must have been in his dotage when he spoke thus; and whether he was or no, the fact positively was not as he is represented to have admitted. The writer says too, that "the testimony of Sir Walter Scott (my early and, as, I love to call him, my venerated friend) is distinctly in favour of Mr. Clerk's claim to the merit of having invented and taught the manœuvre in question, previous to the battle of the 12th of April." Sir Walter's testimony, as given incidentally in a note in the *Life of Napoleon*, goes only to a recollection of seeing Mr. Clerk navigate cork vessels on a dinner table. It is not disputed that Mr. Clerk had long amused himself, as an amateur, with naval tactics; but I am quite sure that Sir Walter Scott, when he shall have

\* p. 17.

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would not permit the corporation and West Indian merchants to pay their personal respects to him, but they did not omit imparting to him their grateful sense of his merits and services."

*Morning Chronicle, London, Tuesday, Sept. 24th, 1782—Extract of a Letter from Bristol, Sept. 22.*

"This day arrived the Montagu man-of-war, with Lord Rodney, and the Flora frigate, from Jamaica and Kinsale.

"Lord Rodney was received with great demonstrations of joy, the bells ringing, guns firing, and every mark of respect. He sleeps this night at the house of Thomas Tyn-dall, Esq. in our fort."

*Morning Herald, Tuesday, Sept 24th, 1782.*

"London.—Last night the Rt. Hon. Admiral Lord Rodney arrived in town from Bristol, in perfect health; his Lordship sailed in the Montagu, of 74 guns, from the Cove of Cork, on Thursday, and arrived in King Road on Saturday last about noon, when he was immediately rowed in his own barge to Bristol, where a general illumination was made in honour of this gallant but ill-treated commander."

*Public Advertiser, Wed. Sept. 25.* The same account.

*London Chron. Sat. Sept. 21st, to Tuesday, Sept. 24th, 1782.—Extract of a Letter from Bristol. Sept. 21.*

*Morning Herald, Wednesday, Sept. 25th, 1782.*

*Morning Chron. Sept. 26th, 1782, Thursday.*

*Morning Herald, Thursday, Sept. 26th, 1782.—Extract of a Letter from Bristol, Sept. 22d.*

*Parker's General Advertiser, Sept. 27th, 1782.*

Either the whole of the preceding official documents, public Journals, and authentic records, from which the foregoing extracts have been made, are absolute forgeries, or there must be some strange mistake here.



read this, and reconsidered, well, the subject, will not continue to assert that Mr. Clerk invented or explained the manœuvre that was practised on the 12th of April, even if he should still think that Mr. Clerk has since "taught the British Navy how to know and use their force."

The Reviewer affirms,\* "that the first part of the *Naval Tactics* was published in London on the 1st of January, 1782." It is scarcely worth while, so far as the matter in controversy is concerned, to consider whether that *brochure* was ever published or no; but so much importance has been attached to the alleged publication of that tract, as well as to its contents, that, although I have disposed of these, so far as to show that they relate not in any way to the manœuvre of the battle, I shall proceed to prove that it was never published till 1790.

Mr. Clerk distinctly states in the advertisement to the first edition, published in 1790, (and which is the first edition ever seen by the public,) that "a few copies of the first part of his *Essay on Naval Tactics*, being printed in 1782, were handed about among a few friends." This "Advertisement" is dated Edinburgh, January, 1790. Again, in his Preface to the second edition, published in 1804, see page xxix., he says, "that the following system appeared in print about twenty-two years ago." This preface is dated, Edinburgh, May 19th, 1804, so that "twenty-two years ago," fixed the date of the printing to be about May, 1782. Again, in a note to the Author's Preface, to the second edition 1804, it is stated, that "the first impression of Part I. consisted of a few copies, not for sale, but to be given away;" and in another part, see page xlii., Author's Preface, he says, "a few copies, only fifty in number, were printed and handed about among friends, and some copies I took the liberty to present to professional men:" and again, page xliii., "encouraged by many flattering letters of approbation, which I received from naval officers of distinguished merit, and of the highest rank, I was advised to send copies to his Majesty's Ministers at the time, which was in Spring, 1782; and my opinions, if just, no doubt deserved the immediate attention of government." Again, in the Introduction to the third edition, by a Naval Officer, see page xxiv., it is asserted that Clerk's book "had not then, (viz., on the 12th April, 1782,) been published, and that it was a manuscript copy which Lord Rodney had in his hands in the battle."

Now, though it is not possible to reconcile all these contradictions, I will give to them a construction the most favourable to Mr. Clerk, by adopting what he says, and what his biographer Mr. Playfair declares; namely, that fifty copies of the tract, were printed on the 1st of January, 1782, and handed about among some friends; some copies presented to professional men, and others sent to his Majesty's Ministers in the Spring of that year; and, which is very important, that "the *Naval Tactics* which appeared in print in the beginning of 1782, were copies of the papers which had been circulated more than a year before.†" But on the 1st of January, 1782, Sir G. Rodney and my Father had left London, together, for the West Indies: the tract therefore

\* pp. 8, 20, 30.

† Playfair, vol. iii. p. 41.

could neither have been PRESENTED NOR HANDED to them. Sir Gilbert Blane says,\* "that on the first of January, 1782, the fleet was wind-bound in the channel, and all communication with the metropolis (where it was believed the fleet had quitted England) and the fleet, being interrupted, it does not appear possible that "a book" printed in January could have been brought on board; and moreover that he never saw, or heard of such a work, though he spent a great part of his time in the Admiral's cabin; and it is certain that no copies, sent through the Ministers *in the spring*, could have reached the West Indies *before* the battle, which took place *in* the spring: if they had, they could have been of no use, for "the book" is proved to have treated only of bearing down from the windward.

Now with respect to the communication presumed to have been made to Sir G. Rodney by Mr. Atkinson. The Reviewer asserts, as another "fundamental fact" of his case, that Mr. Clerk had, long previous to 1782, "fully ascertained and demonstrated, by reasoning and calculation, the advantage of bearing down as it were in column, on an enemy's line on the defensive, and cutting it in two." Here, in the very outset, the writer falls into the extraordinary notion, upon which Mr. Clerk's speculations have been, most erroneously and groundlessly, "connected with the battle of the 12th of April,"—namely, the ridiculous error of *supposing* that this was, in principle, the manœuvre practised on the 12th of April. The operation of "bearing down on an enemy's line," can be nothing but an attack from the windward; and, accordingly, this "first fact" of the Reviewer's is proof, on his own admission, that nothing had issued from Mr. Clerk, but a tract on the attack from the windward, before 1790. If, therefore, it were *proved* that Mr. Atkinson did actually make such a communication as this to Sir G. Rodney, at the time stated, it could give Mr. Clerk no claim, whatever, to any share in inventing, suggesting, or explaining the manœuvre of breaking the line. To get rid of this difficulty, and to endeavour to connect the book, in principle, with the matter alleged to have been communicated by Atkinson, the Reviewer would indeed persuade us, that "bearing down on an enemy's line" is a sort of general theorem for breaking the line, which may be applied either from the windward, or from the leeward. He lays it down, accordingly,† that "the principles on which the breaking of the line from the windward depends, apply equally to a position to leeward," although, he does confess, that "the book may not have contained specific directions for obviating some difficulties which might occur in the latter case." The writer cannot be supposed to understand wherein the difference of these two diametrically opposite operations consists. To set him right, and to prevent those who are not more conversant with the subject, from being put, or kept wrong, I shall explain the essential difference there is, in principle, practice, and practicability; in absolute and relative position; in power of speed, choice of engaging distance, and in every other circumstance that

\* See United Service Journal, No. XX. page 20, 22.

† p. 25.

enters into the combination, between the mode of attack from the windward, and that from the leeward.

The Reviewer, descanting on this part of the subject, observes, page 25, "that there were difficulties in the mode of attack from the leeward, which did not occur in that from the windward; and admits that, for obviating these difficulties, "the book" asserted to have been "studied by the Admiral, afforded no specific directions." I shall merely ask, *en passant*, what possible claim, then, can Mr. Clerk have to credit, for the manner in which any difficulties that may have occurred in the earlier part of the encounter, *were* obviated? What those difficulties were,—which are thus admitted to have been foreseen by Mr. Clerk, as occurring in the attack from the leeward, but for obviating which, his advocate admits, that *no* plans, demonstrations, or specific directions were given, in "the book," which, in another part of the article, is so seriously asserted to have "settled the conditions on which depend the safety and success of;" and to have "contained plans and sketches explaining the text and teaching fully and systematically, that very manœuvre,—we are not told; but if, in two classes of operation, there be differences, requiring specific directions, which "*a book*," professing to explain, fully, the practice, does not show the means of obviating, then, I suppose, the Reviewer will admit *that book* could be of no use on such an occasion. The only difficulty that did *occur* in the early part of the operations of the 12th of April, was the difficulty of getting to windward of the French line. The difficulty avoided was precisely that into which such notions as those which the Reviewer has ascribed to Mr. Clerk, would lead, headlong. Some difficulties do indeed occur to the Reviewer, and he has gone into them completely out of his element. After mistating the case, as I shall show he has done, both relatively and absolutely, he says, page 26, "the French fleet might have been so placed, or trimmed, with regard to the wind, as to make the operation of '*bearing up from the leeward*' to cut across their line, not only very difficult, but absolutely impracticable, more especially if they were so close to each other as to enable them to bring several ships to bear against the assault." It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the term "*bearing up from the leeward*," is a nonsensical confusion of two distinct things, which in their very essence are different—evinced a total, but very excusable ignorance, of the very first principles of the subject. It is, therefore, for the sake of keeping the reader right, that I shall digress, a little, in order that he may not be misled into a belief, that because the term "bearing up" is used by the Reviewer, as the reverse of "bearing down," that, therefore, the one signifies the attack from the windward, and the other the attack from the leeward, so as to embrace both operations under one general principle or theorem. According to this erroneous acceptation, Sir George Rodney, although to leeward, and upon a wind, is described as "*bearing up for the enemy's line*." In another place, the writer defines Mr. Clerk's work to have "*taught only the advantages of bearing down, as it were, in column*;" and adds, (thinking that this

grasps both cases, in principle,) "this, and this only, is the manœuvre which Mr. Clerk discovered, and Rodney carried into effect." Now, neither of these terms, "bearing up," nor "bearing down," apply to an attack from the leeward. The Reviewer is in fact right, and pleads to the truth, that "bearing down upon an enemy to leeward," is the only operation of which Mr. Clerk treated previous to 1790; but such a manœuvre was exactly the reverse, in every respect, of that which Rodney carried into effect! The British fleet, being to leeward, could neither *bear up*, nor *bear down* in column upon the enemy: it had to *haul up*, in order to fetch through; and it was by doing so, in a prompt, decisive manner, that the Formidable was pushed through their line. To *bear up* is when a vessel, or fleet, close hauled upon a wind, keeps away free, to shape a course to leeward: to *bear down*, is to run down upon a ship or fleet to leeward: so that these terms merely specify degrees of the same thing, viz. first to bear up, and then to bear down: a fleet to windward must do both, to attack one on the defensive, directly to leeward; but a fleet to leeward can do neither, in attacking, as Rodney did. These distinctions must be well understood before any person can comprehend, far less teach, naval tactics; and it is quite preposterous, and would be extremely derogatory to a person of Mr. Clerk's sagacity and acquirements, to suppose that *he* did not understand the distinction. *That*, and *that* only, then, which Mr. Clerk did write or have printed, as by the author's "first fact," was, the attack from the windward;—not to break the line of an enemy intending to fight, but to attack the rear ships of an enemy running away! This is *the fact*, which the Reviewer has been all along, though unconsciously, proving; for in no other position can his columns either "*bear up*," or "*bear down*;" and this alone, as proved by "*the book*," is sufficient to dispose of Mr. Clerk's claim.

But the Reviewer gets into other difficulties.—He observes, page 26, "*if the ships of the enemy's line, being to the windward, were also close hauled\* to the wind, it seems obvious that a fleet to leeward must entirely lose way, in attempting to pass through them, or could only gain such way by a complex manœuvre.*" This, indeed, would be "*awkward*,"—this is a difficulty that could not well be obviated. If a vessel be suffered to "*lose entirely her way*," in any attempt, *that* attempt must fail; and by no "*complex manœuvre*" can she be made to go to *windward*. She must go to *leeward* first. The writer is again out of his element, and may be excused; but he may depend upon it, there is no other way of getting out of the difficulty, than by "*backing out*" as soon he can.—And, let me tell him, if he does not extricate himself in an expert, seamanlike manner, from a very discreditable and perilous predicament, he will get the ships of his fleet into *irons*,†

\* In another part, p. 25 at bottom, the Reviewer says, "how near the wind they were sailing when approached by the English, does not appear."

† A vessel is said to be in *irons*, when, by mismanagement, she is permitted to come up in the wind, and lose her way, so that having no steerage, she cannot be brought out of this predicament, but either by *boxing her off*, on the former tack, or bracing round the after yards and letting her fall off on the other tack; to do either of which, the vessel which has thus been paralysed, is forced to make a stern-board, with the helm worked in a contrary direction.

and bring his theory into sad derision. No such difficulty as this, occurred in the British fleet. Such mismanagement and misconduct as that of "losing way," and not keeping proper distances in following their leaders, were committed by some of the French ships; and this it was that suggested the manœuvre which threw their whole fleet into disorder, and occasioned its defeat.

Dealing as much as possible with *facts*, established by authentic official documents, and possessing some which are conclusive against the very vain pretension that the battle of the 12th April was fought in a *deliberate* and *systematic* manner on Mr. Clerk's ideas, or on any premeditated plan, I beg the reader to follow me to a full consideration of all the tactical circumstances of the operations which preceded the battle—those with which it commenced—and the immediate effects of the manœuvre by which the French line was broken.

To this course, indeed, I am led by the Reviewer, who, at page 25, invites us to consider "what were the circumstances of the case, as to the position of the fleet in relation to the enemy, on the morning of the 12th of April, 1782?" The Reviewer, answering his own question, asserts, that "the French fleet, when first descried on the morning of the 12th of April, was to *windward*."\* Here, at the very outset, is an error, in point of fact, of the greatest possible magnitude. I have before me the Journal of the Formidable, which states, that "on the 12th, at break of day, the enemy's fleet was discovered *broad on the lee bow*;" the wind E.S.E. our heads to the northward, (that is, on the starboard tack), and one of M. de Grasse's fleet, towed by a frigate, *square under our lee*." Again—the Reviewer not only mistakes the relative positions of the two fleets, but entirely omits all the very material operations, of the preceding days, which led to the "true position in which the fleets were, in relation to each other, on the morning of the 12th." By these omissions, and this error in position, it would appear as if the lee-gage had been "*deliberately chosen*," for the purpose of carrying "*systematically into effect*," the attack from the leeward. Now, the same authentic documents, which enable me to correct this capital error, furnish me with authentic means to supply the omissions. The great object of the British Admiral, in all the operations of the 9th, 10th, and 11th, was to *avoid* the lee-gage, and get to *windward* of the enemy. About half a dozen official journals, kept by different officers, and in different ships, (that of the flag-ship being one of them) are now before me; and they all state, expressly, that every exertion was made by the British fleet "to get to windward of the enemy, so to force them to close action, which they avoided by *keeping as much as possible*, and *with scrupulous attention*, to *windward*, at their much loved long cannonading distance." That "on the 10th Sir George Rodney endeavoured to *keep* his fleet to windward:"—"that on the 11th, this great object was deliberately and ardently sought, by menacing one of the two French vessels which had suffered in the action of the 9th, and had fallen to leeward—one from the loss of her fore-yard, and the other from the loss of her main top-mast. "That to make his Majesty master of those ships, or to bring M. de

\* p. 26.

Grasse to *leeward* of the British fleet, and thereby draw him into a general engagement, the signal was made for a general chase\*—that in the afternoon the Agamemnon, and some other weathermost ships, gained ground so fast on the enemy's mutilated vessels, that M. de Grasse was forced to *bear down with all his fleet* to protect them. On the 12th, after stating the position of the enemy to be "broad on the lee bow," as already described, the entry of that day's proceedings is, that "to draw him," de Grasse, "yet further to leeward, the Valiant and Monarch were sent in chase of the two disabled ships, which were square under the lee of the British fleet; when the high-spirited de Grasse edged down to support them; while Rear Admiral Drake pushed on with his division to secure the weather gage, and thereby a general and decisive battle." These accounts further state, that "when the French Admiral had been brought far enough down for this our purpose, the signal of recall was made to the Valiant and Monarch (the signal for line of battle ahead having been displayed some little time before;)<sup>†</sup> the French forming their line on the larboard tack to try to regain the weather gage."—They, therefore, were to leeward.

The Reviewer having made this great error in stating the case, with respect to the relative position of the two fleets, shows no less want of precision in describing the absolute position, course, and movement of the enemy. He says,<sup>‡</sup> "how near the wind they (the enemy) were sailing, when approached by the English, does not appear from any documents now before us." But if he had searched into the documents of the day, as he ought to have done, in order to ascertain the real circumstances of the case, he would have found, even from documents in his client's possession, "that when our chasers were called in, the French fleet hauled up on the larboard tack to endeavour to regain the weather gage;" and that, therefore, they were sailing close hauled, that is, close to the wind, when approached by the British fleet.§

The wind, which for some time after the British fleet had got sight of the enemy, was at S.E. began soon afterwards to shift to E.S.E.; but still the British line laid up to windward of the French van; and to show that the British fleet continued, to the last moment, to contend for the weather gage, I may here mention, that the signal was made to the leading ship the Marlborough, as keep her wind as much as possible.|| The wind, however, "reverted gradually, afterwards, to

\* Journal of the Formidable.

† Since this was written Lord Rodney's Memoirs have appeared. The following is an extract of a letter from that Admiral to Lady Rodney, dated April 13, 1782. "This, however," (the manœuvre made by his two ships on the enemy's disabled vessels,) "brought the French fleet near me; and by making a signal after it was dark, that it was my intention to make a press of sail all night and stand to the southward, which was from the French, and tacking at two in the morning, at daylight on the 12th, I had the happiness to perceive that my manœuvre had succeeded, and that we had gained the wind of the enemy."

‡ Page 25, at bottom.

§ Journal of the Formidable.

|| No entry of this signal appears in the Log of the Marlborough; it was made, however, and repeated. One proof of this is sufficient, and I exhibit it in the Log of the

E."\* which headed-off the British ships, and enabled the French van

Bedford, because I shall have other occasion, I now find, to refer to that ship's proceedings.

*Extract from the Log Book of His Majesty's Ship Bedford.*

H.	K.	F.	Courses.	Winds.	Remarks on Friday, 12th April, 1782.
1	5	4	S. E. b S.	E. b N.	Fresh gale and clear weather at half-past, set top gallant sail. Split the jib.
2	6	3			
3			N. b E.		
4	5	6			At 5 the Admiral made the signal to call in all Cruizers, the Santa, E. N. E. 3 leagues
5	6				
6	5	5	S.E. b S.		Joined the Admiral and formed the order of sailing.
7	2	4	S. S. E.	E. N. E.	
8	2	4			Ditto weather.
9	2				
10	2				
11	2				At daylight saw the enemy's fleet in the N. E. quarter in order of battle—the Admiral made the signal to call in all Cruizers, and the signal to form the line battle a-head 2 cables' length asunder. At ten minutes past 8 the Van began the action with the enemy—Repeated the Admiral's signal for action—At fifteen minutes past, repeated the Admiral's signal for close action. At twenty minutes past 8 repeated the Admiral's signal for the leading ship to alter her course to starboard. At 9 A. M. began to engage the enemy as we passed the line. At 11 <i>ceased firing being past their line. Twelve minutes past 11 the Admiral made our signal to come within hail. At fifteen minutes past 11 repeated the signal and tacked as did the Admiral and fleet,</i> hauled down the signal for the line of battle and made the signal for close action. At noon bearing down on the enemy's fleet.
12	2	2			
1	2				
2	2	2			
3	2	2	N. b E.	E. b N.	
4	1	4	N. E. b E.		
5	1	4	N. E.		
6	1	4			
7	3	2			
8	3				
9	3				
10	2				
11	2				
12	2		S. b E.	E. b S.	

\* Journal.

to lay up in a commensurate degree; and it only *then* became distinct to the British Admiral, that he would fail in his object of getting to *windward of the enemy*. By this disappointment, the British Admiral was placed in a situation to do one of two things—either to manœuvre afresh, or to meet the enemy on their terms, since he could not have his own.—He gallantly chose the latter.

The position in which the two fleets now were, in relation to each other, and out of which the manœuvre arose in an unexpected and unpremeditated manner, resulted, therefore, from the British Admiral having failed in a deliberate intention—a systematic attempt, to gain a position (that to windward,) the very reverse of that which the Reviewer asserts was premeditatedly taken; and I shall moreover show, that even after the British Admiral was of necessity *obliged* to engage the enemy from the leeward, or not at all, there still was no intention, whatever, of attempting to break his line.

Whilst the two lines were thus approaching each other, it became my Father's duty, as Captain of the Fleet, to advise with Sir G. Rodney, as to his intentions and plan of operations. It was impossible that any officers in either fleet, looking a-head of their respective ships, and perceiving the British line fetching-in with the French van, laying athwart, could fail to observe, that the actual course of the British fleet lay through the French line; and that, if not ordered to the contrary, by signal, it would be the duty of the van ship to stand through. The intention of the Admiral, as to what was to be done, was, therefore, a matter of the most intense interest, and the Formidable's mast heads, and those of the repeating frigates, were observed with the closest attention and solicitude. This alone, as I have already observed, (p. 45. Preface, Naval Gunnery,) is sufficient to account for the observation stated to have been made by Lord Cranstoun: and here, as the Reviewer has referred to Sir G. Blane's Select Medical Dissertations, I adduce the following declaration from Sir Gilbert, who states that what is therein said, as to the Admiral having visibly caught the idea, was mere matter of conjecture—for that nothing was *said* upon the subject. In a letter from Sir Gilbert to me, of the 9th October, 1829, he says, "upon reading over my own printed account, I recollect no omission of any important circumstance that fell under my observation, except that Captain Byron came alongside about daylight, and hailed that he had observed the position of the enemy to be such, that we *should weather* them; and, if I were to tell over again what passed at breakfast, I should say, Lord Cranstoun came into the captain's cabin, at the starboard side from the quarter-deck, where he had been taking a view of the two fleets, and said, that if we stood on, and kept our wind, or words to that purpose, our van ship would pass through the enemy's line: no answer was made to this, and what I have said about what *appeared* to be passing in the Admiral's mind, was mere matter of *conjecture*." The conjecture entertained by Sir G. Blane proves that there was no *previous mention* of such a plan. Sir Gilbert Blane says,\* expressly, with regard to the

\* See United Service Journal, No. XX. page 206.



passage taken from his dissertation by the Edinburgh Reviewer, "that it cannot be adduced in proof of anything preconcerted or imagined, but only the momentary impression of Lord Cranstoun," he, Sir Gilbert, "never having admitted any such previous conception." He says the Admiral *appeared to catch the idea*: the Reviewer asserts that the Admiral had, long before, *caught the idea* from Mr. Clerk's book, and discussed it during the voyage. Why *such* an interception of the enemy's line was not only obvious to every officer "looking out," from the very nature of the case; but no officer could fail to remark it; for there were then, and have been ever since signals were invented, appropriate signals for such an operation; and if the manœuvre had been premeditated, these might and would have been made, to carry it into effect. If it had been Sir G. Rodney's deliberate intention to attack the enemy's van, the flag, blue and yellow, with a red pendant over it, would have been hoisted at the main top-mast head. Had the enemy's centre been the point of attack, that flag only, would have been displayed *there*: if the rear had been the object of attack, the same flag, with a white pendant over it, would have directed the operation; and had it been intended that the fleet should stand-on, through the enemy's line, the signal red, white, and blue, with a blue pendant under it, (which directed the fleet to bear up in succession along the enemy's lee,) would not have been made; but the flag quartered red and white, at the main top-mast head, would have been displayed: instead of which, the Formidable, after having followed her leader in line a-head, down under the lee of the French fleet, hauled-up suddenly, fig. 2, plate 10, through an unexpected opening in their line.

In addition to the signals already mentioned, we find white with a blue cross, at the fore top-mast head, for particular ships, or divisions (to be designated by signal,) to attack any part designated, of the enemy's fleet. Red primed with white, for divisions (to be designated by signal) to attack the enemy's rear. Flag blue and yellow, with pendants under, or over, direct various modes of *doubling* on the enemy's rear, or van, and to prevent being *doubled* upon. White with a blue cross, in combination with the different pendants, designate all the orders of battle, and orders of sailing upon the starboard bearing and larboard bearing.

I have stated at page xli. First Statement, "that no general signal was *used*, indicative of an intention to break the enemy's line." But the book, containing signals as above, was in my Father's possession, whilst he was receiving Sir George Rodney's instructions and orders;—and what were they? To direct the Marlborough to lead along the lee of the French line, when the British van should have closed with it; and then to make the signals line a-head—battle—and close battle; all of which were displayed accordingly.

Thus systematically directed, the British fleet followed the leader along, and to leeward of the French line—when, so quick was the coup d'œil which perceived the fatal error committed by the enemy, and so prompt the blow which it appeared to invite, (that of *hauling-up* through the opening,) that it was executed without hauling-down or annulling

the signal *line a-head!* As soon as the Formidable broke through the enemy's line, the log-book of that ship shows that "she bore away and raked the four ships of the enemy that were coming up in succession:" the Journal states that the Formidable, "wearing round upon her heel," opened her larboard broadside upon the enemy's ships, and continued to fire upon them for three-quarters of an hour—"not a shot missing, and occasioning the most dreadful havoc." All the accounts cited below,\* concur in stating that the French fleet were, by this bold movement, thrown into the greatest and most inextricable confusion. As soon as the Formidable had stood through the opening in the French line, the signal was made for the van to tack; and at forty-five minutes past nine, after having committed the most dreadful ravages on that part of the French fleet, the Formidable tacked. Never was a movement executed in a more off-hand, unpremeditated manner,—never was an enemy taken more by surprise. So much, in point of fact, for the assertion, that the Admiral and his Captain of the Fleet were prepared, by Mr. Clerk's tuition, to "bear-up from the leeward, through the French line on the defensive," and so to carry his mode of attack, *deliberately and systematically*, into effect!

Now with respect to the extraordinary assertion, that the manœuvres of breaking the line, was, in principle, the *invention* of Mr. Clerk.—The Reviewer asserts, p. 29, that Mr. Clerk not only "made and matured this magnificent discovery," but actually "settled the conditions on which its safety and success depend."—First, as to the invention;—the conditions hereafter.

For the sake of chronological arrangement, and without going farther back into abundant proof which might be adduced from modern as well as ancient history, I shall, in reply to this pretension, first show, that the breaking of the line from the leeward was put in practice about one hundred years before Mr. Clerk was born; namely, on the 16th of August, 1652, by Sir George Ayscue, in his battle off Plymouth with the Dutch: "Sir George Ayscue, with nine sail of his headmost ships, *charged through the Dutch fleet, and got the weather gage.*"—(*Ledyard's Naval History*, book iii. page 542.)

In the *Annales des Provinces Unies*, par M. Basnage, 1719, we find the following description of the battle of the 14th June, 1665, p. 741, vol. i.

"L'Amiral Hollandois, qui étoit au dessous du vent, prit le parti de *percer au travers de la flotte Angloise*, et le Duc d'York, au lieu de l'arrêter sur son passage, en lui opposant ses gros vaisseaux, le laissa passer, *et perça à son tour au travers des vaisseaux Hollandois.* C'étoit une faute considérable; car le duc pouvoit aisément séparer une partie de la flotte de l'autre, et la battre séparément."

The only other instance I shall cite, is the battle of the 15th and 16th of August, 1704, off Malaga.

\* Rodney's Narrative, Journal of the Formidable, Ekin's Naval Battles, De Grasse's Journal, and other authorities given in full, in the latter part of this paper.

BATTLE OFF MALAGA, 1704. O. S.  
15th and 16th August.

THE French line, which consisted of fifty ships, was very strong in the centre, but weaker in the van and rear; to supply which most of their gallees were divided into those quarters; the Marquis de Villette, lieutenant-general, commanded their van, with the white and blue squadrons, having on his second line the Duke of Tursis, with the seven French gallees of his squadron and five Spanish. The Count de Toulouse was in the centre, with the white squadron, having behind him the Marquis du Roge, with four gallees; and the Marquis de Langeron commanded the blue squadron in the rear, having behind him eight French gallees, under the command of the Marquis de Ferville. The line of the confederate fleet consisted of fifty-three ships: Sir George Rooke, the Admiral, and Rear-Admirals Byng and Dilks, being in the centre; Sir Cloudesly Shovel and Sir John Leake leading the van; and Vice-Admiral Callemberg, with Rear-Admiral Vander Dussen, with twelve Dutch ships, commanding in the rear. The Admiral ordered the Swallow and Panther, with the Lark and Newport, and two fire-ships, to lie to the windward, *that in case the enemy's van should push through the confederate line* with their gallees and fire-ships, they might give them some diversion. A little after 10 of the clock, Admiral Shovel, with the van, bore down upon the enemy, and was at some distance from the centre, which, the Marquis de Villette observing, and thinking he might get a-head of that squadron with his foremost ships, *made a signal to the headmost ships of the French line to crowd all the sail they could.* Admiral Shovel, still bearing down upon the enemy, insensibly found himself in their line a-head of them; which the French, judging to be a favourable opportunity, resolved to make their advantage of it by keeping their wind, and crowding all the sail they were able, *in order to cut off the van of the confederates from the rest of their line;* hoping, with reason, that if it grew calm, which usually happens in a sea fight, their gallees might tow them off, so as *they might make a double, and weather Sir Cloudesly Shovel, and fire on him on both sides.\**

Paul Hoste introduces the subject, "*Traverser l'Armée Ennemie,*" thus, p. 388, (Lyons edition, 1697.)

"On trouve dans les relations des combats donnés dans la Manche, entre les Anglois et les Hollandois, que leurs armées se traversoient souvent; c'est-à-dire, que l'armée qui étoit sous le vent, (to leeward,) ayant un peu couru de l'avant, reviroit par la contre-marche, et coupoit l'autre armée," fig. 1, plate 10, &c.; "que de cette manière les deux armées se traversoient plusieurs fois;" "que le Comte d'Estrées, Vice-Amiral de France, dans le combat du Texel l'an 1673, traversa l'escadre de Zélande, lui gagna le vent, la dissipa, et mit les ennemis dans un si grand désordre, qu'il fit déclarer la victoire qui étoit encore en balance."

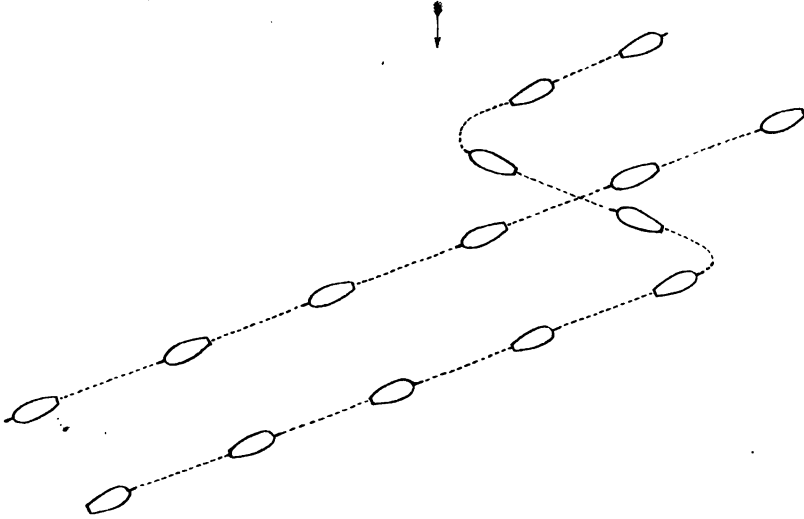
It is upon these facts that the Professor proceeds:—

"II. Il me semble qu'il est aisé à l'armée C D d'empêcher que l'armée A B, Planche 125, ne la coupe. 1. Quand l'armée A B revire par la contre-marche, l'armée C D peut revirer toute en même temps, cequi empêchera la tête A d'atteindre jamais l'ennemi pour le couper. 2. Si l'armée C D ne veut pas revirer d'abord toute en même temps, de peur qu'elle ne paraisse fuir, elle pourra laisser passer la tête A de l'armée A B, fig. 1, plate 10, au point E,

\* Yet Mr. Clerk's advocates assert, that he *invented* the method of bringing the whole of a fleet, against a part of that of the enemy; and that before his system was promulgated, this was never done. See Playfair's assertion to this effect, cited at p. 33 of this Memoir.

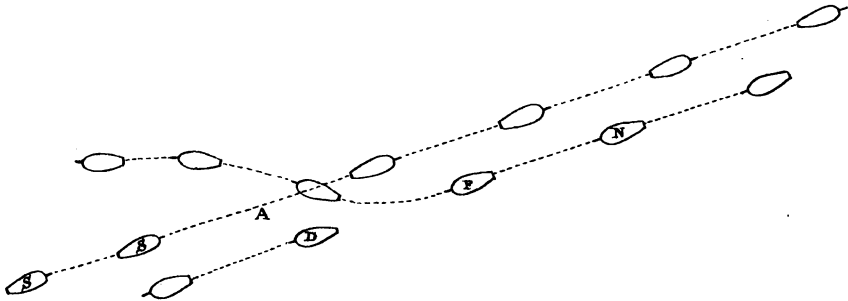
*Paul Hostes' manoeuvre of Tacking when immediately under the lee of the windward fleet—then standing through, and again tacking, when to windward of the Enemy's line; by which each Vessel tacks twice in succession, close under fire of the Enemy's broadside batteries.*

Fig. 1.



*Diagram showing the nature of the unpremeditated, off-hand manoeuvre of heaving-up through the opening A which unexpectedly presented itself in the French line of battle. F the Formidable, followed by N the Namur, deviating from line a-head, standing through the Enemy's line, and then opening a tremendous fire on the French Ships S. S., coming up in succession, and completely disabling them.*

Fig. 2.





revirant ensuite toute en même temps elle mettra les vaisseaux ennemis E entre deux feux, et les ayant bientôt défaits, elle coupera sans peine la tête A, et les autres vaisseaux ennemis qui l'auront déjà traversée.

“III. Je ne vois donc pas qu'il faille beaucoup craindre l'ennemi qui veut nous traverser; et même je ne pense pas qu'on doive jamais faire cette manœuvre sans une des trois conditions suivantes. 1. Si on y est contraint, pour éviter un plus grand mal. 2. Si *l'armée ennemie, laissant un grand vuide au milieu de ses escadres*, rend inutile une partie de notre armée. 3. Si plusieurs vaisseaux FG de l'armée CD sont désemparés; car alors on pourroit faire revirer les vaisseaux EH tous en même temps, et ensuite le reste HB de l'armée AB par la contre-marche, pour tâcher de couper la queue CD.

IV. On est quelquefois obligé de traverser l'armée ennemie pour dégager nos vaisseaux que les ennemis auroient coupés; et en ce cas il faut risquer quelque chose; mais on doit garder plusieurs précautions. 1. On doit extrêmement se serrer. 2. On doit forcer de voiles, sans se mettre en peine de combattre en traversant l'ennemi. 3. Les vaisseaux qui ont traversé doivent revirer le plutôt qu'ils peuvent, pour empêcher que l'ennemi ne continue la même bordée que l'armée qui le traverse.

*Exemple.* Jamais personne ne ménagea mieux ces sortes de traversées que l'amiral Ruitter dans le combat où il battit les Anglois l'onzième de Juin, et les trois jours suivans, l'an 1666. Les deux armées étoient chacune de cent vaisseaux de ligne : mais le Prince Rupert, avec vingt gros vaisseaux, s'étoit détaché de l'armée d'Angleterre, pour aller au devant d'une escadre Française qui venoit joindre les Hollandois; et il avoit laissé le commandement du reste de l'armée au Général Monk. L'armée de Hollande avoit mouillé en ligne à l'Est-Sud-Est de la pointe Nord d'Angleterre; Ruitter en avoit le corps-de-bataille, Tromp l'avante-garde au Sud, et Evers l'arrière-garde au Nord : le vent étoit au Sud-Sud-Ouest. Le Général Monk, qui étoit au vent des ennemis, résolut d'aller à eux, quoiqu'il eût environ vingt vaisseaux de moins. Peut-être qu'il crût les surprendre à l'ancre; peut-être aussi que la victoire de l'année précédente lui fit mépriser l'ennemi; ou même le désir d'avoir tout l'honneur du combat l'aveugla, et le fit précipiter de se battre durant l'absence du Prince Rupert. Quoiqu'il en soit, il vint à toutes voiles sur les Hollandois, qui l'attendirent à l'ancre jusqu'à ce qu'il fût à portée. Alors, ayant coupé leurs cables, ils commencèrent le combat sur le midi avec beaucoup de vigueur. Le vent étoit si frais que les Anglois ne pouvant pas se servir de leurs batteries basses, avoient beaucoup de désavantage : c'est pourquoi après trois heures de combat ils revirèrent tous en même temps au Nord-Ouest, et, arrivant de quelques rhumbs, ils prirent le parti de la retraite, après avoir laissé quatre de leurs vaisseaux désemparés au pouvoir des ennemis. Les Hollandois poursuivirent les fuyards, mais ceux-ci tournant tête continuèrent le combat jusques à dix heures du soir. Le lendemain les Anglois revinrent à la charge, et le combat fut plus opiniâtre que le jour précédent : les armées se traversèrent plusieurs fois, et ce fut dans cette occasion que Ruitter fit éclater son habileté et sa valeur : car, voyant que la plus grande partie de son avant-garde avoit été coupée, et qu'elle courroit grand risque d'être la proie des ennemis qui l'entouroient, il traversa de nouveau l'armée Angloise, et donna dessus avec tant de fureur qu'il délivra les siens, et mit les ennemis en fuite. Mais le lendemain le Prince Rupert, qui avoit rejoint son armée, recommença le combat, où Ruitter gagna enfin le vent aux ennemis, et parcequ'il n'étoit plus si frais, il en profita si bien, qu'il auroit entièrement défaits les Anglois, si une brume ne les eût tirés des mains du victorieux, après la perte de leur amiral blanc, et de quinze autres de leurs gros vaisseaux; les Hollandois n'en perdirent que quatre.”

Until the telegraphic system of integral and alphabetical signals was introduced, by which numeral combinations to any extent might be formed, or words spelled, to convey orders and direct operations out of the ordinary course, codes of signals consisted of a multiplicity of flags, numbered from one upwards; and beyond this simple and primitive expression, no method had been adopted of increasing the number of signals by different combinations of the flags with each other. This was only effected by displaying them, severally, at different parts of the masts and rigging (sometimes with pendants), namely, at the fore, main, or mizen topmast heads; at the fore, or main top-gallant-mast heads; the mizen peak; the ensign staff; and even at the different shrouds, yard-arms, and stays.

In the grand fleet, through the whole of the American war, the code of signals (arranged, there can be no doubt, upon the system of former wars, for there had been very little improvement for some years,) consisted of no less than fifty-four different signal-flags, each representing a number; to which were added signals by drum, bell, a gun, a musket, making in all fifty-eight numbers. The flags had no specific signification attached to them; it was only the particular part of the masts or rigging, at which they might be displayed, that gave them value as signals; and there was no possibility of conveying orders for executing any manœuvre, that had not been previously posted to the code, with an appropriate signal affixed. It was, therefore, indispensable that every evolution that had ever been practised, tactically treated, or which might be deemed fit for adoption under all conceivable circumstances, and in every combination—viz. fleets drawing towards each other—laying athwart each other—edging down, bearing down, or bearing up, from the windward;—laying up or hauling up, from, or passing to, leeward;—attacking the van, the centre, or the rear—“charging through the line”—doubling upon the van or rear, to bring the whole force of one fleet against a part of the other—and all manœuvres which might defeat such attempts—it was absolutely necessary that signals for all such evolutions should be posted to the code. There was not, either in Rodney’s time, or in Sir Charles Hardy’s time, or in Keppel’s time, or at any time,\* a want of signals for directing the standing through an enemy’s line, in any way that it could be fallen in with, or in which such a “charging through a line,” had been practised, or is practicable. Tried by the test of signals, then, the operations of breaking the line, doubling, cutting off some of the enemy’s ships, &c. of which we read in naval history, were either mere desultory, individual disorders of ships, acting without instructions, concert, or professional combination; or that they were regularly organized manœuvres, laid down upon tactical principles and indicated by signals. That they were not disorderly movements, we have abundant proof, in the practical issues, and official accounts of those combats; and, if even the *first* examples of such operations had been fortuitous, disorderly fights, which no person who studies the deeds of those days will

\* Signal Book.

contend, we have abundant proof that they were reduced to system, and adopted, tactically, long before Mr. Clerk's time.

The evidence of signals has disposed of many a life, and pronounced upon many a reputation. What I have said upon this one point, page 28, effectually disposes of Mr. Clerk's claim to the merit of having made any discovery to the profession; and likewise shows another grievous error into which Professor Playfair fell, when, with the other assertions which are launched at random in his paper on Naval Tactics, he wrote, page 466, vol. iii.—“ Lord Howe was the first who introduced into the signal book, signals directed to the objects of cutting off the rear, bringing the whole force to bear upon one point, breaking the line, &c.” If this were so, all the splendid actions of earlier times were mere fortuitous, disorderly combats; the nautical fame and celebrity of this country were degraded; and all her earlier heroes reproached and disgraced. What!—no conventional means devised, of attacking an enemy but by straightforward force—ship to ship—pêle-mêle—without the aid of science, or the facility of system, by which to attack to any advantage, till Mr. Clerk's brochure was printed!—for *that* is the amount of the Professor's record. How were such manœuvres as had, incontestibly, been previously imagined and practised, to be executed, thereafter, but by arranging proper signals to indicate, explain, and direct them? Why the identical signal book now before me, from which I have made the extracts given at pages 28, 29, was, actually, the code of signals of the grand fleet from 1778 downwards, and was in use, as I can prove by the evidence of the signals cited by Keppel on his trial, from the beginning of that war at least, and I have no doubt from a much earlier period:—the French signal books, too, completely refute the Professor's rash assertion. Not a word more need be said upon the subject. But writing to vindicate my Father, and the profession to which he belonged, from the aspersions which the pretensions and assertions I am now meeting would cast upon them, I shall establish, beyond all possibility of doubt, that Mr. Clerk had no title whatever to be considered the inventor of the manœuvre of the battle,—that no previous suggestion was made by him of such an operation,—and that the day would have been won as it was, if he had never been born. Whether my Father may, or may not, have been quickened in his perception, by such elementary observations as those of Paul Hoste, and other acknowledged authorities who had treated of naval tactics, is impossible for me to say. I not only *admit*, but *plead* for him, that he had not *failed* to accomplish himself for his tactical duties, by studying *every* professional treatise that had been published on the subject, to store his mind with resources suited to all circumstances, applicable to all contingencies, and “ready” with the quickness of volition. But the circumstances under which he acted, fig. 2, Plate 10, and the advice he gave, are not in point with any previous case; and, unless all that I have shown be forgeries, the victory cannot be attributable to any theorist, or to aught but the occasion which suggested, *practically*, the idea of standing through the enemy's line; and my Father is no more to be shorn of his beams, by saying that he committed plagiarism on any elementary writer, than



that Wellington at Salamanca and Vittoria committed a plagiarism on Guibert, or that Nelson at Trafalgar is to be less honoured than Rodney. Does the Reviewer really think that Sir Charles Douglas, certainly one of the most scientific and able tacticians of the time, had not profited, from experience as well as constant discussion, by the strictures that appeared on Keppel's action? Why, on such an unjust hypothesis, should it be presumed that Mr. Clerk, in his "learned retreat," and in navigating his father's fishpond, should have hit upon ideas which had not occurred to men such as these, acting for years a most distinguished part in the grand fleet, and who were in the very action from which Mr. Clerk is said to have deduced his plan. Will any reader ascribe to Mr. Clerk credit, and to Sir Charles Douglas the reverse, by such an unfair inference? Does the Reviewer really think that Sir Charles Douglas was not thoroughly acquainted with the battle of the 16th of August, 1652? "*Sir George, with nine of his headmost ships, charged through the Dutch fleet, and got the weather gage!*"\* Why this was, positively, the cross attack from the leeward—and this one sentence would cast Mr. Clerk, and throw his pretensions into ridicule, in any Court of Justice in Europe, as to his being the inventor of the manœuvre of breaking the line. If Mr. Clerk had taken out a patent for his supposed invention, this one fact would vitiate the specification; and so truly preposterous are the Reviewer's pleadings, that, whilst he asserts his client's claim to the principle of the invention, he actually ridicules the *only condition*, viz. a gap, in which it is justifiable to attempt, or practicable to execute it. That Mr. Clerk did not mean to assert that he had invented any thing *new*, I have shown by an admission of his own; and the subjoined note† is very conclusive upon this point; and the unpretending modesty of it does him credit. But when we are told by the Reviewer, that his client was the inventor, notwithstanding, of the manœuvre of breaking the line, *for that Mr. Clerk* (page 7, line 9,) *had never seen or heard of Paul Hoste's work*, I must say, it is too much to infer, that because he was ignorant, others were so too, of a Treatise published by a Professor of Naval Tactics, translated into English in Mr. Clerk's day,‡ and which, as I have observed in my first Statement, "is justly considered to be the root from which all tactical works have sprung." It was at any rate much more incumbent on the Reviewer, in endeavouring to substantiate the claim to *practical* originality set up for his client, to prove that the British Admiral and his Captain of the Fleet had no knowledge of this Treatise, than to plead ignorance upon the part of the person who is seriously asserted, in the beginning of the article, to have been "more learned than they." So far as Mr. Clerk is considered an amateur, who, as he informs us, (page xxxi. preface to the second edition,

\* Ledyard's Naval History, book iii. p. 542.

† "An offer of anything new, it is to be hoped, may be examined with that attention which the importance of the subject demands. By the phrase *new*, is not here meant, that what follows was never either spoke of or thought of before; but it is surely so far new as never to have been put in demonstration by writing."—*Clerk's Tactics*, page 141, ed. 1827.

‡ By Lieut. Christopher O'Brien, R. N. in 1762.

1804,) "had no other practical knowledge, or opportunity of acquiring experience, (never having been at sea in his life,) than in seeing vessels take their departure from a mole or pier-head," and "in sailing on a piece of water in his Father's pleasure grounds," he certainly deserves infinite credit for what he has produced;\* and every person must be disposed to deal indulgently with his work, and none otherwise than respectfully with his memory. But when he is asserted to have "made magnificent discoveries" in naval warfare, which were repeatedly practised before he was born;—when he is declared to have settled, practically, the conditions of what he manifestly never understood;† and that his advocate is obliged to plead pretensions to originality, by asserting his client's ignorance of an elementary treatise, which, as a professor, it is discreditable to him not to have known—though as an amateur, this might not have been expected—he is really "placed, by his friends, in a *very awkward predicament*;" and I must be permitted thus to underscore the above expressions which the Reviewer has thought proper to use, but which can only be applied to the extraordinary case he has made for his client.

Having shown that Mr. Clerk made no material discovery to the profession at any time, whatever he may have done in amusing himself in his own closet, it is scarcely worth while to say anything as to the other medium through which Sir George Rodney is asserted to have become acquainted with Mr. Clerk's speculations; but to leave no part of this case unanswered, I shall go into this point likewise.

Mr. Clerk does not say, or even surmise, that Mr. Atkinson was acquainted with my Father, or communicated "the discovery" to him; but, as the Reviewer attempts to "fasten down" on Sir Charles Douglas, in common with Lord Rodney, a knowledge of the alleged discovery, asserted to have been communicated by Atkinson, so it is proper that I should meet this assumption.

The reader is requested to refer to pages 8 and 9 of these observations, for what Mr. Clerk himself says upon this point. The Reviewer affirms that the "fact of this communication has never been disputed." It has never been admitted,‡ Disputed by Lord Rodney himself it could not be; for the assertion, that this communication was made to *him personally*, through Mr. Atkinson, was not brought forward till 1804, when they were both in their graves.§ Mr. Clerk, though repeatedly called upon to do so, never proved, or even positively asserted, in his oft-

\* Sir Gilbert Blane, in his very interesting observations (see United Service Journal, No. XX, page 204,) says, "it cannot be denied, and he has heard many eminent officers say, that Mr. Clerk's book was a wonderful work for a *landsman*; and that it would, perhaps, have been better judged in his friends, to have been satisfied with *this*, than to have melted their wings by attempting too high a flight."

† See pages 60, *et seq.* of this Memoir.

‡ Vol. ii. Life of Rodney, p. 295.

§ "With respect to the grand manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line, as practised by Sir George on this occasion, little was intended to be said in this work, as the long canvassed question, *whether Sir George Rodney had, prior to his departure from England in the winter of 1781-2, ever seen Mr. Clerk's, of Eldin, Essay on Naval Tactics, or been made acquainted with its remarks relative to breaking the line, has been completely negatived and for ever set at rest.*"—*Rodney's Life.*

revised publications on this subject, that the communication *was* made. He only *infers* that it was, "as Mr. Atkinson could have had no difficulty in doing so;"\* but no question appears to have been put to Mr. Atkinson, whether he had taken any, and what steps, to perform his engagement. I have clearly proved that it could not have taken place in the manner, and at the time stated by Mr. Clerk in the passage to which I have referred the reader; for Sir George Rodney was appointed to the command of the fleet on the Leeward Islands and Barbadoes station on the 1st of October, 1779, and proceeded with all dispatch, to Portsmouth, to expedite the equipment of the fleet. There he remained till he sailed from England, on the 25th December, 1779.† Mr. Clerk says, that it was "in January, 1780, when he was in London," that he intrusted his theories "to Mr. Atkinson, the particular friend of Sir George Rodney, *who was then in London,*" and was "immediately to set out to take the command of the Fleet in the West Indies." But Sir George Rodney left London on the 1st of October, 1779; and had left England before January, 1780! Mr. Atkinson, therefore, did not, and could not, communicate personally with Sir George Rodney in London. "This," the Edinburgh Reviewer says, page 9, "is little better than *cavilling*;" but he is forced to admit, that it is *fact*.

As the Reviewer has requested the reader's attention to the passage in the Memoirs of the late ingenious Mr. Cumberland, which I thought I had already disposed of, (see my last Statement,) I must make a few more observations upon it, though, I must confess, I do not see why the Reviewer should cite it; because if what Mr. Cumberland advanced were correct, in fact, it effectually disposes of Mr. Clerk's claim. But, however—Mr. Cumberland was entirely mistaken as to the objecting party; he confounded the Admiral, with the Captain of the Fleet. I have proved that my Father suggested, urged, and ultimately induced Sir George Rodney to give up *his objections* to, and *adopt*, the manœuvre. This fact of execution I have, by the Reviewer's own admission, "established beyond all possibility of doubt;" and have, therefore, no less conclusively proved Mr. Cumberland's gossip to be erroneous. The fact being, then, that my Father was, even as the Reviewer argues, "the immediate adviser of the manœuvre," and that, if it had not been for his promptitude and energy, the line would not have been broken, what need have I to notice a literary error which is at variance with *that fact*? I take the *fact* as it has been proved and acknowledged, and leave the Reviewer to make what he can out of the contradictory position of citing at page 35, *that gossip* which, by transposition, alleges that Sir George Rodney *proposed*, and my Father *objected* to the manœuvre, but which at page 31, the Reviewer admits was "advised, and energetically urged by the Captain of the Fleet!" The accuracy of Mr. Cumberland's statement was, and has always been, called in question; and I have proved that it was not consistent with the fact, and, therefore, that he

\* Vide Author's Preface, 2nd edition, 1804, p. xxxvii.

† Rodney's Life, vol. i. p. 193.

must have been mistaken. My Father, on his return home, always made it a rule, either to decline speaking at all of the particulars of the battle, or to reply evasively, whenever this delicate matter was broached in society; and there are many persons now living, who remember, well, the delicacy with which he stopped or waived the subject, when pressed or complimented upon it. He always attested the courage, and extolled the noble and magnanimous conduct of his Admiral; and in writing, in society, and unreservedly to his friends, declared that neither through Sir G. Rodney, nor through him, had Mr. Clerk any title to share in the merit of the manœuvre, and that it entirely took place from ideas that arose with the occasion; and when questioned or congratulated as to the share he had in the manœuvre, his answer invariably was, as Sir Gilbert Blane reports, such as to quash the subject, or to say, "We had a great deal to do on that occasion, and we did a good deal.—I trust my Admiral was satisfied with my services, and that the country is satisfied with his." The reader will find many such versions of my Father's brief, dry, and evasive replies, in almost all the chronicles of the time.

I shall now proceed to reply to the attempts that have been made to "fasten down" on my Father, *directly*, a knowledge of Mr. Clerk's magnificent "discovery."

Mr. Clerk died in 1812, having, during the last thirty years of his life, made use of all the proof in his power, "to connect his speculations, historically, with the battle of the 12th of April, 1782." No one, therefore, can believe, that in thus deliberately devoting himself to what had been the sole object of his ambition, in a deliberate and oft revised manner, Mr. Clerk would have failed to *name* my Father, in publications at the time, if he, Mr. Clerk, had really communicated to my Father any explanations, plans or demonstrations, of such a manœuvre as that which was put in practice on the occasion with which he was so desirous of "connecting his speculations." Mr. Clerk named, in 1804, Mr. Atkinson, Lord Rodney's CONTRACTOR, as the *assumed* medium of communication in 1780.—Would he have hesitated, or abstained from publicly *naming* Sir Charles Douglas, if there had been the slightest grounds for asserting such a channel of communication with Sir George Rodney in 1780, or if, as the Professor asserts, it took place in 1782, through the Captain of the Fleet?

But though Mr. Clerk did not *name* my Father, in the "observations" page 119, introduced into the first edition of the Naval Tactics, published in 1790, yet the allusion made therein "to an officer of most distinguished merit," *was* calculated to apply itself, though never under Mr. Clerk's hand, or distinct public declaration, more particularly, to the person who was known to have had a considerable share in the successes of that day; and, accordingly, this allusion occasioned, after my Father's death, the revival of certain verbal rumours which he had put down in 1783, and to the day of his death contradicted.\*

\* Page xviii. my First Statement, and pages 51 and 52 of this.

pleadings amount to, that having no grounds upon which to assert this, openly and publicly, when all parties were alive—and in point of fact, never doing so under his own hand, or in any of his works, Mr. Clerk should, in after life, be whispering away the merit of others—insinuating “by word of mouth” what he could not establish. I will not—cannot believe this. If Mr. Clerk could have asserted that he had had many, or any *conferences*, with Sir Charles Douglas, the one must have declared this, and the other could not have denied it. The next edition of the *Naval Tactics* that appeared after this, was in 1804; and in it a preface “written by the author,” *naming others*, but *not* my Father. So far, indeed, from attempting to prove the particular appointment “with an officer of most distinguished merit,” to have been with my Father, *that* particular assertion was not even repeated; it was generalized, and not particularized. A vague declaration, only, appeared that he, Mr. Clerk, “presented or handed copies to some naval officers of distinguished merit,—and that he sent copies to his Majesty’s ministers in the spring of 1782;”\* but my Father was not named, nor any particular allusion made to him: it was unnecessary, therefore, for our family to do more than we had done.

Mr. Clerk, having over and over again, arranged and revised his works, without ever naming my Father, closed his own deliberate evidence on his own case, as I have shown at pages 8, 9, 14, 15, 20, and descended to his grave; and now *that* is asserted for him, upon mere hearsay and inference, which he could not, and therefore did not, publicly advance. The Reviewer, indeed, is forced to admit, page 10, that “Mr. Clerk did not *name* my Father in any thing that he wrote on naval tactics,” yet the article in another part asserts, on “word of mouth” authority, “that Sir C. Douglas was among the individuals with whom Mr. Clerk conferred by appointment in 1782,” when, in point of fact, Sir Charles was on the ocean!”

This assertion is thus made by the Reviewer, on the authority of Professor Playfair’s *Memoir of Mr. Clerk’s Life*, published in 1821.

“Sir C. Douglas, before leaving Britain, had many conferences with Mr. Clerk, on the subject of naval tactics, and before he sailed was in complete possession of that system. Some of the conferences with Sir C. Douglas were by the appointment of the late Dr. *Blair*, *Prebendary* of Westminster; and at *one* of these interviews were present Mr. Witham and Mr. James Adam, with their nephew, the present Lord Chief Commissioner for Scotland. Sir Charles had commanded the Stirling Castle in Keppel’s engagement; and Mr. Clerk now communicated to him the whole of his strictures on that action, with the plans and demonstrations, on which the manner of the attack from the leeward were fully developed.”

But if the reader will refer to the original paper, printed in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, or to Professor Playfair’s works, (Vol. III. p. 458,) he will find, that the assertion advanced, as above, by the Reviewer in general terms, specifies expressly the particular *time*, *place*, and *circumstances*, of the alleged conferences, as well as the matter said to have been *then* and *there* communicated.

\* P. xliii. Author’s Preface, *Naval Tactics*.

By these specifications the alleged conferences are stated, by this evidence, to have taken place in the spring of 1782, "several months of which my Father is asserted to have remained in London after the Admiral's departure; and, before leaving Britain to serve as his Captain of the Fleet, to have been *then* and *there* put in possession, by Mr. Clerk, of his system. But the Reviewer has very improperly omitted to recite those important adjuncts which prove the utter impossibility of the "conferences" which the Professor "records," and which, on his authority only, the Reviewer asserts. The Professor says, page 458, in one and the same paragraph,

"In the following year, he (Mr. Clerk) visited London himself, and had many conferences with men connected with the navy, among whom he has mentioned Mr. Atkinson, the particular friend of Sir George Rodney, the Admiral who was now preparing to take the command of the fleet in the West Indies. A more direct channel of communication was the late Sir Charles Douglas, *who went out several months after the Admiral, in order to serve as his Captain*, and did actually serve in that capacity in the memorable action of the 12th of April, 1782. Sir Charles, before leaving Britain, had many conferences with Mr. Clerk, on the subject of Naval Tactics, and before he sailed was in complete possession of that system. Some of the conferences with Sir C. Douglas were by the appointment of the late Dr. Blair, Prebendary of Westminster; and at one of these interviews were present Mr. Witham, and Mr. James Adam, with their nephew the present Lord Chief Commissioner for Scotland. *Sir Charles had commanded the Stirling Castle in Keppel's engagement*; and Mr. Clerk *now* communicated to him the whole of his strictures on that action, with the plans and demonstrations, on which the manner of the attack from the leeward, were fully developed."

Now my father did not go out several months after the Admiral. They went out in the same ship! On the 24th November, my Father was appointed Captain of the Fleet to Sir G. Rodney. They left London on the 2d of December, 1781, and sailed from Portsmouth together in the *Arrogant* on the 2d of January, 1782. On the 6th of January, Sir George shifted his flag to the *Formidable*, which had followed from Torbay, and on the 15th, these two officers sailed in that ship for the West Indies! Yet the Reviewer, in the face of this, asserts, "that Mr. Playfair's record, the articulate testimony of Mr. Clerk himself, and Mr. Adams's direct testimony, corroborate each other," as to Sir Charles Douglas having "remained several months in London after Sir George Rodney's departure for the West Indies," and, in that time, to have had many conferences with Mr. Clerk, by appointment; so that "before Sir Charles sailed to follow his Admiral, in order to act as his Captain of the Fleet, he was thus put in complete possession of Mr. Clerk's system"! I regret extremely, that the name of the eminent and distinguished person, the amiable and excellent character, the Lord Chief Commissioner, should thus have been used, incorrectly and unjustly, and left in print, for several years, as vouching for the truth and accuracy of an assertion which neither in time, place, circumstances, nor bearing upon the case at issue, could possibly be true, and which that eminent person now declares he does not recollect! I entreat that excellent person to believe that I charge

none of these grievous errors to him—that I mean nothing, feel nothing, but respect for him, in the astonishment with which I have viewed this extraordinary assertion. This is another result of what is very generally condemned as an injudicious and inconsiderate claim, urged by some of Mr. Clerk's friends, in his behalf. I appeal to the distinguished and learned judge, whose name has been improperly connected with the Professor's record of an impossible occurrence, which has laid me under the necessity of coming forward in my Father's behalf, (for had it not been for the assertion, that Sir Charles Douglas had conferences with Mr. Clerk, in London, in the spring of 1782, the public might never have been troubled with this appeal,) whether evidence, proved to be impossible in the adjuncts of time, place and circumstances, specified therein, can be retained?—I ask the Advocate, who thus continues to asperse my Father's character and injure his fame, by adopting, and persisting in, allegations proved to be utterly groundless and impossible—I demand of him whether this be the practice of the faculty over which he presided? Mr. Playfair was, I repeat, mistaken, grievously mistaken, or misled. He was greatly in error; he was an honourable and excellent man, but he *was* on this occasion, somehow or other, led to assert impossibilities. What I have proved, is fatal to his evidence, destructive of the validity of his record; and I solemnly protest against, and throw it aside.

Now with respect to what is advanced as the testimony of Lord Cranstoun.—The Reviewer states, at page 13, that his Lordship went out in the *Formidable*, as a volunteer, with Lord Rodney, and was very much in his confidence during the voyage; that (page 22) "Lord Cranstoun always asserted that the manœuvre had been repeatedly the subject of conversation and discussion at the Admiral's table, on board the *Formidable*, during the voyage, and particularly in the earlier part of the voyage," and that "this distinct testimony of Lord Cranstoun proves, (page 32,) not only that Mr. Clerk was the acknowledged instructor, both of Sir Charles and the Admiral, but shows the utter absurdity of the notion or assertion, that the manœuvre was not contemplated till it was urged on the Admiral by Sir Charles Douglas." Upon this "distinct testimony," as the Reviewer calls it, of Lord Cranstoun, the Reviewer asserts, that "the Admiral and his Captain had been heard to discuss that very manœuvre repeatedly during the voyage, and even in the earlier part of the voyage.\*"

Having, in several parts of the article, made these assertions, the Reviewer asks, "What is to be said of this?" and adds, "A complete and satisfactory explanation, we fear, is impossible." It is very painful to be obliged to reply to this. With every respect for Lord Cranstoun, I have only to say that the Reviewer will find he has exhibited his Lordship as the very reverse of an authoritative witness; and the solution will very much surprise, and be far from satisfactory to the Reviewer. Lord Cranstoun *was not on board the Formidable in the early part of the voyage, nor in any part of the voyage; nor did*

\* Page 28, Edin. Rev.

*he dine in the Admiral's ship until the very day on which the operations commenced which led to the battle.\** Lord Cranstoun was in the West Indies a considerable time before the Formidable arrived—he was posted into the St. Eustatius on the 31st of January, 1782, and remained in her till the 8th of April, when he was discharged from that ship, and on the afternoon of that day, or on the morning of the 9th,† came on board the Formidable as Supernumerary Captain, and remained in her till the 13th of April, when he superseded Captain Symmons, the former Captain of that ship.

Mr. H. Cranstoun writes,‡ that he has a perfect recollection of Lord Cranstoun having told him that the manœuvre of breaking through an enemy's line had been repeatedly discussed at the Admiral's table on board the Formidable during the voyage, and consequently that he (Mr. H. Cranstoun) had a decided conviction that Mr. Clerk was the original proposer of this celebrated manœuvre, and that Sir Charles Douglas could claim only the merit of recommending it to Lord Rodney. Mr. Cranstoun is an honourable and respectable person, and incapable of wilful misrepresentation. Unacquainted with the subject professionally—hearing only one side of the question, and having, no matter how, such persuasions, (whether upon a misunderstanding on his part, or a mistake on that of Lord Cranstoun, is not for me to say,) it is not surprising that he, as a friend of Mr. Clerk, should have entertained such a conviction; but Lord Cranstoun did not join the Formidable until the fleet was in full operation in attempting to bring the enemy to action, or actually in battle. Sir Gilbert Blane, who dined at the Admiral's table every day throughout the voyage, declares, that he never heard of such a person as Mr. Clerk till many years after the war, for that not one word about the manœuvre ever passed at the Admiral's table;§ and this is confirmed by Mr. Knight my Father's Secretary, Sir Joseph Yorke, and a host of other officers, who were on board the Formidable throughout the voyage, and dined, some daily, others in turn, at the Admiral's table, all of whom declare they never heard of Mr. Clerk till long after the battle, and state their conviction, that neither of these eminent officers were in possession of, or were actuated by Mr. Clerk's ideas or plans; and this is proved,

\* On the 8th the signal to prepare for battle was made, on being advised by signal from the Alert that the enemy were in the offing. On the 9th the fleet was in action, or clear for action, the whole day. On the 10th in chace, and clear for action the whole of the day. On the 11th working to windward in chace—the enemy three leagues distant only—the fleet clear and ready for action. The reader may judge how far there were sittings at table, and he will observe that in all these operations the British fleet was endeavouring to get to windward.

† Lord Cranstoun's commission is dated the 10th of April.

‡ In 1830.

§ Sir Gilbert Blane remarks, (see United Service Journal, No. XX. page 292.) "As to the assertion that Clerk's manœuvre had been the frequent subject of conversation at the Admiral's table," that "if his (Sir Gilbert's) denial of this depended on his memory through a space of time extending from that time to the present, that is, forty-eight years, he would have reason to distrust it: but that he perfectly recollects having the same opinion from the first hour he heard Mr. Clerk's name mentioned, namely, at Lord Spencer's seat, in 1802; for that not one word about it (the manœuvre) ever passed at the Admiral's table."



not only with respect to the *Formidable*; but by Lord Saumarez and a mass of evidence which has come to me since I last wrote, it is shown to have been the case throughout the fleet. Mr. Cranstoun's letter, then, amounts to nothing more than this—that he remembers to have *heard* Lord Cranstoun *say* fifty years ago, that he, Lord Cranstoun, had *heard* that the manœuvre of breaking the line was suggested to Sir Charles Douglas by Mr. Clerk in a conversation with that gentleman a considerable time before, and likewise communicated to Sir George Rodney at a dinner party in London in the beginning of 1782. Why this is hearsay on hearsay, and error upon error! Both Sir Charles Douglas and Sir George Rodney left London on the 2d of December, 1781, and sailed from Portsmouth on the 2d of January, 1782. Nor did Mr. Clerk ever pretend to have met Sir George Rodney at dinner, or to have communicated in any way with him, but through Mr. Atkinson. Where, besides, did Lord Cranstoun *hear* all this? The Reviewer (page 14, 28) and Mr. Cranstoun (page 14) say, “on board the *Formidable*, where it was repeatedly spoken of and discussed *during* the voyage, and *in the early* part of the voyage.” I beg to quote the log-book of the *Saint Eustatius*, to show that Lord Cranstoun was not in the *Formidable* in any part of the voyage; and I refer to the living testimony of many who *were* on board the *Formidable*, to prove that neither Mr. Clerk's name nor his system were ever mentioned during the voyage. Lord Cranstoun *must*, therefore, either have been mistaken or misunderstood. As to what is stated by Mr. Fordyce in his letter of the 11th of June, 1809, (page 16 and 17 *Edin. Rev.*) that relates to the “*Naval Tactics*”—the plans and principles recommended in the *Naval Tactics*, “a work to which Lord Rodney gave praise.” In short, to the *book*, the first part of which is so erroneously supposed to have contained “full explanations and demonstrations of the manœuvre” which Rodney practised, but which contained no such matter. Poor Lord Rodney! “it is,” as his son-in-law writes, “strange to observe what advantage was taken of the praise which the liberal-minded, generous old man bestowed in convivial moments, towards the close of life, upon Mr. Clerk's work, and the means that were used to pervert these good intentions.” But the inferences drawn from this, and other social conversations, which have been raked up by the Edinburgh Reviewer, from the conversations in Berkeley Square to the exclamations at Spa, attach only to Lord Rodney's character;—they have nothing to do with my Father's case. Those who assert that they heard Lord Rodney distinctly state that he owed his success in the West Indies to the manœuvre of breaking the line which *he took* from Mr. Clerk's book, will have found proof, in my pages, that no such manœuvre, positively, was in the tract of 1782; and all that is stated by the Reviewer as to Lord Rodney's acknowledgments that *he* acted premeditatedly and systematically, upon Mr. Clerk's suggestion, can only throw his Lordship's character, and conduct in the battle, into shade; for unless the signal book, the journals, and all the logs of all the ships in the fleet are *forgeries*, Lord Rodney neither premeditated nor took from any preconceived plan, the mode of attack

that was adopted.—Unless a mass of evidence, collected from the highest and most honourable sources, be, in this particular, only, *positive falsehood*, the manœuvre was a sudden impulse adopted in the heat of action on the suggestion of my Father; and unless all that I have brought forward and cited, establishing for ever the facts of the case, can be overturned, *that* which was done would have been effected, if Mr. Clerk, of Eldin, had never existed.

To the preceding evidences which I have adduced as to Mr. Clerk's tract not having been known in the fleet, I add the testimony of Captain M'Kinlay, who was then one of the Lieutenants of the *Barfleur*, the flag-ship of Sir Samuel Hood. This letter is a remarkable confirmation, besides, of an observation made by Sir Joseph Yorke at the time, upon which the Quarterly Review made some severe remarks. Captain M'Kinlay writes under date the 28th of April, 1831,

"I was quartered on the lower gun deck of the *Barfleur*, and had not the opportunity of observing the manœuvre of the van and centre of the fleet; but when it was known to us that the *Formidable* had broken the line of the enemy, the importance of this, before unknown manœuvre, performed by the commander-in-chief's own ship, created an animation that I never can forget, more especially as it led to the brilliant achievement of the victory.

"Had Mr. Clerk's work been known in the fleet at that time, it would not have been possible to have escaped observation; for I full well remember, some time after in the peace, perusing that work, and observing, with many other officers, how fortunate that the manœuvre had been effected before Mr. Clerk's work was known."

But Mr. Adam says, "that my Father met Mr. Clerk at his, Mr. Adam's house, in the end of 1779, or beginning of 1780." This is enough; I have too much respect for Mr. Adam, and too much reliance on his veracity, to dispute this for a moment.

The Reviewer's attempts, then, to "fasten down on my Father" the knowledge of the manœuvre as the invention of Mr. Clerk, are, after all, reduced to this, that he and Sir Charles Douglas met at dinner, at the Lord Chief Commissioner's, in the end of 1779 or the beginning of 1780, where it was surmised in the Quarterly Review, (Number LXXXIII. page 54,) "that Mr. Clerk might have seen Sir Charles Douglas," who, as the Reviewer of the Quarterly believed, "was then unemployed, and residing in London!"—Sir Charles Douglas unemployed in the middle of a war in which he acted so distinguished a part! There is something so slighting to my Father's services, as well as incorrect, in this surmise, that I hope I shall be pardoned for a short digression to set this matter right. After my Father's return from Canada, where he had performed a splendid service, for which he was rewarded with honours which have descended to me, he was appointed to the command of the *Stirling Castle*, in which ship he remained until the 26th of August 1778, when he was appointed to the command of the *Duke* of 98 guns, and remained in the actual command

“ the Captain of the Fleet, who remained some months in London in the spring of 1782, and who in that time was put in complete possession of Mr. Clerk’s secret, in several conferences.” Why the Captain of the Fleet was with his Admiral! Thus, in the year 1780, when Sir G. Rodney and my Father are represented as being together in London at the period of Mr. Clerk’s visit—they were never there at the same time. In *that* year, when they are thus alleged to have been training, under Mr. Clerk, for an operation two years deep in the womb of time, they had no official connection with each other: and in 1782, when, for the same purpose, Sir Charles Douglas is asserted to have remained behind his Admiral, they were never separated, nor was Mr. Clerk in London!—Whilst one party asserts that Sir G. Rodney learnt Mr. Clerk’s secret from him at a dinner party in 1782, Mr. Clerk’s written and printed testimony is, that Mr. Atkinson, one of Sir George Rodney’s friends, undertook to communicate the discovery to him in writing, and that it was supposed to have been so communicated to the Admiral, in London, in January 1780.—But Sir George Rodney left London on the 25th of October, 1779, to take command of the fleet, and remained at Spithead till he sailed; and neither Sir George Rodney nor my Father were in London in any part of 1782.

The case, then, as it concerns my Father, is reduced entirely to this,—that in 1779, when captain of a private ship, (happening accidentally to be in London, in affliction, seeking temporary retirement,) he is said to have met Mr. Clerk, on one occasion, at dinner, and, in an after-dinner conversation, to have discussed fully with him, “ the whole subject of naval tactics.” Truly such a meeting may be admitted without dread. I will venture to say that in any such discussion, Mr. Clerk was the instructed, and not the instructing party; and so far, such a conversation may have been profitable to the amateur, and *he*, therefore, may have had occasion to note and recollect it. Upon my Father it made no such impression: he always averred that he had no recollection of any such meeting or conversation. But supposing my Father had recollected, and accordingly admitted, such a communication of what is called “ Mr. Clerk’s acquisitions on Naval Tactics,” will the shallow inference upon which only Mr. Clerk’s pretensions proceed, be admitted, that never till then, had Sir Charles Douglas heard of the operation of breaking an enemy’s line? Shall my Father’s character as a man, and his learning and experience as an officer, be arraigned, on mere inference, drawn from having met, at dinner, an inexperienced amateur, who imagined he had discovered what was well known; and is now cried up, by injudicious friends, as having been the first to demonstrate, what had been repeatedly executed? What I have shown at pages 30, 31, to have been the state of tactical knowledge of such manœuvres long before Mr. Clerk’s day,—the practical cases which I have cited at pages 29, 30, and 31,—the evidence of signals, pages 28, 29, 32 and 33,—and the observations introduced at pages 33, 59, 60, 61 and 69, are, incontestibly, sufficient to forbid such an inference, in principle, and fully prove that Mr. Clerk never contemplated the conditions of the battle, nor laid down those on

which only the manœuvre which gained it is safe or practicable; and these, finally, refute the charge, that my Father, acquiring thus a professional discovery from Mr. Clerk, laid it by, cunningly, in the stores of his own mind, and two years afterwards, dared to impose it, as an off-hand suggestion of his own, on his Admiral, his profession, and his country, to the prejudice of the inventor,—for to such a charge do the Reviewer's assertions amount. I disprove and repel it as I ought. Stationed, and circumstanced as my Father then was, the meeting in 1779, of which Mr. Adam now speaks in the letter quoted by the Edinburgh Reviewer at page 11, could not have been devised with any view to afford Mr. Clerk an opportunity of communicating his grand secret to Sir George Rodney, *through*, or of suggesting its adoption *to*, my Father “as the distinguished officer who had been selected to serve as his Captain of the Fleet;” and, accordingly, the “discussions” mentioned by Mr. Adam, are not particularised, but stated to have been on Naval Tactics generally. *Naval Tactics* is a wide subject for “full” treatment, in an after-dinner conversation.—Wide and groundless were the inference that would assume such a conversation with my Father in 1779, to have had *the* particular object which the Reviewer, on the Professor's authority, asserts; or to have had any reference to the long subsequent battle; for, unless Mr. Clerk had divined the coming event, and foresaw that my Father was predestined to that distinguished post, and to that decisive influence, which, very unexpectedly to him, he two years later exercised in that event, Mr. Clerk could have had no motive for attempting to “fix down” any of his imagined discoveries on my Father for execution. It is clear moreover from Mr. Clerk's own showing, that he was not prepared to “advance” that part of his subject, which was published for the first time in 1790; for, as he tells us in the *first* edition, “the part on the attack from the leeward was not finished” at the time the tract of January, 1782, was printed, for circulation amongst his friends. He says (page xliiii. Preface 3d Edition,) that the part on the attack from the windward, (with which the reader is now well acquainted,) “was first executed with as great speed as possible by the 1st of January, 1782;” and again, (page 158, Art. 193, Part I.) “a further prosecution of demonstrations, which are likely to lead us on to the attack from the leeward, we think proper to decline for the present.” We have here a public declaration, from the Author, that nothing on the cross attack from the leeward was brought forward, in 1782, “because no example of such an operation” had, as he imagined, “occurred.” Mr. Clerk having, for this reason, declined treating on such an operation till 1790, “not to prejudice his subject (the attack from the windward) by advancing any thing doubtful on an operation which had not been executed,” is it likely that in 1780 he was either prepared or disposed to bring those observations, in particular, before one of the most competent judges in the service, in a general conversation on Naval Tactics? In these passages, and in the note page 119, page 8 of this, Mr. Clerk distinctly avows that his object was only to commentate on operations of which examples had, according to his notions, been given;

and, page 14, "to explain the principles upon which they proceeded." Yet his advocates will infer that he promulgated what *he* expressly says he declined to advance,—that he matured and completed, plans and demonstrations upon a branch of the subject, which he declares he had neither "prosecuted" nor "finished" in 1782; and that my Father swallowed and digested the whole of these crudities, as grand discoveries, in an after-dinner conversation in 1779.

Such is the sad case made for Mr. Clerk, by his over-zealous, injudicious friends. I acquit him of having intended that any thing to the prejudice of others should be insinuated after his death, which he had never asserted, distinctly, under his authority, whilst he lived. I will not believe that such an honourable and upright man could intend to whisper any thing that he had not ventured publicly to assert. I not only reject such an accusation, but I maintain that if Mr. Clerk's case had stood on such grounds as his advocates now represent, it must have worked itself to issue whilst he lived. I read Mr. Clerk to have been as he wrote, an acute, industrious, and in some cases a useful amateur commentator. His plain-sense strictures are admirable, and some of his conclusions just; but his tactical theorems are almost without exception erroneous, and his practical problems unsound. Mr. Clerk did not *dispute* that Sir George Rodney may have adopted the manœuvre, without having received any previous suggestion from him. (Author's Preface, page xliv.) He only contended for the credit of having afterwards explained the system upon which it had proceeded, page 141, Naval Tactics. He did not assert that what he advanced was *new*, but only that it had not been properly laid down, and put in demonstration.

My object, in giving the reader so much matter to wade through, is, to enable him to try the case asserted for Mr. Clerk. *First*, by the matter actually contained in the tract printed in 1782, and by what Mr. Clerk has subsequently published. *Secondly*, by the actual, tactical circumstances of the case. *Thirdly*, by the evidence of living witnesses. *Fourthly*, by the evidence of the code of signals then in use, and those actually made; and by reference to log-books, journals, and other authentic records. *Fifthly*, by epistolary and declaratory testimony, other than my Father's, so that by not making him an evidence in his own case, I might explain and establish it on proof which the other party could neither object to nor cavil at.

But, to confirm the more effectually that refutation of the pretensions urged for Mr. Clerk, which the preceding expositions and facts establish, I shall further cite my Father's letter of March, 1783, and put other proof in evidence of his repeated denials that the manœuvre of breaking the line, on the 12th of April, was, in any way, attributable to any idea supposed to have been thrown out by Mr. Clerk, but entirely from accidental circumstances which took place, and ideas which arose with the occasion.

The Reviewer, well aware of the decisive effect of this denial, more particularly if it should appear to have been given in a "confidential word" or "private document," represents (p. 39) my Father's commu-

nication, of March, 1783, to have been a preconcerted declaration, proceeding disingenuously, from the Formidable, to preclude some claim, of which the officers concerned on the recent memorable occasion were not unconscious, by: "a demi-official letter, written to answer that ostensible public purpose"—not "a private note or memorandum to a confidential friend." To set this matter right, it will be necessary to revert to the circumstances which produced that important document, and so show up another capital error upon which the Reviewer has permitted his pleadings to wander, in a very insidious and unwarrantable manner, to object to the integrity of a document which, as I shall now show, was a private letter to a very confidential friend.

In the beginning of 1783, my Father's sister, writing to acquaint her brother that his son Charles had recovered from a dangerous malady, and on a great many other private and domestic concerns, took that opportunity of advising her brother that some vague surmises had lately been circulated in Edinburgh, insinuating that my Father, who was then very generally known to have suggested and urged the evolution of breaking the line on the 12th of April, may have been one of the officers to whom some instructive communications were reported to have been made by a gentleman of the name of Clerk, who was said to have written a book on sea engagements, and to have had some conversation with the Captain of the Fleet on that subject. To ascertain whether there were any and what grounds for such surmises, the writer desired to learn, expressly, from her brother, whether he knew, or had any recollection of ever having met, or conversed with, such a person; and if so, when, and who such person was. She likewise desired to know whether my Father had any knowledge of Sir G. Rodney having received any such communication or information; and how she should treat the rumours and insinuations in question. My Father's answer is dated St. Lucie, March 2d, 1783. It acknowledges "the receipt of his sister's letter by the Sandwich Packet"—expresses "thankfulness to heaven for the happy recovery of his son"—"gratitude which it is not in the power of words to express for the maternal care taken of his children"—and "affectionate prayers that Almighty God might long preserve his sister." He then enters on pecuniary affairs—promises that, "should he live to revisit home, his dear boy Charles should have his Shely;" and then proceeds to some very confidential communications relating to my elder brother, then commanding the *Licorne* frigate, and other private affairs. To the queries respecting the rumours and insinuations which his sister had imparted to him, my Father returned a full and absolute denial. He declared that he had no knowledge of or recollection of ever having met, or conversed with, such a person as Mr. Clerk: that he only knew of two persons of that name, both lieutenants in the navy—one, our cousin in the East Indies—the other, a lieutenant, whom he designated Lieutenant Clark; that he had not seen the former for many years, nor the latter for several, before his appointment as Captain of the Fleet: that if *this Lieutenant Clark* were the person alluded to, he could not answer for never having conversed with *him* on professional subjects, as with

other *brother officers* ; but that he did not retain any, even the faintest, trace of any particular conversation even with this *Lieutenant Clerk* : that he had never received any communication or information from such a person as that surmised or inferred : and that, so far as he (my Father) knew, Sir George Rodney had not and could not have derived any information from Mr. Clerk. Taxing thus his memory, reviewing and enumerating his acquaintance, to reply fully and ingenuously to his sister's queries, he declared "the whole story to be so far-fetched, groundless and ridiculous, as not to deserve serious refutation:" and, since the Reviewer will have what I had thought it right to reserve, for reasons which I shall now explain, my Father instructed his sister to treat the "ridiculous insinuations" and "groundless inferences" with contempt, as by the annexed facsimile.

Can any one believe that this denial, under the hand of an officer of undoubted probity and well-established honour—embodied in a private letter filled with confidential and unreserved communication, was a tissue of demi-official craft and dissimulation ; or that these answers to questions put confidentially to my Father, by a person so nearly and tenderly interested in his professional fame and so sure of his integrity, were not used, as he intended they should, to deny that there were any grounds for such surmises or insinuations ? That letter was freely used :—it was shown to every member, and to all friends of the family, at the time. My Father visited Scotland in 1783, on his return from the West Indies, and repeated, every where, those denials—always designating the whole story which had been rumoured "ridiculous, and to have proceeded upon random inferences;" and the fact moreover is, that no claim was at any time admitted by my Father of any personal acquaintance with Mr. Clerk, nor, in point of fact, did any subsist. Then surely, in 1783, when my Father was on the spot, and the battle recent, then was the time for Mr. Clerk to assert, publicly and distinctly, the reality of any claims which had been insinuated, and to disprove my Father's denial of them ; and this no one can doubt Mr. Clerk would have done, if there had been any grounds for such pretensions as those now asserted for him, or any proof of having conferred, either with Sir G. Rodney or the Captain of the Fleet, on the manœuvre which they had executed. But what is the fact ? With whatever person, or from whatever circumstances, the rumours of 1782 had originated, my Father's declarations so completely put them down, that they were never, to his knowledge, or to that of the family, revived, whilst he lived ; and so far was Sir Charles Douglas from ever having had a distinct opportunity of contradicting *such printed claims* as those which it has now become my duty to refute, he was actually dead before the first edition of Mr. Clerk's work was published.

Nor does this denial rest only on the preceding declaration.—Scores of times have I heard it repeated, by elder members of the family, in the days of boyhood, and since, by many confidential friends. Sir Gilbert Blane, and all those now living, and the much-lamented Sir Joseph Yorke, who *were* on board the Formidable

(14) it is, ~~and~~ commanding a Fleet or Army, in whose  
Mind the Decisive rise with the Occasion and who seizes the  
Decisive Moment when it presents itself that gains a decisive  
Victory. Not the Dull Mah who blindly acts to the Instructions of  
others even the most respectable

of  
Mr Ommancey will continue re-  
gularly to answer your Demands - how well bestowed to re-  
store my Charley's Health! - I ever am, Dr Kelly his fond father  
and your affectionate Brother and Friend Ch: Douglas over



P.S. I cannot for my life describe that conversation between  
him and me. It ~~is~~ means if he alludes to any con-  
cerning sea engagements; with me it must have gone  
in ~~the~~ <sup>one</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> the other; for I do not remember  
<sup>even</sup> any the faintest trace of any such conversation. When  
Knox is well, tho' not yet a Captain, but I hope soon will be

51

✓ 51 1

150  
147

before, at and long after the battle, confirm this, by averring that "they never heard of Mr. Clerk's name or book, till many years after the war." Lord Rodney's family publicly deny that any communication from Mr. Clerk was received by Sir George Rodney: Lord de Saumarez declares his "conviction that neither Sir George Rodney, nor the Captain of the Fleet, was in possession of, or actuated by, Mr. Clerk's ideas:" no notice whatever of Mr. Clerk or his communications, appears in letters, pages 11 and 12, from the very persons to whom, if not addressed, such communications would have been submitted and referred: and besides these, and the other evidences contained in my last Statement, (see Appendix), numerous communications have since been addressed to me, by Officers with whom I have little or no acquaintance, declaring this to have been the case throughout the fleet. My eldest Brother, the late Vice-Admiral Sir William Henry Douglas, who was made Post Captain into the captured *Glorieux*, has often told me that *he* never heard of Mr. Clerk till long after the battle, and had frequently heard my Father declare that he knew nothing of Mr. Clerk's book, and never received any communication from him: and this I particularly remember, in a conversation I had with my Brother, at High Wycombe in 1805, upon urging him to take up the subject in consequence of an Article that had recently appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* on *Breaking the Line*.

Finally, to reply to the Reviewer's confident announcement, page 38, of "surprise, if a single confidential word of Sir C. Douglas's be ever put in evidence by any surviving friend, denying that both he and his commander had been instructed by Mr. Clerk in the general nature of the manœuvre," I select, from the proofs in my possession, the following letter from Captain Hewit of the royal navy, and the letter annexed to that communication will prove that Captain Hewit *was* a confidential friend of Sir Charles Douglas.

Copy of a letter from Captain Charles Hewit of the Royal Navy to Commissioner Edgecombe, dated London, 9th June, 1830.

"Observing in the last number of the *Edinburgh Review*, that the discussion between Sir Howard Douglas and the representatives of Clerk of Eldin, relative to breaking the French line of battle by the British fleet in the West Indies, on the 12th April, 1782, has been resumed, I have to state, that in the autumn of 1786 I was an inmate of the same house, No. 3, Great Pultney Street, Golden Square, with Sir Charles Douglas, and living on terms of the closest intimacy with him, of which I have testimonials in his own hand now in my possession; and I most perfectly remember on one occasion when he had been dining with some person, I believe a relative, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, at St. James's, after his return home, he told me that he had, with great surprise, learnt that the merit of breaking the French line had been attributed to an idea thrown out by Clerk, to which I most perfectly recollect he said, that at the time it took place he had never seen or heard of Mr. Clerk or his book, and that in his own mind he was conscious Sir George Rodney had not; and that the

manceuvre in question entirely took place from ideas which arose with the occasion.

(Signed) CHARLES HEWIT,  
Captain, R. N."

Copy of a letter from Sir Charles Douglas to the Honourable George Berkeley, dated 3, Great Pultney Street, June 1st, 1786, put in to prove that Captain Hewit, who now survives, was a confidential friend of my Father's.

"DEAR SIR,

"Having yesterday done myself the honour of calling in Spring Gardens to ask your commands for Holland, I now do myself that of acquainting you that the bearer, Mr. Charles Hewit, a gentleman whose welfare I, because of his merit, have closely at heart, is the person whom I recommended to you for a midshipman's birth on your quarter-deck: you will find him very useful, and if occasion should so require, very deserving of having confidence reposed in him, as I did on board the Assistance. Ardently wishing for Mrs. Berkeley's speedy recovery, and to you both, long health and happiness, I remain with great consideration, &c. &c. &c.

"A true copy. (Signed) CHARLES DOUGLAS."  
(Signed) CHARLES HEWIT."

The original of those, and many other confidential letters from Sir Charles Douglas to Captain Hewit, are extant, and may be seen by any person.

Before I close this part of my subject, there is one very material circumstance to which I request the reader's attention. When the passage printed in the text at pages xxxv. and xxxvi. in my First Statement, was written, my Father's letter so far as it relates to this matter, stood in a note to which the text referred. With the greatest desire not to give to any person offence, I submitted the intended publication to an Officer of the very highest character—a man of the highest order of intellect—to intreat his opinion whether I might, or might not, without prejudice to my Father's case, dispense with any, and what parts of my proof, that might be felt unnecessarily hurtful of *other's feelings*. That part of the opinion of this officer which relates to the controversy as it concerns Mr. Clerk, is thus expressed.

October 13th, 1829.

"I have very attentively read Sir Howard Douglas's interesting and manly statement, and I have not found in the narrative or in the argumentative part a single expression that can give just cause of offence. As to Lord Rodney's yielding his own opinion and adopting in such a trying moment the advice of another person, and that person an inferior Officer, there, cannot, I think, be a stronger proof of true greatness of mind. With respect to the propriety of inserting all the letters, so and so might be spared; as to controversy, that must depend on the

other parties, and on their view of the matter; certainly there is nothing to excite it in Sir Howard's manner."

"A question however does arise, about the propriety of inserting Sir Charles Douglas's letter, page 37,\* Statement. All those parts of it which materially bear on the subject, have been already appositely quoted, and upon the whole it would be more dignified and prudent not to publish it."

In conformity with this opinion, I struck the letter out of print; and I can assure the Reviewer, as I have declared in my last Statement page 4, that my reason for doing so was a motive of delicacy to Mr. Clerk and his family. "Arrogance and impertinence," &c. are very strong words, and I would rather not have shown these up.

Now the reader will perceive, and this is a very important circumstance, that the words, "*or any other person,*" (which by mistake stand in the text in my First Statement with reference to the letter which, when that text was written, stood in a note—and which words, being there, are fairly used by the Reviewer at page 23, line 28,) are not in the letter. The passage was meant to recite, in substance, the declaration contained in the letter, that Sir George Rodney had not derived any instructions, directly or indirectly, from Mr. Clerk. But, however, here, at page 52, is proof that those words do not stand in the letter, and therefore all the argument founded upon them, as to their being a disclaimer on the part of my Father, falls entirely to the ground, and leaves the sentence clearly and distinctly averring, that Lord Rodney *did not, and could not have received* any instruction from Mr. Clerk that my Father knew of. The facts of execution proved, as admitted on all hands, beyond the possibility of doubt, (and some important communications have recently come to my hands, see Appendix, p. xix,) render utterly vain the Reviewer's pleadings, page 37, that because my Father did not distinctly assert his own separate claim in that letter, it may be taken as evidence against himself. The letter, taken in relation to the *facts, proves* the nobleness and disinterestedness of his conduct. Though Sir George Rodney and the Captain of the Fleet had differed, seriously, on points of service, they parted on the best terms,—my Father, deeply mortified at being overlooked in the honours that had been awarded, relied on the justice and generosity of his Chief; and the Admiral, when he learnt the distinctions that were conferred upon others, omitting my Father, charged himself, under his own hand, under date Montagu, at sea, August the 8th, with "procuring for my Father whatever he most wished or desired." Under such circumstances it would have been unwise, ungenerous, unjustifiable, and uncalled for, that my Father should assert his own separate claim at the time he wrote the preceding letter. But had he not been struck dead in the activity of his career—had he lived to hear that asserted, which since his death has been published,—to read Mr. Clerk's works—Professor Playfair's record, and all the conversations reported of Lord

\* This refers to the page in which the letter was printed, in the proof sheets of my first Statement.

Rodney; of himself even, as having been "hard to persuade"\* in several conferences, which, in point of fact, never took place:—had he read all the literary gossip and twaddle that we have lately seen;—had he lived to hear claims seriously urged upon the country, for honours and rewards to Mr. Clerk, on grounds such as these, without even the remotest mention of *his* name, who had, in fact, executed the important duties which I have *proved*;—had my Father lived to hear all this, he *would* have come forward to assert the facts, and prove the services which I have established, in the statement of which the Appendix to this Memoir is made up. He would have vindicated the skill and conduct of all concerned on that ever-memorable occasion, from the aspersion, that had it not been for Mr. Clerk, the manœuvre which gained that battle would neither have been imagined, nor executed! That duty which I know my Father would have done to himself, I have effectually done for him; and that vindication which he would have established, I too undertake.

Professional readers, and all who understand this matter, must now be convinced that the operation in question would have been conducted, exactly as managed and achieved, if Mr. Clerk had never existed; but I owe it to the profession and to the country to put this upon higher grounds. I have refuted the assertions which reflect upon my father as an honourable man, and an accomplished officer.—That is enough for me, as his son. I shall now investigate the subject, tactically, to correct many wrong notions which inexperienced officers might be led to form, from the unqualified manner in which Mr. Clerk's theories have been lauded, in urging pretensions which some professional men proclaim to be "grand discoveries in the science of naval tactics." This is necessary, to keep landsmen, and amateurs, from being led astray on the practical part of the controversy likewise, by the pleadings of the Reviewer, which, though full of error, are dexterously managed to induce the general reader to believe that there is no difference, in principle, between the operation of breaking the line from the windward, and breaking it from the leeward. I shall, therefore, endeavour to place distinctly before the general reader, and young officer, the real, absolute and total difference of these two distinct classes of operations; for I know well enough what might be pleaded by critics to landsmen, if I were merely to *assert* that there are such distinctions.—We should be told that these are mere technicalities—professional cavillings—tactical ambiguities—for that the "principles on which depend the practicability of the manœuvre" do, notwithstanding, "apply equally to both cases." That there may not remain any grounds for the landsman to surmise that these operations, though laid down by all tactical writers as totally distinct and opposite classes of evolution, may, notwithstanding, mean the same thing, and be applied accordingly, on principles common to both; and that I may satisfy the general reader—the Profession needs no proof—of the absurdity of the Reviewer's *composition* to the above effect, and demon-

\* Playfair's Works, vol. iii. p. 459. Edin. Rev. p. 32, l. 20.

strate the extravagance of those assumptions and practical expositions in Mr. Clerk's theory of the attack from the leeward, which, under the denomination of *bearing up*, the Reviewer would assimilate in principle, to the movement of *bearing down*, I shall here introduce some diagrams and explanations which I had intended to bring before the public hereafter in more comprehensive form, when I should follow up and generalize what I have already published upon the tactic of single actions.

I have explained at pages 22 and 23, that the terms *bear up* and *bear down* apply only to movements off the wind, and therefore, exclusively, to the attack from the windward; and that these cannot, in any way, be connected or confounded with the term *hauling up*, which is the distinctive sign of a lee position, in which a fleet or ship hauls to the wind, to fetch-up to the windward. In these two diametrically opposite classes of evolutions, all the principles and circumstances that enter into the tactical combination, as well as the particular points of bearing and sailing by which these operations are severally practicable—whether to approach—pass—cannonade or penetrate, or to gain and keep relative position for battle, are dissimilar, and dependant on very different conditions. A fleet to windward may approach, and attack a fleet to leeward, in *line of bearing*,\* by each ship bearing down, and keeping its corresponding antagonist always on the same point of the compass. The windward fleet may, at any time, form line a-head parallel to the enemy, by simply bringing each individual ship to the wind; and may, at pleasure, take any engaging distance; or a windward fleet may bear down, or bear up, upon a fleet in line to leeward, and pass through it, even if its intervals should be compact and correctly kept, at as many points as the windward fleet may choose, if the lee fleet does not bear up too, and run away; or, instead of coming down in line of bearing, parallel to the lee fleet, and forming line a-head to windward of it, as Rodney did on the 17th of April 1780, each ship may make directly for its corresponding antagonist, pass through the enemy's line at the several intervals, and engage it to leeward, as Duncan did; or the windward fleet may bear down in columns in line a-head, and each of these penetrate through one and the same interval, or each ship break off to take its bird; or the weather fleet may bear down in divisions in line a-breast; and, in all these cases, the relative positions of

\* The lines of bearing are the directions of the two close-hauled lines of sailing, at about six points each way from the wind. Thus, if the wind be N. the two lines of bearing at six points are E.N.E. and W.N.W. So long as a line keeps either of these directions or "bearings" with respect to the wind, no matter in what course, or on what tack the ships may be sailing, *line a-head*, close-hauled upon the corresponding tack, may be immediately and readily formed, by tacking or wearing the ships individually. This is the simple order, in line of bearing. The order is compound, when the fleet is formed in angular position, composed of both lines of bearing. In this case, a part only of the fleet has the power of readily forming line a-head, the other part must necessarily remain on the bow-and-quarter-line. By tacking or wearing the fleet, altogether, the order reciprocates, so that the part that was in line a-head, now comes into bow-and-quarter line, the other into line a-head. To form one line out of this order, the part of the fleet not in the line of bearing which it may be desired to retain, must form line upon the other, either a-head, or in rear, as the case may require.

the lines, or vessels, may be maintained, and the intervals kept steadily open, by keeping them constant in bearing.

The distinctive properties, therefore, of this class of evolutions are, that they may be made either in parallel or oblique order, without exposing the attacking part of the windward fleet, to the broadside batteries of the ships a-head of that part of the enemy's line which it is not intended to attack;—relative position may be preserved;—all the intervals in the line to leeward may be kept open to the offensive movement, in the same degree as at first;—and the enemy's ships a-head of the point of attack, allowed no *prise* of the attacking part of the windward fleet, whilst it is closing with them. These, and other modes of operation, belonging, exclusively, to this distinct class, have their several advantages and disadvantages, and may all be met by appropriate and timely counter-mancœuvres, upon which I may, on another occasion, presume to offer some practical observations.

To leeward, every thing is different.—The lee fleet, standing on the same tack, cannot approach the other sailing close hauled in line a-head. If the lee fleet sail faster, it may *fore-reach* upon the other, and then tack and stand towards it. A windward fleet close hauled, can only be approached by the lee fleet fetching-up on the contrary tack in line a-head; or by the lee fleet, after having sufficiently fore-reached upon the other, tacking altogether, and forming bow-and-quarter line, that is a line in the same bearing as the enemy, (consequently parallel to them) but upon the contrary tack, each ship stemming obliquely towards the enemy, and threatening an interval in his line. But in all these cases, *relative position*, which it is so vastly important to consider in Naval tactics, so difficult to allow for, involving so many uncertain results, and so fluctuating in degree, cannot be preserved. All the relative circumstances are continually altering. The intervals in the enemy's line do not remain open to the offensive movement. They pass athwart the offensive course, at rates composed of the two velocities with which the fleets are moving; and not only is it uncertain which interval may be fetched, but the practical width of *that* which is gained, is greatly reduced, when projected upon the oblique course of the lee fleet; and further diminished, by the continued movement of the other: the leading ship, or ships, must be exposed to the broadside batteries of all the ships a-head of that part of the windward line which it is intended to attack, as those ships pass, in succession, athwart the bows of the vessels fetching-up; and a fleet, in line a-head, fetching up against a fleet keeping its wind on the other tack, with compact and correctly kept distances, cannot possibly pass through one and the same interval:—any attempt, therefore, that may be made by a lee fleet to force its way through a compact, well regulated line, should prove disastrous, or greatly disadvantageous.

A line in motion, in the direction of itself, meeting another line in position and likewise in motion, cannot cut that line in one point, or divide it at all, without being itself divided. Parts of each of the lines, thus moving, will intercept each other. In cases of fleets in line a-head, those portions will consist of several ships, more or less, and their

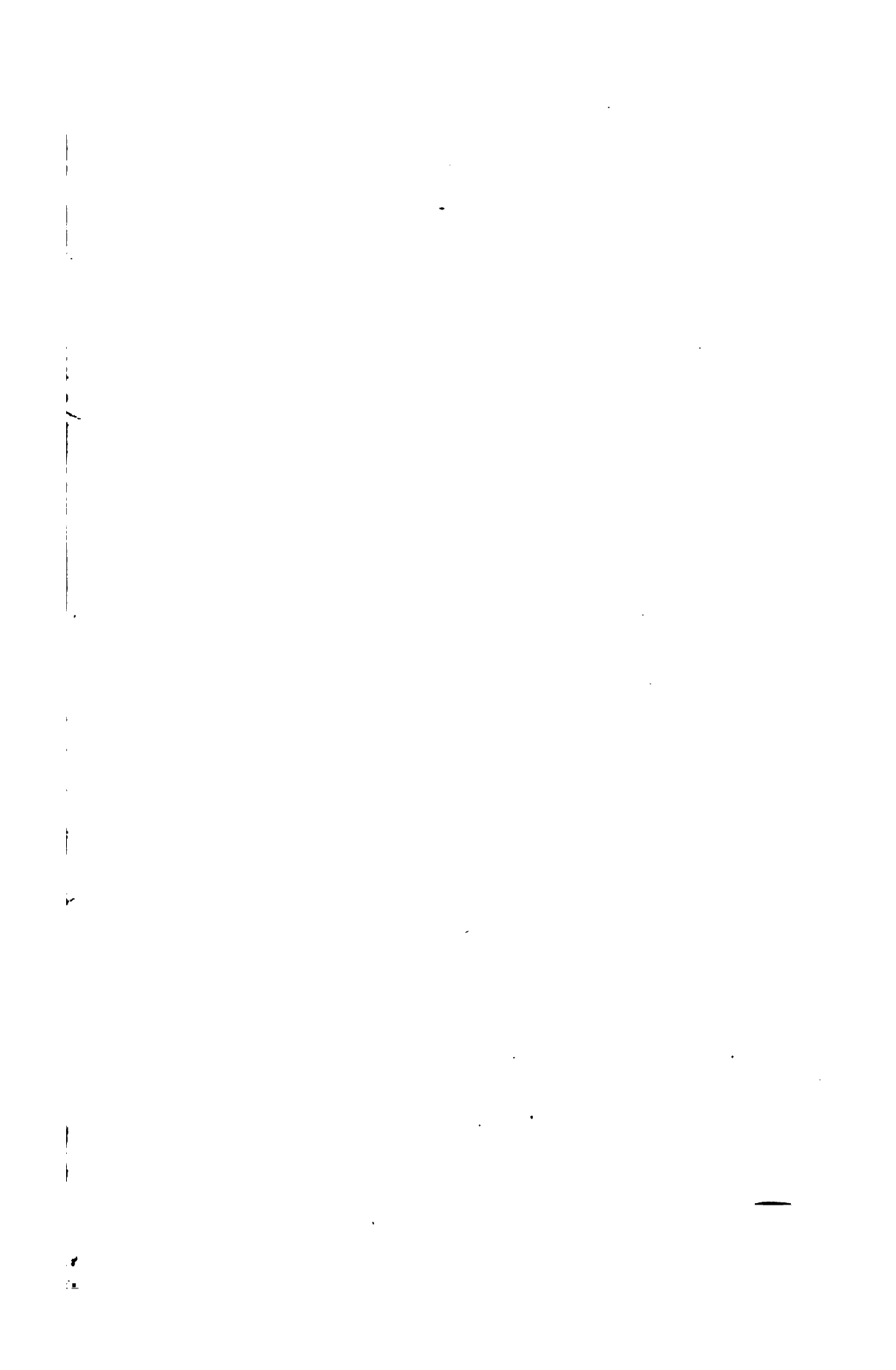




Plate by which M<sup>r</sup> Clark illustrates his theory of breaking the Line, published for the first time in 1790.

PLATE VII. Part II. p. 211.

PLATE 18

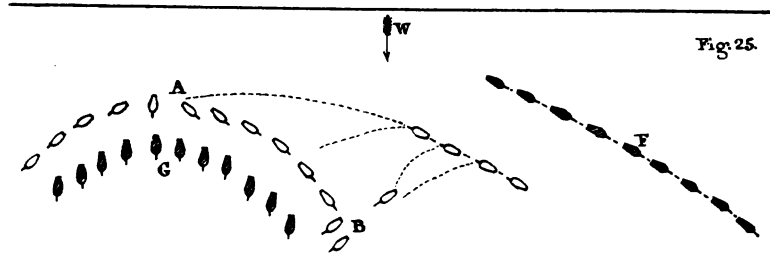


Fig. 25.

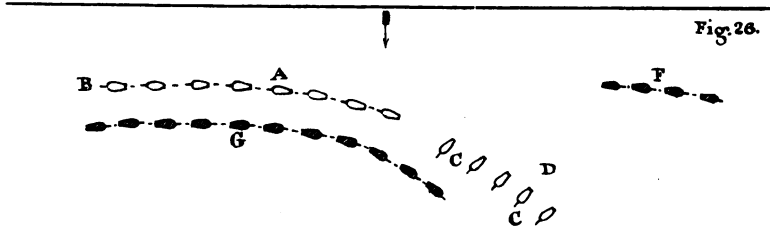


Fig. 26.

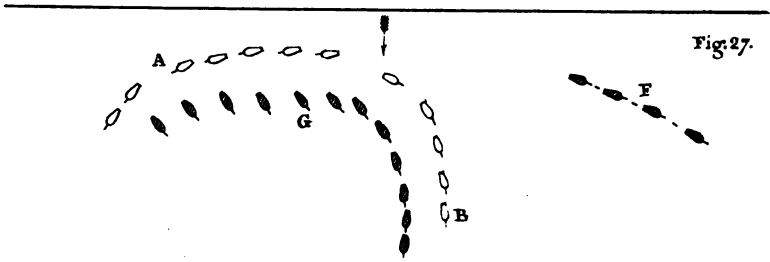


Fig. 27.

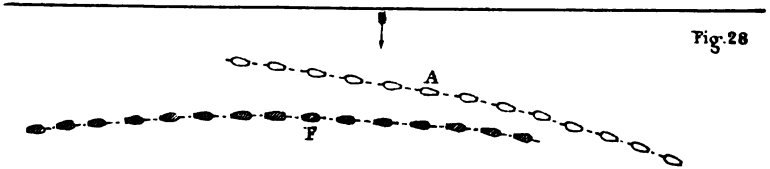


Fig. 28.

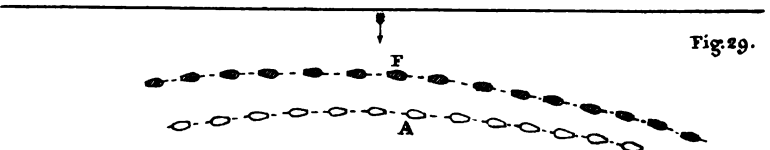


Fig. 29.

A. King Litho. 11 Charlotte St. Dublin. Plate.

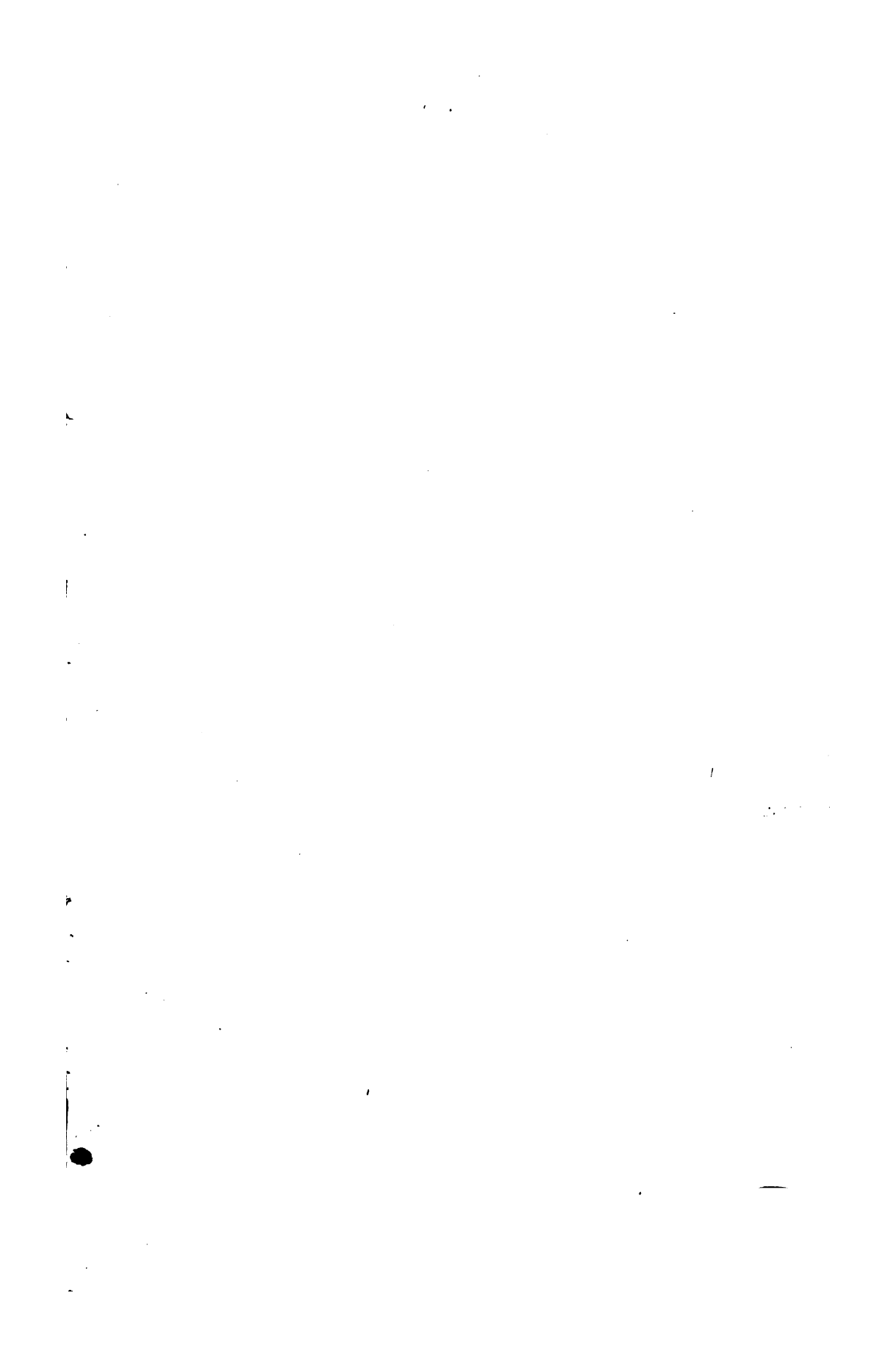


Plate by which M<sup>r</sup> Clark illustrates his theory of breaking the Line, published for the first time in 1790.

PLATE VI. Part II. p. 209 .

PLATE 12.

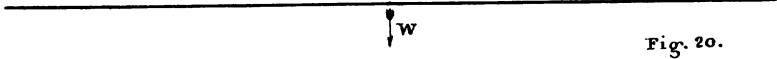


Fig. 20.

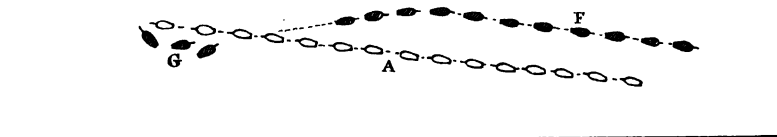


Fig. 21.

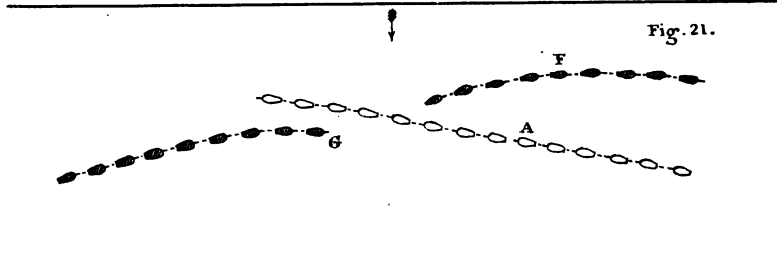


Fig. 22.

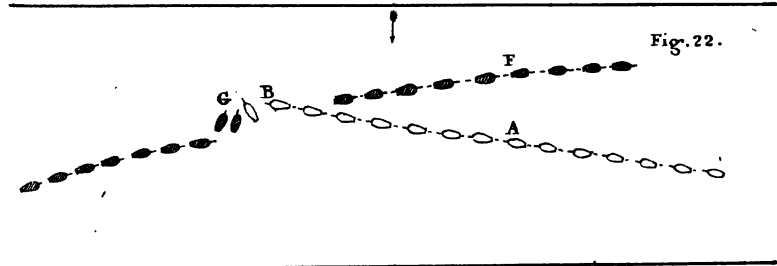


Fig. 23.

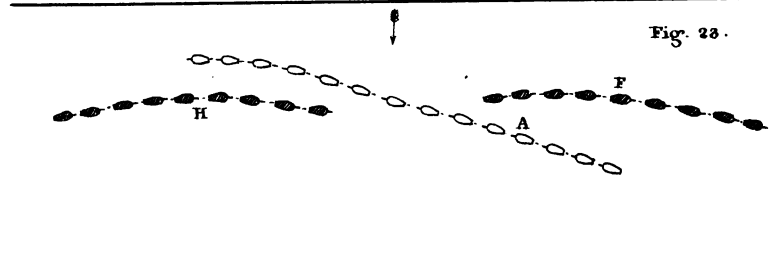
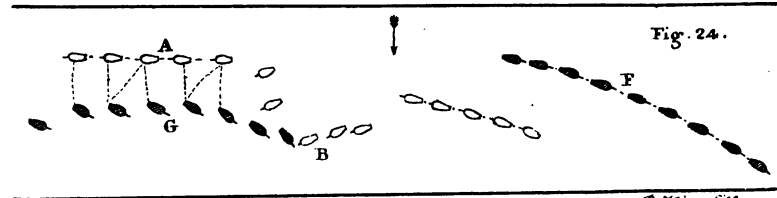


Fig. 24.



B. King del. & sc.  
11 Charlotte St. Barbours Ct.

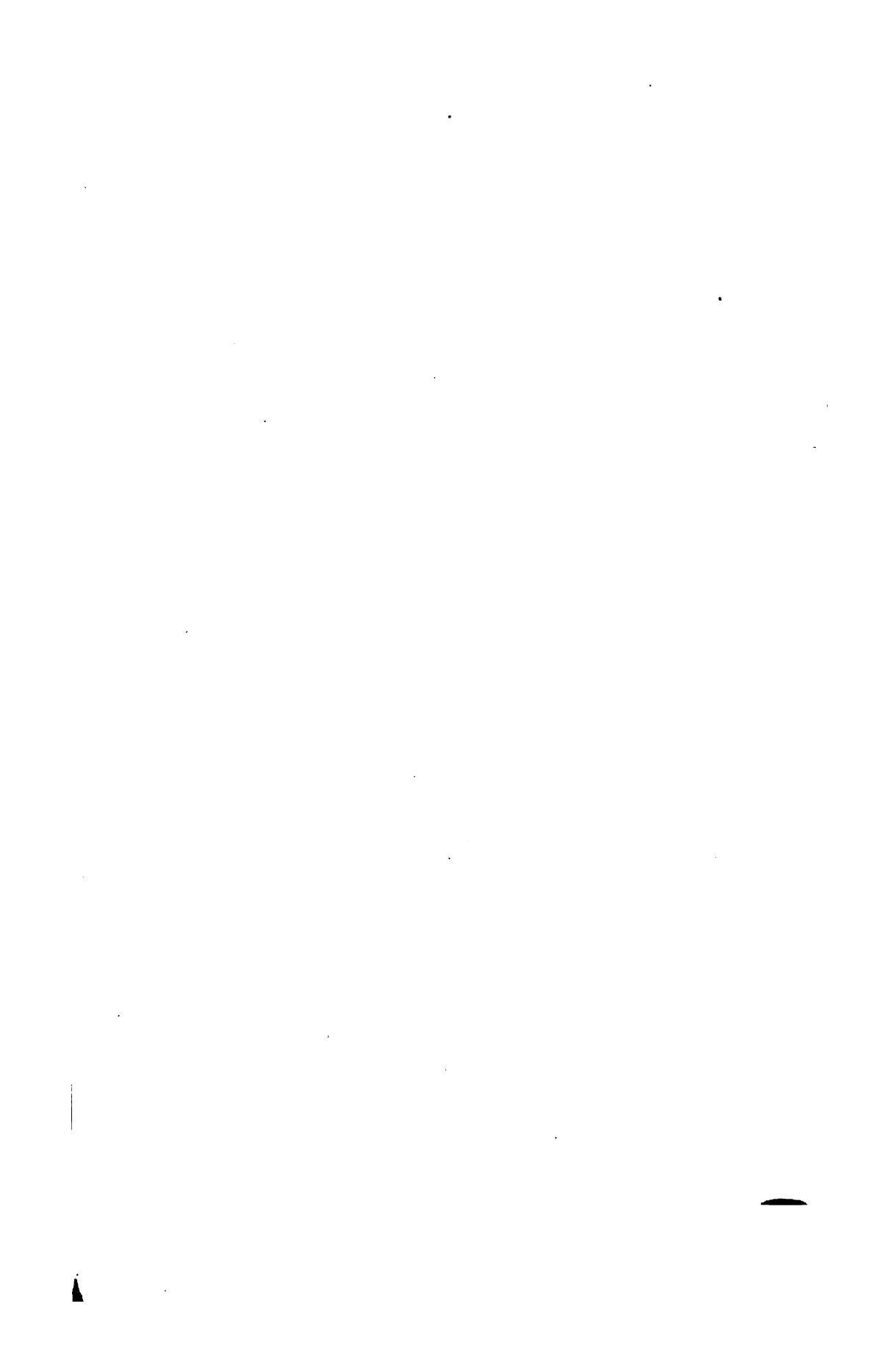
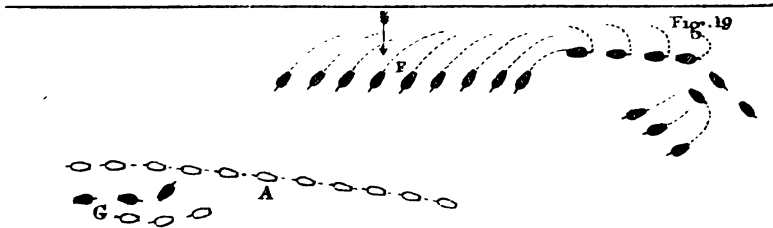
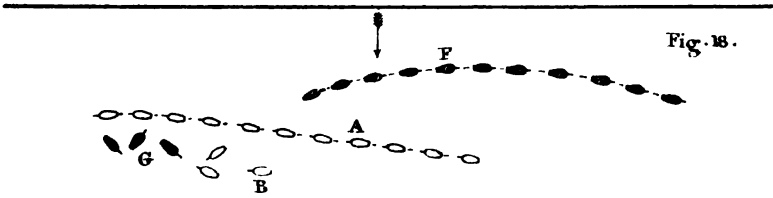
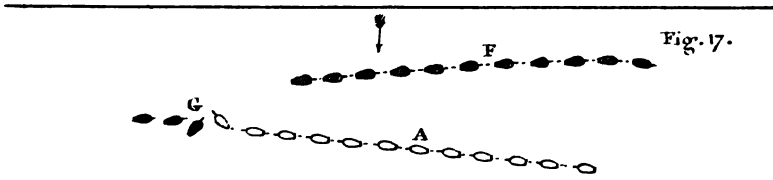
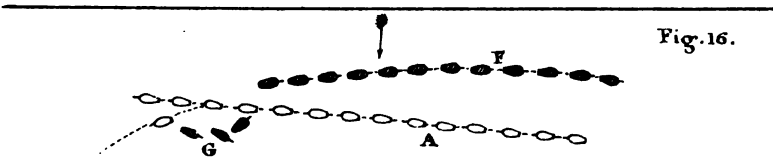
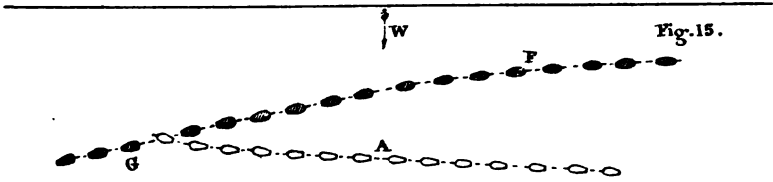


Plate by which M<sup>r</sup>. Clark illustrates his theory of breaking the Line, published for the first time in 1790.

PLATE V. Part II p. 207.

PLATE II.



intervals, mutually separating, intercepting, or getting foul of each other, according to the direction and celerity of their movements, the magnitudes of their intervals, and the manner in which the vessels are handled. The lines are composed of vessels of nearly equal size, placed at nearly equal intervals from each other—sailing, in this case, at nearly equal angles with the wind,\* and going pretty nearly at the same rate. If the intervals are maintained, as they *may*, and ought to be; and as they most certainly *will*, after the severe lesson given on the 12th of April 1782 for not having done so, it is clear, that no more than one ship can pass through *one* interval; and through whichever space any one vessel fetch, she will, in like manner, be divided from her follower, by the next adjoining ship of the adverse line passing through the corresponding interval. This alternate cutting of each other's line may proceed, one ship passing through one interval, and then being divided from her second astern; and thus many ships may pass through each others intervals; but this will be attended with much difficulty and danger to the *lee* fleet in particular, if the enemy's intervals be compact; and, if they do what they ought, it is impracticable.

Mr. Clerk assumes, in his theory of the cross attack from the leeward, (which the reader will observe was published for the first time in 1790, and no part of which was in the tract of 1782,) that the lee fleet, (see plates v. vi. and vii. Clerk,) plates 11, 12, and 13 of this, may penetrate a fleet standing athwart to windward, in "any one point, and so cut it in twain:" that the incision may either be made in the enemy's van, centre, or rear; and that whichever of these be chosen by the fleet "*bearing up from the leeward,*" as his advocate calls it, (hauling up,) stemming close-hauled, towards the broadside batteries of the enemy, that "the windward fleet must be cut in twain at that one *point*, or otherwise the leader, getting foul of the lee ship at that interval, will stop her course, and that of all her followers," (without stopping his own, which are precisely under similar circumstances—for otherwise there is a *gap*—an enormous *gap*.)—throw all their sternmost ships into confusion, whilst *he* gets clear, maintains *his* order, and forces *them* to leeward. Thus, as we perceive by his *plates* and learn from his *text*, all the attacking, and, as they ought to be, well battered ships, fetch unhurt through one and the same interval, to the weather beam of this easily defeated enemy! Mr. Clerk's notion is this; that whichever part of a windward fleet standing athwart, the ships of a lee line may have it in their power to fetch,—whether the rear, plate 11 of this, (plate v. part ii. page 207 of Clerk,) or the centre, plate 12 of this, (plate vi. part ii. page 209 of Clerk,) or the van, plate 13 of this, (figure 26, plate vii. part ii, page 211 of Clerk,) they, by keeping their wind, will either force their way through one and the same interval; or otherwise, by getting foul, not only stop the course of all the enemy's ships, but likewise

\* Usually at six points from the wind. A long line of battle cannot, however, be preserved, and kept in hand, or its intervals *assured*, if kept so close to the wind; and therefore *seven* points from it are generally considered necessary. If it were not thus, and ships were to push on, making the most of the sail they had set, there would be no commanding means of *ensuring* the correct keeping of intervals, and line.

throw all those astern into complete confusion; and in which ever case this may happen, that the enemy's sternmost ships must be intercepted, forced to leeward, and captured. This theory, as a practical maxim for future guidance, is deduced from the observations given by Mr. Clerk at p. 49, on Admiral Byng's engagement in 1756, in the following words:—"While matters were going on after this manner in the van, the *Intrepid*, one of the van ships, having lost her fore-top-mast, was so taken a-back, that her course was stopped." "This, of consequence, produced a disorder and stoppage in the ships next astern, some designing to go to leeward, and others endeavouring to go to windward of the distressed ship." From this "observation" we are referred to Art. 19, page 32, where we find this piece of *mismanagement*—this *gross misconduct*, drawn into a "*Demonstration*" for the *Guidance of the British Navy*, in these words: "It is evident that should any ship be crippled, her way must, of consequence, be stopped, and occasion confusion amongst the ships astern, some moving to leeward, others endeavouring to get to windward, and those a-head (never looking behind them) running away from the rear." It is in vain that it had been laid down as an instruction, "the stoppage of one ship need not necessarily produce a stoppage in every ship astern,"—Mr. Clerk *illustrates his* theory by the errors of the *Intrepid*! The misconduct, not only in the handling of *that* ship, but in the management of her followers, who did not immediately pass her, and close up their intervals, should be condemned in the severest terms, and the heaviest censure pronounced upon such errors by every person engaged in tactical investigation. This theory is not only tactically erroneous, in the very first principles of the science, see page 62, but it is highly dangerous to the country, that a book containing such doctrine should be so much cried up and advocated, as this has been, without pointing out its great and manifold errors. The following investigation of the case will abundantly show, why the penetration of the line from the leeward, though *imagined* long before Mr. Clerk was born, has been so rarely *attempted*;—why the case which I am now proving, as one of *exception* to a tactical precept,\* and one of great practical skill and promptitude, succeeded; and it will admonish practitioners to avoid attempting such an operation against a compact line, and to beware of the dangerous position into which Mr. Clerk's theory would unquestionably lead, namely, that of throwing the fleet fetching-up into confusion, with an enemy on both bows ready to take advantage of its disorder.

Let A B, and C D, figure 1, plate 14, be two fleets standing on different tacks towards each other, in line a-head, with equal and correct intervals; and let the leading, or any other ship, of the lee line fetch any point E, in the weather line, and there attempt to penetrate. We shall, at present, put out of the question the severe treatment, the serious damage, which the ships F, I, D, &c. must sustain, whilst fetching-up under the broadside batteries of the enemy's vessels B, K, &c.

\* See Art. III. *Tactique Navale*, printed at page 31 of this.

Fig. 1.

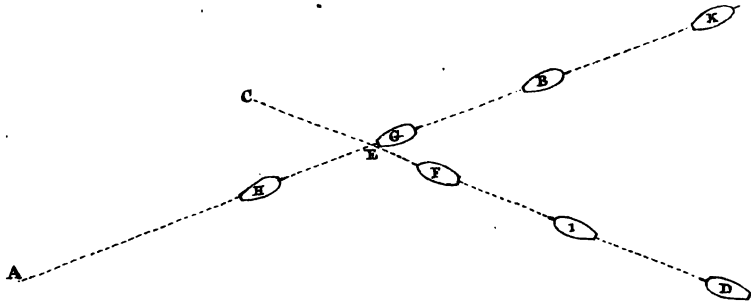


Fig. 2.

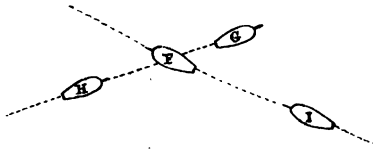
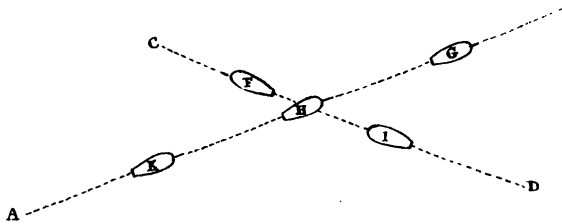
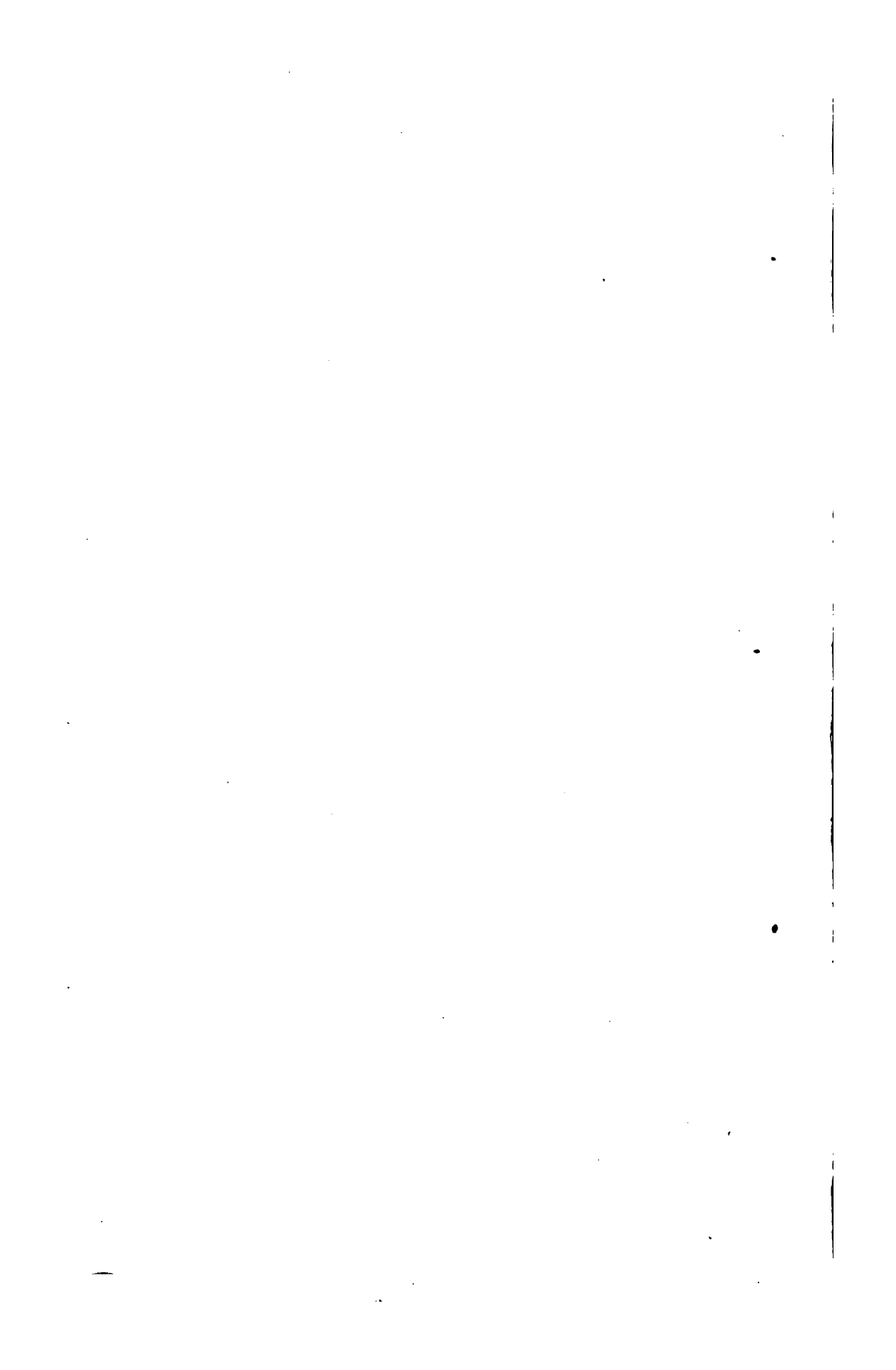


Fig. 3.







passing in succession athwart their bows. To get clear through the interval which F may be able to fetch, it will be necessary for that ship to pass close under the lee quarter of the ship G on the star-board hand; in doing which F will be raked, fore and aft. We will admit, however, that F gets through, clear, (certainly not unhurt,) and that, when in the interval, she gives her fire, both ways, into the vessels between which she is passing, raking G by the stern, and H by the bow, as in fig. 2. But whilst she is getting through that interval, to the position F, fig. 3, the enemy's ship H passes on to do the very same thing, by penetrating between F and her follower I, and so breaks the line C D, raking both F and I. Again, it is clear that the ship I cannot pass through the same interval as the leader F, if H maintain her proper distance from G, and therefore I can only attempt to pass between H and K, after having been raked by H exactly as will have been done by F, in passing between G and H. Mr. Clerk has here not only committed a capital error in tactical principle, but supposes one of a still greater degree on the part of his adversary. He causes the enemy to remain apparently at rest; makes no allowance for relative movement and position; greatly accelerates his own speed; extends prodigiously the enemy's line; contracts his own; and assumes, that the contact of any two ships getting foul of each other, will be as partial to him, as all the other circumstances are assumed to be.

Should any ships of the attacking fleet fetch through a windward line in compact and proper order, it cannot be through *one* interval; it must be performed by several succeeding ships fetching through several succeeding intervals, whilst their own line will have been similarly penetrated by the enemy's vessels: and, should any of the attacking ships get foul of those of the enemy in attempting to get through, it will be, *at the very least*, quite as likely to stop *that* ship and her followers, and throw *them* into confusion, as to stop and confuse those of the enemy. If this should happen, after two or three of the lee line have got through,\* what is to become of the ships which will thus have penetrated, without being followed, and upon which the van of the enemy's fleet should double, by moving *free*, and therefore *fast*, upon them? Such an obvious counter-mancœuvre would, indeed, defeat the attempt altogether, or it might be prevented by such earlier applications as I have glanced at in page lxxv. First Statement, and page 5, Additional Statement;—not by so feeble a movement as tacking and doubling *in succession* from the van, but by tacking the part of the fleet headward of the point of attack, *altogether*, and thus reversing upon the attacking ships which have got through, and which, by proper measures, would be placed in a very perilous predicament.

Mr. Clerk seems to have imagined that a fleet cannot be kept in position, in proper order, but by fresh way, with full sail. No fleet is permitted, in mancœuvring, to make the best of their way with the sail they have set. If they were not thus kept in hand, intervals could not

\* Lord Howe on the 29th of May, 1794.

be maintained. The faster ships would leave the slower, and the bad sailers impede the swifter astern of them. That Landsmen may understand this, I shall explain the means by which fleets are kept in hand, and how intervals are correctly ascertained and accurately kept. One or more powerful sails, either the mizen-top-sail, or the main-top-sail, (and top-gallant-sail, if set,) or both occasionally, are kept shaking or backed, or more or less filled, if going upon a wind; or *braced by*, if going large, so as either to increase, or check, the ship's speed. The interval, from ship to ship, at the distance directed by signal, is regulated by observing the angles subtended by the mast-head above the water line, of each adjoining ship, which angles, being calculated for the various distances that may be signalled, are entered in a table, whence, by setting the limb of a sextant or quadrant to the angle corresponding to the distance ordered, it may be ascertained in every ship, whether she is drawing a-head, or dropping astern, or steady to distance. I need scarcely say, that this is of the very first importance. Of such importance indeed, that an officer who should permit his vessel to "lose her way altogether," that is, *her distance*, so long as his masts stand with sail upon them, deserves to lose his head, and certainly would now-a-days lose his commission: and, moreover, any officer of a following ship, who, as in the case of the *Intrepid* in Admiral Byng's battle, should hesitate, for one moment, to obey the signal "line a-head," by passing immediately any ship that might, either by damage or getting foul of another, occasion a gap or interval in his line, such officer, and all his followers astern who did not immediately close up in file, by every exertion of sail over and above that which he, or they, may have been carrying, would deserve, and *justly* incur, the most severe punishment.\* And what, will it be said, is to become of the damaged, or, as the case may be, the ship boarded? Why, if she cannot keep her station, let her go to leeward, or to the bottom; or let her fight it out, hand to hand, with the ship alongside of which she has fallen. If she be of our side, we trust she will conquer; but if she should be beaten, the battle is not lost.

Mr. Clerk's doctrine of cutting the line from the leeward, therefore, proceeds upon an assumption of the grossest misconduct on the part of his enemy, or comes practically to this,—a *mêlée*, in which Mr. Clerk asserts that, without sacrificing the activity, or compromising the safety, of any of his own ships, by running foul of the enemy's vessels, he must disable and detain them and their followers, but not his own, and so cripple the enemy's ships, and ruin their fleet. Truly, there is no great science in this. Such a mode of fighting would be going back to the times of the ancients—skirmishing with three-decked ships as if they were galleys! Professional men know well enough that such

\* The rule is, when the enemy is to leeward, the followers should all pass to leeward of the crippled ship, which should on this account keep to windward, as much as she can. The *Intrepid*, with only a fore-top-mast gone, might have kept up out of the way, with her main and mizen top-sails and fore-sail. The officer in command of the ship that attempted to go to windward of her, should have been brought to a court-martial. When the enemy is to *windward*, a crippled ship should go to *leeward* out of the way, to let the followers pass to *windward* to close up their distance.

a practice has been often, and universally, condemned. A line-of-battle ship *may* get foul of an enemy in battle; but, in manœuvring, this must not be done, if it can possibly be avoided: and that form of the *predicament* which Mr. Clerk thinks most advantageous, is unquestionably most dangerous, namely, when a fleet fetching-up, attacks the enemy's rear; because, in that case, the van so fetching-up, must first be closely pelted, and more or less raked, by nearly the whole of the enemy's vessels standing in succession athwart; and if it should get entangled with the rear of the enemy, a *mêlée* must be formed, which the followers in the lee fleet cannot pass, *to windward*, whilst they will be exposed to the most formidable and unavoidable danger, from that part of the enemy's fleet which is to windward of them, and which may fall upon them in various critical and decisive ways. To *make* an interval in the enemy's line, by collisions of ships, as Mr. Clerk imagines, must not be attempted; nor will an opening be ready-made to our hands, by such faults as he ascribes to his very incapable, and easily defeated enemy. We shall look for such in vain:—Order of battle in every form depends essentially upon keeping distance. It is only by well directed cannonade, that impressions are to be made, and effects produced, that may disturb the enemy's order; and it is upon the talent with which this is watched for, and the promptitude with which advantage may be taken of such an effect, that success will depend. This was magnificently, and splendidly done, on the 12th of April, years before Mr. Clerk published any thing upon the subject; and now, even with the benefit of that practice upon which he has theorised, he overlooks the real conditions, and would actually set about skirmishing with three-deckers! It was from the rear squadron of the French fleet not having been altogether able, or from not having been careful, to observe this very important regulation, (“*la ligne ne fut plus serrée*”—De Grasse's Journal,) that an opening took place, sufficient to permit several of our ships to haul-up through *one and the same interval*, and that the Formidable and her followers were pushed through the French line—an operation which Rodney would otherwise no more have attempted than Keppel did, and which the absence of signal proves was not contemplated until it was perceived, “*que la ligne ne fut plus serrée.*” What does the Edinburgh Reviewer say to this? The victory of the 12th of April was gained from the very circumstance at which he scoffs (p. 5.)—the enemy, by leaving a gap in their line, afforded an opportunity for several ships to pass through one and the same interval.

The great solicitude which our Admirals have always shown to gain the weather gage, (and notwithstanding what Lord Rodney has noted p. 18, Introduction, Naval Tactics, pages i. and ii. appendix, he was invariably desirous of acting thus, see p. 24, 25, 27,) arises from the difficulty, which I have endeavoured to explain, of forcing an enemy to close action from the leeward. Thus we read in Rodney's despatch of the affairs of May 15th and 19th, 1780, “That he was in hopes he should have weathered the enemy, but had the mortification to be disappointed.” It appears, however, from the *relative position* of the fleets, that it would have been in the power of the British van to have passed

through the enemy's line on that occasion, if such an error as that committed by De Grasse's fleet had taken place: but the line was compact and this was not practicable. So in Keppel's action there was no opportunity, no fact upon which Keppel can fairly be condemned for not having made the attempt. There is a good deal of obscurity in the details of Sir Robert Calder's battle 22nd July, 1805: he twice led up his van, under the lee of the French fleet on the contrary tack; but the French manœuvred, and he could not penetrate.

In Howe's action, on the 19th May, 1794, the British fleet, standing on the larboard tack, parallel to the enemy to windward on the same course, tacked in succession, by signal, to pass through the enemy's line. The *Cæsar* failed in the attempt, from an accidental shot in her rudder; but the *Queen Charlotte*, (followed by two other ships only,) passed through between the fifth and sixth ships from the rear, and then put about on the larboard tack. The rest of the British fleet passed to leeward. If proper advantage had been taken of this, the Admiral and his two seconds might have been cut off. Though the *Cæsar* may not have made proper exertions to break the enemy's line, in conformity with the signal, yet the *Orion* and many other ships did; "but they were prevented by their own disabled state, and by the compactness of the French line, from effecting this."

Lord St. Vincent, on the 14th February, 1797, took prompt advantage of a *very considerable interval* between the two divisions of the enemy's fleet,—formed his line with the utmost celerity,—and passed between them, before they had time to form a line of battle.

Nor should the operation, even as executed on the 12th of April, be attempted hereafter without great circumspection and precaution. New modes of operation are generally successful at first, from being unexpected and unprepared for: such would not be the case again with respect to this evolution. The leading movements of *first* hauling-up to fetch a fleet to windward on the contrary tack, and *then* bearing-up in succession under its lee, are not easily connected with each other, in correct order and distance. All compound *movements* of fleets—that is, those in which different parts of the same fleet are made to sail on different courses at the same time, are exposed to serious derangements. Compound order in formation, such as the angular order of retreat, page 57, and the several descriptions of *echellon* or lozenge formations (and on the merits and great advantages of these I wish to enlarge), admit of all the ships keeping on one and the same *course*, though forming several oblique lines of sailing: but the ships of a fleet sailing in angular form, as in this case, some fetching-up in line a-head, others running down with the wind abaft the beam, can scarcely be kept in proper distance from each other. If there be much wind, the ships going free could scarcely be prevented, by *bracing by*, from drawing away from those still hauling-up; and if the wind be light, it may not be in the power of these to keep in proper proximity to their leaders; or, as in the 12th of April, the rear may be becalmed, as the day advances, in the most critical part of the operation. Enveloped in smoke, as the lee fleet must generally be, it will on that

account be still more difficult for it to keep the proper intervals; and if a glimpse of such an exposure should be caught by the admiral of the windward fleet, and he know *well* his business, the consequences might, and *should* be, most serious.

There are two classes of counter-manceuvres applicable to the cross attack from the leeward. By the one it may be prevented; by the other defeated. When the windward fleet perceives it is the intention of the enemy to attack its centre or rear, it should wear from the van in succession, before the leader of the attacking fleet arrives directly to leeward of the other's van. This, too, is in accordance with the principle which I have ventured to lay down for the tactic of single actions,—never to let a movement be shaped into the wake; for should such a design be permitted to operate against the centre of a fleet, it would menace the wake of all the ships a-head of the point of attack. The windward fleet should therefore counteract such a design, by meeting it, in time, with a front—encounter it with its broadside force, and not expose to it, a rear; come round in time, and offer battle on equal terms, on the same tack, if no better can be had. The most effectual method of defeating any attempt of this description, is to keep the windward fleet in two divisions parallel to each other,—the windward division so far a-head, as to keep it open to leeward. In such a formation it would be very advantageous to it, if the lee fleet *should* attempt to lead between the divisions of the other; because by tacking or wearing, altogether, at a proper time, a combined attack may easily be executed upon the van, or windward part of the lee fleet, and so bring the whole of the windward fleet to act against a part of the other. We do not work enough in divisions. In the windward position, more particularly, such a formation will be found highly advantageous and safe, whether for offence or defence.

It is not my object to remark upon divers other matters, treated erroneously in Mr. Clerk's book; but it is necessary for me to notice all those parts which in any way relate to the comparative merits of the windward and leeward positions: and first, to say a few words on Mr. Clerk's manœuvre of bearing down, from the windward, upon the rear ships of a fleet to leeward.

The ships detached to act against the rear of an enemy's fleet, as represented in Mr. Clerk's fig. 20, plate xxi, (plate 8, p. 16, of this,) might infallibly be cut off, or their fleet brought to action on very disadvantageous terms, if the antagonist know his business. No naval officer would act in the manner the author makes his foe to do, by the position and movement which he has assigned to his opponent's fleet. Mr. Clerk makes the enemy abandon his rear ships! Why, this were a disgraceful flight, not a battle;—a retreat at least; but according to tactical science, neither. If the enemy meant to fight, it is impossible he should act thus: if to manœuvre for better terms, he would still conduct himself differently.—If retreat were his object, (and it is so, according to Mr. Clerk's supposition and exposition,) he would withdraw in the well-known "order of retreat," either on a single line of bearing (starboard or larboard, as the case might be), by which to keep

the broadsides of all his ships open, and be able to haul-up, by ships, into line a-head on the proper tack; or he would retire in angular order, formed of *both* lines of bearing, by which one-half of the fleet may always be ready to *haul-up* into line a-head, and the other to form upon it, p. 57; or the fleet would retire in line abreast, which, with round-sterned ships, as Admiral Ekins justly observes, makes that order of movement less objectionable now, than it has hitherto been. But Mr. Clerk knew nothing about these fundamental orders of sailing. A fleet sent to meet an enemy, is sent to fight; and Mr. Clerk's enemy, who is represented by him to be of equal force, would not dare, or venture, to act as he supposes. First, he ought not to let the enemy get, or at least *keep*, upon his weather quarter. Applying here what I have said, page 273 Naval Gunnery, as to the most advantageous way in which a vessel to leeward can act, to receive an attack from the windward, and so bring on close action, on, at least, even terms, it appears, that a fleet likewise should take care to avoid being approached or attacked in rear. For this purpose, it should endeavour to keep as directly as possible to leeward of the enemy. So far, therefore, from running away, or even moving fast, the lee fleet should make no more head-way than is necessary to keep in due order. The object here should be, not to go faster than the enemy; but to oblige him to come abreast of you, by *keeping* on a proper bearing with him, *forereaching* only, if he should alter his course, and so endeavour to meet him gradually, and fight him on equal terms if no better can be worked out of him. In this way, a good tactician may, and ought, to prevent his enemy from making an attack slanting upon his *rear*, or quarter, in the manner recommended by Mr. Clerk. If the lee fleet, thus acting, be approached, it *must* be more or less *direct*, in proportion to the slowness with which it *forereaches*; and when the enemy does "bear down," it must be upon the broadside *batteries* of his opponent. When he comes near, the lee fleet should *then fill* and *stand-on*, to cause his antagonist to haul-up a point or two, but still keeping him on the most advantageous bearing, for effect. This will produce, what should always be contemplated, and if possible forced upon the enemy, namely, an alteration in the direction of his course, after his vessels shall have been some time under fire. The lee fleet *then filling* and *standing on*, the other must haul-up more or less, to keep in proper bearing; and this may not be convenient, or even practicable with due regularity, after a well directed cannonade shall have raked the enemy's columns bearing down, or bearing up, from the windward, and shot away some of the running rigging. If the fleet to windward, when yet a distance on the quarter—perceiving that the lee fleet is not disposed to avoid battle—should decline to come fairly to the point, and show a disposition to bear down into its wake instead of *standing-on* to windward, or should manifest any intention whatever of attacking the rear ships, the lee fleet should be careful to tack, or wear, altogether, in *good time*, to meet, *thus*, the offensive movement. Much of what I have said upon this subject, pages 273 to 276, Naval Gunnery, applies, in principle, to this case. A course shaped into the wake of a fleet, or *quarterly* against its rear, is an offen-

sive movement so disadvantageous and dangerous to a *fleet*, as well as to a single vessel, so approached, that it should never, on any account, be permitted. If the above offensive movement cannot, or should not be executed to *meet* the enemy, then it must be remembered that the lee fleet is a retiring fleet, and its admiral would be dishonoured for ever as a tactician, were he to attempt to make his retreat in the manner Mr. Clerk represents his enemy to be acting in his figures 2, 3, plate xvii, and fig. 20, plate xxi., plates 4 and 8 of this. To permit an enemy to attack the rear of a fleet in this way, would evince total incapacity on the part of its commander. It may not always, perhaps, be desirable for a fleet to refuse fighting upon such terms as the enemy to windward may offer; but the lee fleet standing-on, cannot be certain that this will be fairly met in a straight forward way by an enemy manœuvring so shyly, nor be sure of being able to bring all its force into action. If the enemy is disposed to come fairly to the point, lay by and meet him;—but if he hang upon your rear or quarter, get round and face him. It is only by active measures of defence—meeting an offensive movement in a timely manner, and not receiving it passively, that the affair can be engaged on even terms, far less with odds in your favour. It should always, therefore, be recollected, that a stem may readily be substituted for a stern, by tacking or wearing the fleet *in good time*, all together; and that thus a defensive line, menaced and exposed in rear, may be wholly and instantly converted into an offensive and formidable movement with a van,—thus reversing the case upon an enemy when so nearly under your guns, as to be no longer able to avoid coming to the point, in a close and general affair. The *Stratégie of Naval Tactics* has not, it appears to me, been properly considered or treated. This, I believe, should be more thought of and pursued. I believe, too, that the manœuvres of fleets should be more generally performed by the individual movements of ships, than by wearings and tackings in succession—that large fleets should be kept more compact—worked more frequently in divisions—rarely developed in line, particularly in the windward position,—and kept more in hand than they have usually been.

Totally unqualified in practical knowledge, either of gunnery or seamanship, to treat this matter rightly, it is not surprising that Mr. Clerk should have formed some strange and erroneous notions on the service-practice, capabilities, and comparative effects of naval ordnance. So far was that commentator from having taught the British navy how to know and use their force, properly considered, he was so little skilled in what he undertook to explain and demonstrate, as to be incompetent to detect the serious errors that were committed by sail as well as by gun—in evolution and explication, in the very cases to which he refers. Ascribing *that* insufficiency which could not but result from deplorable mismanagements, on particularly discreditable occasions, to some imaginary disabilities of cannonade inherent in particular positions, and supposed to admit not of rectification, the author of the *Naval Tactics* framed general theorems for the guidance of the British navy, on conclusions drawn from the worst of practice; and calls that



“demonstration,” which is demonstrative only, of the practical ignorance and error upon which the proposition proceeds. Thus Mr. Clerk lays it down as an invariable maxim, “that fleets passing on contrary tacks cannot injure each other;”—“that in all such cases it is vain to expect that the most artful management of sail—the closest approximation, or the most spirited cannonade can avail anything,” on account of the celerity which, as he assumes, the two fleets must pass each other. Let us investigate this;—there is error, and much danger to us in doctrine so eulogized as Mr. Clerk’s has been. Now, though such a movement is, usually, the result of an intention on the part of the windward fleet, not to come to a decisive action, and therefore may pass off, indecisively, if permitted by inefficient gunnery as Mr. Clerk takes it for granted *must* be the case; yet, as the 12th of April proves, a well-directed cannonade from a fleet to leeward, may be so efficient as to procure favourable opportunities of bringing on a close and critical battle. A professor of naval tactics should not only understand practical seamanship, but be moreover skilled in the principles and practice of naval gunnery; for whilst it is the object of the tactical combination to form such a plan of operation, and direct such evolutions, as may be best calculated to bring the enemy under your guns, the effect of the movements, however ably conceived, will depend upon the manner in which the vessels are made to conduce to the efficiency of their gunnery, by no unnecessary spread or use of sail, and celerity of movement; and upon the intelligence with which *floating motions* which cannot be controlled, may be taken advantage of, to discharge the ordnance, in the nick of time, in right directions. It is true that when fleets are passing each other at any rates of going, the apparent velocity of the transit is, as if one were at rest and the other moving with a velocity equal to the sum of the two rates: but this apparent circumstance is not absolute; it is in a great degree under the controul of, and reducible by either party; and, moreover, only applicable to express the *time of acting* of the evolution. Applied to effect, it would lead the student to very wrong conclusions, and justify the very worst of practice. In the first place, as Keppel well said upon his trial, “it is a contradiction of terms to speak of a general engagement where the fleet that has the wind tacks, to pass the fleet to leeward on the contrary tack.”\* If the enemy *will* run away at this rate, why let

\* If I were not fearful of taking up too much time, I would prove that the discussions which took place amongst professional men between the period of Keppel’s battle, July 1778, and his trial, January, 1779, and the strictures which were current, and many of which appeared in the chronicles of the time, are quite sufficient to show that, if to any previous circumstances the manœuvre of the 12th of April may in any degree be ascribed, it was to such very important observations as the above, and many others, which may be found in the chronicles and correspondence of the time, vehemently urging the necessity of using every possible endeavour—taking advantage of any unforeseen circumstance that might occur, to *force* the enemy, thus endeavouring to avoid a general action, into close and critical battle. De Grasse, in 1782, was endeavouring to do, exactly, what D’Orvilliers had done in 1778. De Grasse was absolutely under the greatest obligation not to fight, and Rodney had every motive for grappling with him, if he could. Now there was not only every *appearance* that the initial movement of the day would pass off indecisively, as De Grasse designed it should; but the signals, *the*

him do so if he can. The more sail he uses, the quicker, certainly, will be his *absolute* motion; but the quicker, greater and more frequent too, will be the jerks and lurches, inseparable from the use of a press of canvas, a full sail and a swift course; and the more hurried and inefficient his gunnery. But if *both* fleets fly with such speed, then indeed both may be declared to be shy of fighting, and neither admiral to understand his business. I, by "artful management" of the sails, would diminish my speed as much as possible—keep my vessels steady for the best effect—prohibit what is usually called "a spirited cannonade,"—a term generally applied to a noisy, random volley—and throw in my fire, by guns in succession, as the enemy comes on with their sights, in glimpses caught through intervals clear of smoke, and which, if properly watched, and not precluded by random firings which produce little but smoke, may, from the obliquity of the wind to the course of a fleet close hauled in line a-head, generally be caught as the enemy's ships come, in succession, a-beam of the vessels of the fleet fetching-up, when they are to leeward of the *intervals* in the windward fleet. Here, in particular, may be noticed the methods, pages 219, 220, *Naval Gunnery*, by which horizontal fire may be nicely adjusted to lit the hulls of the enemy's ships which may be enveloped in their own smoke, but whose masts' heads, seen over it, indicate the line upon which a well-regulated *horizontal* fire may be projected, with a certainty of effect. If, therefore, the sails be "artfully managed," the "proximity" sufficient, and the guns well handled, I deny that the celerity of transit must, necessarily, be such as to interfere essentially with the *effect* of the discharges that are made; and Mr. Clerk's advocates may depend upon it, that the cases in which great inefficiency of fire have appeared, and upon which he has commented in this prejudicial manner, (pages 122, 123,) arose from *gross ignorance of*,

*general orders of the Fleet*, and every testimony, *prove*, that the British fleet would have passed the other in line a-head, if the glorious opportunity, which happily presented itself, had not occurred. My Father had commanded a line-of-battle ship in Keppel's action;—he had been an evidence on the trial—he had deposed to the gallant bearing of Keppel's advance—to the impossibility of doing more than was done, on the 27th, and to Keppel's inability to bring the French Fleet to action on the 28th. My Father had partaken, deeply, of the mortification felt throughout the Fleet, from not having been able to grapple with the enemy on *that* occasion, and he was alive to the severe disappointment which the nation had suffered, at an issue so indecisive. Can it be doubted, that this person, when Captain of Rodney's Fleet, was, under all these circumstances, in a state excited to the utmost, to be *watchful* and fearful lest this might recur; and that science, responsibility, reputation, participation in former disappointments, all eminently predisposed him to the quickest perception of any circumstance which might enable the British admiral to force De Grasse to a close and critical affair, and the readiest and boldest mode of effecting this? *This was sufficient*. The prospect that now opened, flashed upon my Father with a vehemence such as to strike all present (See the evidence of Sir Charles Dashwood, Sir Joseph Yorke, Sir Charles Thesiger, &c. Appendix). He instantly advised and urged that bold course which, if not adopted, would, in all probability, have left *that* affair to terminate as Keppel's had done, and to expose the nation to perils still more serious. I may have occasion to say more of this hereafter, not controversially but historically. My Father's evidence on Keppel's trial shows, that he was an eminent tactician; and by the bye he speaks familiarly in 1778 of another movement which Mr. Clerk says he was the first to explain in 1782.

and *great defects* in practical gunnery, such as we shall no more witness. There is no case in which fire can be thrown into an enemy with greater effect, than when a ship's broadside *is* passed by another in an oblique position. The fire is then given perpendicularly, and received diagonally. The guns are all ready—the line, whether horizontal or elevated, regulated according to distance—the chiefs of pieces looking over their guns, ready to pull the trigger-lines, in succession, as the body of the enemy's vessel comes-on with their respective sights. The offering may be mutual.—It is “shooting flying,” certainly; so is *all* the practice of naval gunnery; but I had rather one such chance, than a hundred random broadsides. As to which may have the best or the worst of it, that depends upon relative position—on the weather—on the swell—and many other circumstances which have no relation to the *duration* of the particular evolution. Admiral Ekins ably and justly observes, “from the great improvements in gunnery, all future naval contests must be speedily decided; and he who best knows how to set about this, *must* win the day.” Instead of adopting the grievous error, that because the enemy may be running away as quick as possible, you should assist him with a full sail and excess of speed, and so apparently give double celerity to his flight, absolute inefficiency to your practice, and *shorten* the duration of the cannonade, I should, by “artful management” of the sails, diminish my speed as much as is consistent with retaining head-way sufficient to keep the line in due order, and so *prolong* the affair as much as possible; endeavouring to prevent thus the heeling and rolling motions from being aggravated by the wind, and taking care that my cannonade *avail a great deal*, and either partially or wholly stop the enemy in his flight. If I succeed I should follow up the blow with vigour. There is no part of Mr. Clerk's theory more vicious than the “demonstration” which I am now combating; and any officer, from whom an enemy may thus be endeavouring to run past, who should run away too, with equal speed, would lose his fame and deserve to be deprived of his commission, though he should cite Mr. Clerk's demonstration in his defence.

Mr. Clerk likewise enumerates, page 39, article 34, as one of his “demonstrations,” that “when the ships of a weather fleet are brought to at their position, the shot from the lee fleet, by the lying along of its ships, will be thrown up in the air, and have an effect at a much greater distance; whereas the shot from the windward fleet, from the lying along of its ships, will be thrown into the water, and the effect lost.” This very extravagant conclusion, called a “**DEMONSTRATION**,” appears to have been drawn from Admiral Byron's account of his engagement of the 6th of July 1779, if we may judge from the following extract printed in italics at page 55 of the *Naval Tactics*,—“that, being to leeward, they, the enemy, did great damage to the masts and rigging, when our shot *could not* touch them.” In blowing weather, and a heavy swell, the heeling and rolling of ships may, no doubt, be such as to baffle all attempts to point guns with precision, and consequently to produce much effect, on either side; but in Byron's action the wind was light and the sea smooth; and, as a general position, the disturbing

effects of quick motion occasioned by bad weather, should not be admitted to operate partially on one party. The principles of gunnery, and the fittings of naval ordnance, were, it is true, not so well understood and provided in those days, as at present; and the practice was, in many cases, uncertain, inefficient, and discreditable to the country. Mr. Clerk, therefore, as an amateur, may well be excused for falling into the error of believing that the damage done to Byron's fleet, "*whilst his shot could not reach the enemy,*" were comparative capabilities or disabilities, inherent in, and unavoidably attaching to, the leeward and windward positions respectively; and for having drawn, from this wretched apology made by Byron for the inefficiency of *his* gunnery, the conclusion, that shot from the lee fleet *must* be thrown up in the air, and *may* have an effect against the windward fleet, whilst the shot from the windward fleet, by the lying along of its ships, *cannot* be levelled at the lee fleet, and therefore *must* be thrown into the water! This extraordinary annunciation, drawn from a case in which the weather was so moderate, and the sea so smooth, as not necessarily to interfere with, or restrict, a proper use of the ordnance on either side, according to precise rules for regulating the practice, far less to operate partially, as by this conclusion—is seriously advanced as *demonstrating*, as a general theorem, that the vertical direction in which shot are projected, *must* depend upon the angle of heel, or the inclination of the deck; or, in other words, that ships to windward, fighting their lee sides, even in moderate weather, must heel so much that their guns cannot be sufficiently elevated, with respect to the plane of the deck, to give either a horizontal direction, or actual elevation to their ordnance: and that the lee ships, fighting their weather guns, having no power of *depressing* them with respect to the deck, *must* throw their shot up in the air, and by this random power may "*reach*" a fleet to windward, without being exposed to be "*touched*" by it in return. This exposition of Mr. Clerk's theory of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of these two positions, is advanced by him as "*demonstrating*" the superior advantages of the lee position. But there is no more necessity for the ships of the lee fleet to "throw their shot up in the air," than for the other "to throw theirs into the water:"—the one, indeed, could scarcely be more wasteful than the other. If the fleets be near, shot thrown "up in the air" at the weather fleet, from the lee fleet, might just as well be "thrown into the water;" and if the distance between the fleets be such as to require an actual elevation equal to that of the average inclination of the deck of a vessel under sail when it blows hard, her shot had much better remain in her lockers. Mr. Clerk has not only here brought forward again the error of working his ships, though in strong winds, under full and filled sails—flying with a speed such, that, as he asserts, "they cannot possibly injure their enemy, passing on the other tack;" but he moreover concludes that in using ordnance in any such cases, there is no resource by which to rectify the pointing of the guns, nor any other alternative than to throw away the shot either "up in the air, or into the sea." But a very slender knowledge of practical seamanship and gunnery would have

taught Mr. Clerk, that the "lying along" of ships under a spread of sail proper for *action*, according to the force of the breeze, and skilfully managed to spill, or catch it—full or aback—as may be requisite to keep due order and to conduce as much as possible to smoothness, may be so controlled, or counteracted with respect to the guns, as to admit of giving them either a horizontal or actually elevated direction, even in the ship's mean deflections;—that the rolling motions which result from the actions of wind and agitations of the sea, in strong breezes, afford intermediate opportunities, incessantly recurring, which may always be taken advantage of to project the shot in proper directions to hit the enemy's ships; or that the discharges may be made at the precise moment in which a vessel, rolling in the proper direction (articles 186, 187, 188, Naval Gunnery), is most nearly, or quite upright. It may be difficult, and sometimes impossible, to discover and determine that moment, by sight of the enemy's hull, on account of smoke, and it certainly requires a great deal of skill and dexterity, "watching the roll" with the experienced eye and practised hand of a *seaman-gunner*, to strike the lock at the critical coincidence;\* but it is strange that, instead of perceiving that this could not have been executed in a proper manner, on the occasions cited in Mr. Clerk's commentaries, and accordingly condemning, in the severest manner, such wretched practices, it should thereupon be propounded to us, as good doctrine, that on all such occasions (for Mr. Clerk's theorem is general,) shot must, necessarily, be thrown either "up in the air," or "into the water."—Strange that a writer who would thus countenance the wasting of our forces on the winds and the waves, should be declared "most learned in nautical war," and be held up as a professor "teaching the British Navy how to *use* its force." A knowledge of practical gunnery would have disclosed to the amateur, that even when he wrote this commentary, there was a very ample allowance, in the vertical dimension of ship's ports, to admit of elevating the guns, with respect to the planes of the decks, sufficiently to compensate for the "lying along" of ships fighting to windward; and a considerable, though not *then* sufficient quantum of scope, to provide for the leeward case. At present the vertical dimension is ample for both; and there are expedients by which the power of giving depression may be increased to any requisite extent: whilst the horizontal scope allowed for "training guns" to fire obliquely, either before or abaft the beam, put completely out of date Mr. Clerk's observations, section 111, "on the distances which one line must be from another, to admit of any one ship in the line of battle, being exposed to the fire of three or more ships at the same time." Indeed the power of giving a converging or oblique fire (see the action between the *Foudroyant* and the *Pégasse*), was

\* See Naval Gunnery, art. 182 to 190, on the aberrations in the pointings and practice of naval ordnance, occasioned by the floating motions, showing the several effects of firing during the rising and falling of the side engaged, to windward and to leeward, respectively; and the particular positions, or periods in the movements of vessels in floatation, which, if properly observed and nicely taken advantage of for firing, tend least to disturb the pointings and efficacy of their gunnery,

sufficient to admit of throwing-in a concentrated fire, from several ships upon one, greatly within the distances which Mr. Clerk's trigonometry exhibits, without altering the lineal position of the ships—a practice so vicious, (for this would be a random volley given in the act of yawing, see Naval Gunnery, article 197) as to be strictly prohibited, utterly exploded, and universally condemned. Other considerations and circumstances must likewise be taken into view, in deciding which of the two positions to prefer; and I have already, at page 57, treated, tactically, the several modes of operation which belong, exclusively, to each. Further, with respect to the effect of gunnery—if, indeed, it blow so hard, that a line-of-battle ship cannot open her lower-deck ports, the weather fleet is at disadvantage in this respect; but this is not usually the case; and then lee ships, by heeling their fighting sides out of water, are exposed in tender parts, to the guns which the weather ships may still effectually use. If the fleets be near each other, the quarter-decks, poops and forecastles of the windward ships would be much exposed to musquetry, grape and cannister shot: this gives an advantage to the lee line; but then again it is exposed to this most serious of all contingencies—that their weather rigging being most exposed, the masts might be endangered from the effects of the fire of ships to windward cutting away what is necessary to their support; and therefore, body blows, which moreover kill and wound the people, are most likely to produce dismantling effects on the leeward fleet.

Mr. Clerk, referring to the former French practice, mistook an error (now confessed to be such) for an *excellence*; and upon this misconception framed the section, page 24, “on the comparative effects of shot directed against the rigging, and those directed against the hull of a ship.” He puts two cases: one, an eighty gun ship running down upon another lying-to to leeward, which directs its fire, exclusively, at the rigging of the assailant: the other, a ship running down to engage his antagonist lying-to, who directs his fire, exclusively, at the hull of the assailant. He *supposes*, for the exemplification of his theory, the ship coming down, as in the first case, “to lose some of her principal stays, eight or ten windward shrouds, or a fore top-mast, or some other spars and rigging, but without sustaining any loss of men; whilst the other assailant, without having sustained other damage, has thirty or forty men killed.” Upon this *hypothesis* Mr. Clerk observes, that “the first ship, by having lost this part of her rigging, will be less serviceable to the attacking fleet, in the battle to be fought, than if she had lost a hundred, or even two hundred, of her complement of men;” and, therefore, as the probability of hitting an object so large as the vertical space made up of the hull, sails and rigging of a ship, is vastly greater than the chance of striking and perforating those portions of the hull which cover the men occupying the decks, so he lays it down as a general rule, that the fire of a ship or fleet should, in all such cases, be directed rather at the masts and sails, than against the hulls of the attacking ship or ships. This exposition might be deserving of some consideration, if the statements upon which it proceeds could possibly hold; but the terms of supposition in which the cases are expressed, are practically irrational,

and, consequently, the premises upon which the doctrine is founded, impossible. Indeed the whole of this section (sect. II. p. 24, Naval Tactics,) is practically erroneous, vicious and dangerous, inasmuch as it proceeds upon *chance* at all. To fire 24, 32 and 48 lb. shot "at the whole body"—at random—to take a chance, which, in a vast ratio, is in favour of only making holes in sails—instead of aiming at the hull, by which both *matériel* and *personnel* may be destroyed—is wretched, wasteful, random practice—discreditable gunnery, which I trust the British navy will never attempt, and which I am quite sure they will suffer for, if they do. That it is of use, and is an important object, to dismantle rigging, there is no doubt;\* but it should be set about deliberately, and not at random. Mr. Clerk assumes, on the one hand, that a cannonade, directed against the hull, may take effect upon the *personnel* apart from the *matériel*, and "kill thirty or forty men without doing other damage;" and, on the other hand, that ravages may be committed on the *matériel*, exclusively. Shot thrown at *random* (for aiming at the "whole body" is random practice) may carry away a few spars—cut some of the rigging, or make holes in sails. 68 lb. shot may cut half-inch lines; but they will kill no man, unless they *chance* to meet an unfortunate knotter or splicer scrambling aloft. But body blows will do both; and can scarcely do one without the other. I too have computed the vertical area of those portions of a ship which are "crowded with men," namely, the sides which screen them, and compared it, accurately, with the whole vertical area or expanse of the body; I have computed, too, how much of that vertical space is taken up by chain plates, shrouds, lanyards, stays, masts, and such parts of the running rigging as come down to, or pass through the deck, and may therefore be considered as projected upon the vertical plane; and I assert, upon that comparison of the horizontal strips—the decks occupied by men—with that upon which vital parts of the *matériel* are projected, (and upon the well-known proportion of wounds to deaths,) that thirty or forty men cannot possibly be *killed* without there being about three times as many *wounded*; and that 100 or 120 men cannot be put "*hors de combat*," but by penetrations and ravages so numerous, as to inflict, moreover, upon the whole *matériel* of the vessel, injury and damage far greater, and far more vital, than any that could be produced by firing exclusively at the rigging. This error is well understood, and very generally admitted. Mr. Clerk was under a great mistake, in supposing that the French made it a *rule* to throw the whole effect of their shot into the rigging of their enemy. *That* practice was the effect of *random errors* in gunnery, just such as those upon which Mr. Clerk proceeds. These arose from an improper use of the line-of-metal sight, which the French call point-blank, by which, with gunners not well instructed, shot which ought to have been projected horizontally, were, *in error*, fired at some elevation, and *that*, frequently, not reduced to what we call point-blank, even when at *close quarters*. The French also made it an invariable rule to fire with the

\* See Articles 194 to 199, Naval Gunnery, on the destruction of masts and rigging.

rising motion, which, I have shown (article 188, Naval Gunnery) is, in the position which they preferred to take, a *lee lurch*, quickened by the pressure of the sail, and consequently acting so rapidly as to cause any aberrations, which that motion might occasion in gunnery, to take effect *high*, as it has been thought, purposely, to aim at and damage the rigging. But I have proved, and it is now generally admitted, that it is much better that the pointing of the guns should be calculated to let inconsiderable errors take effect *low*, on the body, than to aim so that, missing it, the rigging might be, by chance, hit. A shot striking the hull may desperately wound a mast, carry away many of its supports—cut braces, bowlines and halyards—dismount guns, and do execution to the crew besides: but a ball taking effect high, in nearly the same vertical line, can only injure the rigging, and *that* with little effect. A lower-mast, wounded aloft, will be more likely to stand, than if the same wounds were inflicted by shot which had previously perforated the ship's bulwarks. I repeat, it is extremely important to effect destruction of rigging; but this should never be attempted by a supplementary, random speculation, that must interfere with the far more important and decisive uses the ordnance should be put to, and which may produce a double effect. At a distance which cannot be reached but by round shot at random ranges, it were absurd to open ships' broadsides against rigging; and when vessels are once fairly engaged in close, critical action, the main object should be to kill and wound as many men as possible. Within the former distance, but before the contending ships approach to critical proximity, it will certainly be proper to try what skill and precision, with suitable charges and projectiles, can effect, upon the enemy's sails and rigging;\* but I would never fire a heavy gun, directed at random, to cut, perhaps, a top-gallant bowline.

It is entirely to the injudicious attempts of the Professor and the Reviewer, who have thought proper to urge Mr. Clerk's performances out of all place, by representing them as evincing a superior degree of learning and skill *in nautical war* to any such qualifications possessed by those professional men with whom Mr. Clerk has been unwisely put in competition, and to the disparaging tendencies of the pleadings and conclusions of the Reviewer in particular, that these strictures on his client's work are owing. I may appeal to former writings to show that I had forbore to notice the manifold errors and defects which are to be found in that work; and I deny not "that it is a wonderful book for a landsman, who had never been at sea in his life, to have written." But when the contents of that book are cited by his advocates thus to depreciate the skill of the eminent officers concerned, and doctrine such as the preceding is cried up as evidence of that superiority, I am obliged to show cause against the pretensions urged for the author as a learned teacher of naval tactics, though by no means disposed to refuse my tribute of respect for the ability and industry evinced by the acute but inexperienced commentator,—the ingenious but erring amateur.

\* Naval Gunnery, article 193.



It is not an agreeable task, even though a bounden duty, to be under the necessity of discharging facts, unsparingly, as I have done, to refute arguments and demolish pretensions raised and advocated as those urged for Mr. Clerk have been. Even with these overwhelming evidences in my hands, it was, as it always ought to be with persons of right feeling, a question demanding the most serious consideration, in courtesy to others as well as in duty to myself, whether, under all the circumstances of the case, I could *avoid* bringing those facts to bear upon a question in which the names of some distinguished and respectable persons had, however erroneously and inconsiderately of others, been used, as asserting or vouching for, what I knew my facts would effectually refute and overthrow. I am, or I am not, chargeable with having taken up, unnecessarily and uselessly, the question which was opened afresh by the Professor in his paper on naval tactics, as I shall, or shall not, be deemed to have succeeded in vindicating my Father's professional reputation and integrity from the aspersions which the claims and pretensions urged for Mr. Clerk, and the insinuations of the Reviewer in particular, would cast upon my Father's fame. If the reader, after a careful perusal of this memoir, find himself under any doubt as to the impossibility of the meetings asserted by the Professor, and the absolute injustice of his "record," as recited at pages 40 and 41 of this memoir,—if I have not succeeded in establishing conduct, and proving services on the part of my Father, which those conflicting claims would obscure and disparage,—if the reader do not now consider Sir Charles Douglas's character and services justly entitled to a very different place in the history and grateful recollection of the country, than that in which these must have appeared to any who may have been led away by the Professor's allegations and the Reviewer's conclusions,—if I have not proved by evidences which cannot be disputed, that the tactical circumstances, which gave rise to the evolution in question, were entirely incidental, and the execution as unpremeditated as the occasion was unexpected,—if I have *not thus vindicated the skill* and conduct of the eminent officers concerned on that memorable occasion,—then shall I have failed in the use I have made of facts which are abundant to establish these points, and be chargeable with having entered imprudently on an undertaking to which I am unequal. But if, on the contrary, I have established these propositions,—if I have shown that my Father, selected as an eminent tactician "to assist and advise" his Admiral, acted consistently with the duties and obligations attached to that situation, on a quick perception of unforeseen circumstances in the fight, with a prompt unadvised suggestion of an evolution peculiarly appropriate to take instant advantage of a fatal error; and that the Admiral adopted, accordingly, with true greatness of mind, that proof of his Captain's off-hand competency;—if it appear to the reader, from these facts, that Sir Charles Douglas was unfairly treated at the time, by not sharing with others of his rank, in the distribution of honours conferred for a victory which he had so great a share in gaining, and that he might go down misrepresented and doubly injured to posterity, had I permitted those

assumptions to prevail, which were obtruding upon the precincts of his monumental urn,—then shall I have discharged my duty to his ashes, righteously and successfully, to ensure, that, if recorded truly, his name shall hereafter be inscribed in history and biography in terms which shall do him ample justice.

To the Reviewer's observations, page 12, then, that Sir Charles Douglas has been placed by his son in the "awkward predicament of taking a leaf out of another man's book," and to all that is said about "building a house on original and beautiful designs, furnished by a skilful and experienced architect," and used surreptitiously to his prejudice—to all this special pleading, the surest evidence of a case having, in fact, no legs to stand upon, I refer to proof on my pages, that "the leaf" is not to be found in that "man's book" to which the reviewer refers. That the "beautiful idea" was no original design of his client's; and as to the "jumbling of types," I leave it to the reader to pronounce who has fallen into that grievous error. Finally, to answer the concluding part of the Reviewer's article, and no doubt to his very "painful surprise," here, page 52, in the face of day, is "a private document under the hand of Sir Charles Douglas," solemnly declaring in 1783, that the pretension, whether rumoured without authority, or asserted by "word of mouth," was, "ridiculous, groundless and arrogant,"—that the allusion made to my Father, as having been instructed by Mr. Clerk "was impertinent."—That so far as he, my Father "knew, Sir George Rodney had not, nor could not have derived any instruction from that person;" and, in short, that the "whole story rumoured, was far-fetched, ridiculous, and groundless," and proceeded "inconsiderately, upon random inference." Here too, page 54, is "a confidential word of my Father's, put in evidence by a surviving friend," denying that either he, or his Admiral, had been instructed by Mr. Clerk.

To the Editor of the Edinburgh Review, I have peculiar, and, I trust, praise-worthy motives for transmitting a copy of this memoir.—The writer tells us, page 3, that the reviewers, being Scotchmen, are disposed to maintain their original opinion, that their countryman, Mr. Clerk, was the original proposer, to the profession, of the manœuvre of breaking the line:—that if it had not been for that learned gentleman it never would have been known:—that Professor Playfair's record is true; and that, therefore, the victory gained on the great day in question, is chiefly to be ascribed to Mr. Clerk. Now I, being a Scotchman too, have no less disposition to *prove that* opinion to have been made up on erroneous and utterly untrue hypotheses; and determine, accordingly, to show cause why *that* opinion cannot, consistently with truth and justice, be maintained. I call then upon the Editor of that journal, in particular, and upon the public press, every where, in the "*land of my sires*," to hear me—to read me—to consider *my facts*; and then to say, whether an opinion formed *exparte*, upon *hearsay*, *inference*, *manifest mistake*, and *groundless record*, is to prevail, to the prejudice of, I think, as good and true a Scot as ever lived. I love and honour my country.—I laid my Father's ashes in the dust there, and I do hope,

with the blessing of God, and a just regard of my efforts by those who preside over the public journals, to gather "his remains together," in an honorary sense, and deposit them in one of the niches of that temple which is destined to adorn the capital, and perpetuate the fame of the heroes and worthies of Caledonia.

Firmly and devoutly satisfied as I am, and as I think the reader will be, that there is not a shadow of right in the claims and pretensions asserted in behalf of Mr. Clerk—"that if it had not been for him the manœuvre would not have been known, and that he is entitled to the chief merit of this great event"—what retraction is there for me to make, on my own account—what restitution on the part of my Father?—None! That which is demanded of me by the Edinburgh Reviewer, as retraction and retribution due to the author of the *Naval Tactics*, I resist, and treat as a claim, that would detract from my Father's rights, reputation and character, and from the practical skill of the profession to which he belonged. That duty to himself, which I, in my conscience, believe my father would have effectually done, had such pretensions been distinctly preferred whilst he lived, I have irrefutably discharged, in the behalf of the honoured author of my existence:—not without reluctance;—not without a consciousness of my inability to clothe the facts in literary elegance, far less to adorn them with the beauties of the Reviewer's style. I do confess that I wish I could have avoided, with inward satisfaction, this very difficult and delicate task. I had no disposition to enter into controversy, directly or indirectly, with persons of a family which I greatly respect; whose characters I esteem; whose acquaintance I value; and, to conflict with literary characters whom it behoves me, as a very unpretending writer, to hold in respect. *I hesitated long ere I moved*; but, after having been brought by my friends to consider, more particularly, what Mr. Playfair had asserted;—when I read a statement *published, republished*, and industriously circulated, alleging that my Father remained in London, after the departure of Sir George Rodney for the West Indies, in 1782, purposely, as it is insinuated, that, in the capacity of Captain of the Fleet, he might be put in possession of Mr. Clerk's system, and that he was accordingly instructed by that gentleman, in the spring of that year, "in the identical manœuvre soon afterwards put in practice systematically and deliberately upon his plan."—When I *read* all this, and *knew* that my Father accompanied Sir George Rodney to the West Indies in the same ship, and was not in London in *any* part of 1782—I felt, so long as I hesitated, as if reproached by my Father's spirit, his character suffering, and his professional reputation withering in my hand. When brought, by a sense of filial duty, to view the matter thus, neither antagonists the most powerful, nor pens the most pointed, nor diffidence in my inferior powers, could deter me from taking the course which that duty prescribed. I sent forth my statement: I transmitted it to the chief members of the distinguished house of Clerk, and called upon them to come forward, in their own names, as I had done, if they had any thing new to produce, which might support the claims and pretensions urged for their kinsman; so that

in this way we might exhibit ourselves in the amiable light of men contending, fairly, for what we believed to be our respective relative's dues, in a manner to harmonize with those good feelings, and to keep entire those sentiments which we entertain for each other. This was not met, as I expected. Materials, furnished by the family of Mr. Clerk, have been worked up, together with a great many inferences, assertions, and conclusions of the Reviewer's own, in *an article* on Naval Tactics, which could not fairly sum up between us, until I should bring out what I might find it necessary to select from my desks, in reply to any additional evidence which the family of Mr. Clerk might produce in support of the claims urged for him. I have thus been brought to contend, single-handed, with the ablest pen, the most accomplished journalist, the most dextrous critic of the present day—a distinguished and learned person, who "had withdrawn from his literary labours," but, as he informs us, resumed the critic's pen, "buckling on his armour afresh," expressly to plead the case of his friend, and write an article on "Naval tactics." I have no doubt that learned and well practised gentleman might, if he be so minded, pick up the "shreds and patches" of his client's case, and, *again* "buckling on his armour afresh," write *another* "clever article" on this, or any other subject, however tattered, stale or unprofitable to him it might be. But this is no matter for literary criticism; and I have no pretension or desire to emulate the flights and pleasantries of the learned Gentleman's pen. I am invincible in my facts: and, as the Reviewer will have *felt*, I have thought too much of tactics lately, and know my antagonist too well, to fall into the error of deviating from the sage maxim "always to keep something in reserve;" and, which is the surest sign of a good case and a righteous cause, at every movement *I* make, I come upon *fresh facts, additional evidence, powerful, voluntary support*, from persons, strangers to me, and from coincidences as remarkable as they are irrefutable. Even within this month, June 1832, I have acquired very important additional information and *proof*. I put facts upon record—and I could multiply them, infinitely\*—which shall prove to the future historian, that this great battle would have been fought and gained, exactly as it was conducted and won, if the author of the Naval Tactics had never existed. Tacticians, too, will perceive and be convinced, that Mr. Clerk's notions and heroism of the attack from the leeward proceed, to this day, upon incorrect and extravagant assumptions on the one hand, and erroneous principles and practices on the other.—That so far from having made any *discovery* of a manœuvre sound in principle, and therefore universal in practice, Mr. Clerk's work treats, incorrectly, a class of evolutions well known to the profession for ages before he was born:—and that, therefore, the pretensions, asserted in behalf of Mr. Clerk, of having "invented, matured, and fully explained the manœuvre by which the victory of the 12th of April was gained, before any other person had thought of it," and that "he was more learned and re-

\* Appendix, p. xix.

flecting in nautical war" than those who conducted, directed, and gained that great battle—are unjust to the Admiral and his adviser, injurious to the profession, and dangerous to the country, inasmuch as the unsound theory is recommended and advocated in an able and influential journal, which may lead inexperienced, unscientific officers into the Reviewer's error, of a fatal disregard of practical conditions which the author never correctly understood, and which the Reviewer evidently does not comprehend. To the country, then—from whose parental guardianship, and for whose bright annals, public justice and national honour demand a grateful recollection of the services of public men, and a correct inscription of the deeds that were done in their day—to the country I dedicate this vindication of the skill and conduct of those eminent professional men, to whom, *exclusively*, the nation is indebted for this great and glorious victory. To the profession I appeal, that it was from a quick perception of the manner in which instant advantage might best be taken of an unexpected error, by an unpremeditated and undesigned evolution, that the idea, of standing through the enemy's line, arose in my Father's well exercised mind.—That this suggestion was adopted with true greatness of mind, as an emanation from him, by the gallant Rodney; that this took place under circumstances which had never occurred before, in a way never precisely taught, and which could not possibly have been premeditated or preconcerted; and that the signal to pass in line a-head, beneath which my Father conceived and urged the sudden deviation from the predetermined evolution which that signal continued to indicate, is proof as victorious against the vain assumption of a deliberate systematic adoption of Mr. Clerk's speculations, as the unpremeditated off-hand evolution was triumphant over the foes of Britain.

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Having brought my proofs of the leading operations and circumstances of the battle, to the point at which they cease to relate to the claim and pretensions asserted for Mr. Clerk, I should not think it necessary to proceed further, into the ulterior operations, occurrences, and prospects of that day, were it not for some circumstances which have recently come to my knowledge, and some observations that have been published, since I threw together the matter contained in these pages.

An opinion has recently been advanced (and so far as it is favoured by Lord Rodney's friends, this surprises me very much), that "if the Admiral had not led the centre of the British fleet through the French line of battle, but had followed along its lee, and then tacked to windward of it, more ships might have been captured;"—that, in short "the victory of the 12th of April was so far from having been gained by the manœuvre of breaking the line, that it produced only the effect of allowing seventeen or eighteen ships of the French rear to encounter a less destructive fire, than that to which they would have been exposed if their line had not been broken"—and that, by this manœuvre,

“ at least thirteen ships of the enemy's fleet escaped, which would otherwise have been captured.” Indeed, a professional writer goes so far as to assert “ that Rodney himself would acknowledge that had not the centre of the British fleet led through the French line, deviating, consequently, from the continuity of his own, the victory would have been more complete.”

These views of the subject place Lord Rodney in a position far more extraordinary than any that has hitherto been imagined. If well grounded, they would convert into censure, all the exultation in which this great maritime country has ever indulged, in that great proof of nautical ability, and tactical superiority which we have hitherto claimed, and are admitted to have earned, in the operations of that day in particular—erase from history the praise and admiration which have hitherto been bestowed, at home and abroad, on the manner in which the Comte de Grasse, seeking to avoid action, was closely grappled with and defeated, in a battle which turned the balance in which the long boasted naval supremacy of Britain was, at that time, in a state of fearful and anxious suspension; and permit foreign authors to write down the defeat of the French fleet on that day to have been the fruit of accident, and our victory but the offspring of error.

These speculations having appeared in publications which my assertion of the real merits of this action have educated—and perhaps from very right views, of the errors and defects of Mr. Clerk's theory—I hold it to be my duty to the naval profession, and to the maritime reputation of the country, to meet these speculative observations likewise, with proof which shall effectually maintain the character of this battle, as a tactical, well conducted and splendid action, in that bright place in the page of history, which all authorities have concurred in assigning it.

And first—The strictures which I have recited are not expressed in what is technically called rational terms. *The* victory gained on the 12th of April, was gained by *the* manœuvres that were actually executed on that day. It could not have been gained by movements that were not put in practice. *Other* operations might have gained *a* victory; but not *the* victory that was gained. Whether therefore *a* victory, more complete than that which was gained, might or might not have been won in *another* form of battle, is entirely another question; but whether *the* victory that was gained, might, or might not have been made “ *more complete*,” is a question of degree, which can only be resolved, by investigating whether *the* manœuvre which, incontestibly, gained *the* victory, was, or was not, properly followed up, and made the most of. Both these questions are, certainly, open to be taken up and reasoned upon: but they cannot be confounded with each other, the one being hypothetical and speculative, namely, whether, *if* the manœuvre of breaking the line had not been attempted, and another executed, *a* more productive victory might not have been gained;—the other proceeding upon a splendid fact, to inquire, whether the most was made of *the* manœuvre that gained *the* victory as it is upon record. I shall take the case which proceeds upon the facts, and with the cer-

tainty of fact, develope all the circumstances of that case—show in what manner that glorious day was won, and has been recorded in the triumphant annals of this country, by all writers, as a splendid tactical operation—I shall cite the terms in which Rodney wrote it down, and De Grasse and all his countrymen admitted it to have been the sole cause of his defeat: I shall then deal, shortly, with the hypothetical case.

If the effect actually produced by *the* operation that *was* executed, be really to be regretted, as inferior to what might have been effected by another mode of acting, and this *speculation* can be relied upon with the certainty of fact, then the friends of Lord Rodney, and the advocates of Mr. Clerk, have little reason to contend with me, for my Father's conduct in advising and urging that operation—I shall have been doing the reverse of contributing to my Father's reputation, by having proved the facts of execution to have been as I have shown; and much that has been conceded to our glory, must be blotted out of the page of history. I need therefore be under no such delicacy, as that which has hitherto restrained me from going into the whole subject of the battle; for, according to these views, I shall only charge my Father with responsibility which he exclusively should bear.

When any attack proves so successful, as to penetrate an enemy's defences, and throw his line, whether a fleet or an army, into disorder and confusion, then that operation has effected all that the most consummate science can devise, or tactical skill and promptitude accomplish. The trophies that may be taken, the losses that may be sustained, the fruits, more or less abundant, that may be reaped from the victory so gained, will entirely depend upon the manner in which the one party follows up his success, and upon the degree in which the other may succeed in restoring order, and rallying his divided forces.

*The* victory of the 12th of April, which was immediately produced by the manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line, was so far complete, in effect, as to frustrate the ulterior plans of the French Admiral, (to form a junction with the Spanish fleet at St. Domingo, and then to make a combined attack on Jamaica,) but the immediate fruits of the victory, in number of ships captured, have always been considered unsatisfactory, compared with the confusion into which the enemy was thrown, and particularly when contrasted with some of the great battles of the last war. If the remains of the French fleet under Vaudreuil, consisting of twenty-three sail of the line, and the Spanish fleet consisting of sixteen sail of the line, had acted as they ought to have done, after the battle, when watched by Sir Samuel Hood with only twenty-five or twenty-six sail of the line, there would have appeared serious cause for regret that the successes of the 12th of April had not been more closely and vigorously followed up;\* but happily no such attempt was made as that

\* Desirous of showing, before I proceed further, that I am not the originator of any such strictures as the preceding, I refer the reader to the numerous works, journals, professional opinions, and discussions,† which were published at the time, from which

† Newspapers of the time; Annual Register, 1782; French official documents; Rear Admiral Ekins; A Short Account of the Naval Actions of the last War, 1790, &c. &c. &c.

which might have thus damped the general satisfaction with which the nation received the accounts of this victory.

The point from which we have to set out is, that De Grasse had positive orders to avoid battle by every possible means, in order that he might proceed to form a junction with the Spanish fleet, at St. Domingo, and then, with the combined forces, attack Jamaica; and that if he had not been grappled with as he was, in a decisive and critical manner, and the British fleet had stood-on, in continuity of line, it is very probable that he would have evaded a general action altogether, or that a battle of a far less decisive character would have taken place.—

*Extract of Comte de Grasse's narrative.*

“L'exécution ou le succès de mes ordres, ne dépendait aucunement de moi. Tel est le sort de tout général d'armée navale, fixé sur le pont de son vaisseau, il ne peut qu'ordonner. Il ne saurait comme sur terre, se porter rapidement à l'aile attaquante ou attaquée, pour faire exécuter ses manœuvres. Il ignore même ce qui peut les empêcher ou les retarder.

Le 8 Avril je fis appareiller de la rade de *St. Pierre de la Martinique*, le convoi que je devais escorter. L'armée du Roi mit sous voiles à dix heures pour le suivre—à 4 heures on me signala l'armée ennemie. Je fis signal aux vaisseaux de l'arrière de forcer de voiles, et j'en diminuai pour les attendre et pour laisser prendre plus d'avance au convoi; au soleil couchant, nous étions presque sous *la Dominique*, et le convoi commençait à se ressentir du calme sous la terre de cette île. Le 9, au point du jour, je découvris l'armée ennemie, composée de 37 vaisseaux de ligne, dont 5 a trois ponts, et de nombre de frégates et autres bâtiments légers. Elle était sous le vent et profitait de brises pour nous approcher. Je fis à l'armée le signal de se former en ligne de bataille, bas-bord amures, pour me mettre entre le convoi et l'armée ennemie, et je fis au convoi le signal de forcer de voiles vers *la Guadeloupe*, où je donnai ordre par une frégate de le faire mouiller en attendant. Je manœuvrai ensuite pour que l'Auguste et le Zélé, qui étaient encore en calme sous *la Dominique*, pussent se réunir à l'armée. Je fus obligé de virer plusieurs fois pour les empêcher d'être coupés. L'avant-garde ennemie s'étant avancée, il me parut qu'elle ne pouvait être assez tôt protégée par le reste de son armée, qui était encore retenue par le calme. Je la fis attaquer par mon avant-garde. Quoique l'avant-garde Anglaise fût supérieure, elle plia et fut assez maltraitée. J'aurais pu remporter un avantage plus décisif si je n'avais pas eu, d'un côté, le convoi à couvrir, et de l'autre, à conserver une position qui protégeait le ralliement de l'Auguste et du Zélé à l'armée. J'avais lieu de craindre que l'arrière-garde ennemie ne les interceptât, pendant que j'aurais poursuivi l'avant-garde, ainsi je fis virer l'armée du

it appears that considerable doubt, some animadversion and dissatisfaction, were entertained on our side—surprise and vaunting on the other—that Rodney did not make more of his victory; and that if he had, “consequences the most disastrous to the French must have ensued.”



Roi toute à la fois, pour aller au devant de ces deux vaisseaux. Ils me rejoignirent à la faveur de ce mouvement. Le convoi continua la route pendant la nuit, suivant mes nouveaux ordres, et je courus des bords dans le canal *des Saintes* et de la Dominique, pour observer de près si l'armée Anglaise ne ferait pas quelques mouvements pour troubler la marche de mon convoi. Le 10, à la pointe du jour, l'armée Anglaise était sous le vent. *Le Souvenir* parut au vent de l'armée du Roi, et il s'y rallia. Celle-ci continua à courir des bords dans le même canal, pour observer les ennemis. Le convoi n'avait pas encore assez d'avance sur l'armée pour que je le suivisse ; je le protégeais plus sûrement en restant en présence des ennemis."

*Extrait de l'ouvrage de Joly de St. Valhier.*

" L'Amiral Rodney arriva aux Indes Occidentales avec un renfort considérable, et fit sa jonction avec l'Amiral Hood, sans le moindre obstacle ; par cette jonction l'Amiral Rodney se trouva très supérieur au Comte de Grasse. La flotte Française était alors à la Martinique, où l'on préparait un nombreux convoi pour une expédition que l'on avait projetée. Lorsque tout fut prêt, la flotte Française mit à la voile pour se rendre à St. Dominique, où elle devait se joindre à une flotte Espagnole et aller ensuite de concert attaquer la Jamaïque. Le Marquis de Bouillé devait commander les opérations dans l'île, et il suffit de le nommer pour apercevoir que la conquête de cette île était certaine. Dès que la flotte Française eût mis en mer, l'Amiral Rodney se mit à sa suite, et l'atteignit le 9 Avril, où il y eut un de ces combats de peu d'importance, et sans aucun avantage de part ou d'autre. L'objet de l'Amiral Français dans cette circonstance devait être de poursuivre sa route avec toute la célérité possible, et d'éviter le combat à quelque prix que ce pût être."

The next point to be established is, that De Grasse executed his orders with great ability in avoiding battle, covering with consummate address, as is admitted on all hands, his convoy of transports and store ships, and protecting with so much science and dexterity two of his ships, which, had fallen to leeward, and were menaced by Rodney, as to foil the British Admiral in every attempt, throughout three successive days, to bring the French fleet to action; and I shall show that the operations of the 12th, brought on by the French fleet bearing up to protect the *Zélé*, were undertaken by De Grasse with an expectation, which the event in some degree justified, that the *Zélé* might be saved without coming to general action.

" Le 11 nous étions presque tous au vent des Saintes, lorsque sept vaisseaux ennemis chassèrent de près le *Magnanime*, qui avait à passer un *mât-de-lune*, et le *Zélé* qui se réparait de son abordage de la nuit précédente. Ces deux vaisseaux, je ne sais pourquoi, portèrent leur bordée au sud, ce qui leur exposait à être pris. Je ralliai l'armée pour aller à leur secours, je les fis forcer les voiles, par des signaux réitérés, et sur ce mouvement, les vaisseaux ennemis s'arrêtèrent et se rallièrent sous le gros de leur armée. Je repris alors l'exécution de mon premier plan, que cette manœuvre avait retardé. Je fis signal

de tenir le vent, et pour mieux indiquer mon intention à l'armée, avant d'être sous la *Dominique*, je fis signal de virer, et je continuai à courir des bords, mes feux et ceux de l'armée allumés.

“ Outre cette précaution contre les abordages, j'avais donné une instruction par écrit, qui aurait pu les prévenir tous. Je m'y étais soumis moi-même, elle portait: *que tout bâtiment ayant les amures à bas-bord devait arriver sans égard à l'ancienneté.*

Cependant le 12 à deux  $\frac{1}{4}$  après minuit, le *Zélé* ayant les amures à bas-bord n'arriva pas, et aborda la *Ville de Paris*. Il rompit son beaupré et son mât-de-misaine; mais avant que ces deux vaisseaux se fussent dégagés ils étaient tombés sous le vent, par une suite naturelle de tout abordage. La *Ville-de-Paris* moins endommagée, reprit le vent pour s'élever et rejoindre l'armée, dès l'instant qu'elle se fut réparée; le *Zélé*, au contraire, qui avait des mâts rompus, fut remorqué par l'*Astrée*, ces deux bâtiments tombèrent encore plus sous le vent. À cinq heures, cette frégate me signala l'approche de l'armée ennemie.

“ Dès que je crus l'armée pouvait distinguer la couleur des pavillons de mes signaux, je fis le signal de se rallier, peu après celui de forcer de voiles, et ensuite celui de se préparer au combat. J'appuyai chacun de ces signaux de plusieurs coups de canon, pour marquer combien je désirais de célérité dans leur exécution; en effet, le danger du *Zélé* était imminent.

“ Je ne pouvais pas l'abandonner, et quoiqu'on ait pu dire, je ne le devais pas. L'issue du combat a pu seule faire penser le contraire, mais elle était incertaine, et la perte de ce vaisseau infaillible. Or, mon premier devoir était de le sauver *si je le pouvais, et je le pouvais, puisqu'il n'a pas été pris.* Ma contenance, et le mouvement ordonné le 11, avaient sauvé le *Magnanime* et le *Zélé*. Aurais-je du les laisser prendre plutôt que d'offrir le combat? Étais-je assuré que je serais obligé de combattre le 12, pour sauver un seul vaisseau, tandis que je ne l'avait pas été le 11, pour en sauver deux? Pouvais-je m'attendre à combattre si malheureusement le 12, après l'avoir fait si heureusement le 9? *La manœuvre qui avait garanti le 9 mon convoi, l'Auguste et le Zélé, pouvait me procurer encore l'avantage le 12, si elle avait été exécutée.* Pouvais-je prévoir, qu'elle ne le serait pas? D'ailleurs l'honneur des armes du roi, le mien ne me permettaient pas de laisser prendre, sous mes yeux, un vaisseau hors d'état de se défendre, bien plus, tous les jours, comme on vient de le voir, depuis mon départ de la *Martinique*, il y avait eu quelques vaisseaux traîneurs dans l'armée; il fallait donc tous les matins, ou présenter le combat pour les rallier, et pour les sauver, ou augmenter mon infériorité par une lâcheté journalière. Quelle perte, quel découragement pour l'armée! Quelle flétrissure pour le pavillon Français! Quel général eût pu s'y déterminer?”—*De Grasse's Narrative.*

“ Il avait déjà gagné assez d'avance sur l'Amiral Rodney pour être assuré de réussir, lorsqu'un événement de peu d'importance fit oublier au Comte de Grasse le véritable objet dont il devait s'occuper. Il y avait dans l'arrière-garde de la flotte Française, un vaisseau qui, mar-

chant moins bien que les autres était sur le point de tomber entre les mains des premiers vaisseaux de l'avant-garde de la flotte Anglaise. La perte de ce vaisseau n'était rien dans un moment où Mons. de Grasse savait qu'il avait une opération de la plus grande importance à exécuter, et qu'après sa jonction avec la flotte Espagnole, il aurait une supériorité qui le rendrait maître de la mer, il n'ignorait pas qu'il était de beaucoup inférieur à l'Amiral Rodney; enfin il savait que tout le succès de cette campagne dépendait de la célérité de sa marche, malgré toutes ces considérations le Comte de Grasse voulut sauver ce vaisseau et marcha lui même à son secours."—*Joly de St. Valhier.*

This movement of the Count de Grasse caused Rodney to call in his chasers, and produced the effect he desired with respect to the *Zélé*, which got safe into Guadeloupe. As soon as this recall was observed, De Grasse hauled-up on the larboard tack, determined "de ne pas combattre que l'avant-garde," and this he hoped to do "avec autant, et peut-être plus d'avantage que le 9, si elle continuait à porter sur son centre, car il n'avait plus à veiller à la conservation d'un convoi, et des vaisseaux traîneurs comme le 9."—*De Grasse's Narrative.*

At 8 the position is thus described by my Father, in a letter to Admiral Greig, in the service of Russia.

"Thus standing towards each other upon contrary tacks, the wind moderate, the weather clear, and the water perfectly smooth, the Marlborough, being the leading ship of Rear Admiral Drake's division, fetched in with the sixth or seventh ship, counting from the headmost of Count De Grasse's line, and at half past seven was fired upon, whereupon the signals for battle and close battle were made, our said leading ship, supported by the quick and well-directed fire of her followers, sailing in due and close succession, now leading large, sliding slowly and closely down along under the enemy's line."

Whilst the British fleet was thus passing to leeward of the French line, the opening already described was discovered, or as De Grasse says, "la ligne ne fut plus serrée." Upon this it was, as already proved in the Appendix, that my Father urgently advised his method of "grappling with De Grasse," and so force him to a close and decisive battle.

Here then the question presents itself, whether, under all the circumstances of the case, and the opportunity there appeared to be—and which the result proves there *was*—of forcing to critical battle the enemy whom the British admiral had been striving in vain for several days to bring to action—whether, under all these circumstances, it would have been the duty of the admiral to *resist that* advice, and let slip that opportunity of doing that which produced the victory, —or whether it may be regretted that Sir George Rodney had not declined that advice, and stood-on, following his leaders, for the purpose of causing his van to tack when it should have passed the rear of the French fleet, as a mode of assuring a victory more abundant than *the* victory which was gained.

The reader is here referred to pages 28, 29, 50 ; to fig. 2, plate 10, page 30 ; to note page 68 ; and to the chronicles of Keppel's time. No person who shall have perused those, and the following proofs and records, will doubt that if the Admiral had declined what my Father urged, De Grasse might have evaded, as it was his duty to do, a general action, and that *Sir* George Rodney would never, in all probability, have become *Lord* Rodney.

To show what effect was actually, and immediately produced by the prompt execution of the manœuvre in question, and to prove that it did all that a bold and decisive evolution can possibly accomplish, I put in the following proof:—

1. Rodney's Narrative.
2. Memoirs of Comte De Grasse.
3. Journal of the Formidable.
4. Extract of a letter from my Father.
5. Extract of a letter from my Father to Admiral Greig, in the service of Russia.
6. Explanations written at the time by Captain Rotherham, who was Captain of Lord Collingwood's flag-ship at Trafalgar.
7. Extract of the Log of his Majesty's Ship Anson.
8. Naval Battles, by V. Admiral Sir Charles Ekins.
9. Dodsley's Annual Register.
10. Campbell's Lives of the Admirals.
11. Leyden Gazette.
12. Leyden Gazette.
13. Leyden Gazette.
14. Tactique Navale par M. le Viscomte de Grenier.

1. *Rodney's Narrative, page 127.*

“ The British Admiral's ship, the Formidable, reached the enemy's fourth ship from their van, and began a very close action within half musket-shot, and continued such action close along the enemy's line, under an easy sail, till an opening appeared at the third ship, a-stern of the enemy's admiral, which gave an opportunity of breaking their line, and putting their rear in the utmost confusion ; when six of their ships falling on board each other, in that condition the admiral and division attacked them, tore them to pieces, and the moment they had disengaged themselves, they bore away right before the wind.”

2. *De Grasse's Narrative.*

“ Par toutes ces causes la 3me escadre avec les vaisseaux de la 1re qui la suivaient, fut coupée de mon corps de bataille, par le reste de l'armée Anglaise.”

“ Déjà jointe et prise en flanc par quelques vaisseaux, et attaquée de l'arrière par plusieurs autres, cette escadre cessa ses efforts en ma faveur, et peu après je fus entouré de partout. Mon malheur me parut inévitable, d'autant plus que ma chaloupe et mes canots avaient été percés de part en part en plusieurs endroits dans le cours du combat, et qu'il m'était impossible de transporter mon pavillon sur un autre vaisseaux.”

3. *Journal of the Formidable.*

"The immediate effect which this penetration produced, was the bringing all together almost, if not quite in contact with each other, the four ships of the enemy which were nearest to the point alluded to and coming up in succession. This unfortunate groupe, composing now only one large single object to fire at, was attacked by the Duke, the Namur, and the Formidable, and receiving several broadsides from each, not a single shot missing, and dreadful must have been the slaughter. From this moment victory declared against De Grasse, who defended himself with much courage, found himself separated from all his ships a-stern of the point of intersection never to join them again. All was now a scene of disorder and confusion throughout the enemy's fleet from end to end," &c. &c.

4. *Extract of a letter from my Father, dated 13th of April, 1782.*

After describing the Formidable passing between the third and fourth ship a-stern of the Ville de Paris, the preceding ships having passed our "thundering starboard side," almost in contact, proceeds to state nearly as the journal, that all was now a scene of disorder and confusion in the enemy's fleet from end to end, and that De Grasse could never restore any thing like order.

5. *Extract of a letter from my Father to Admiral Greig.*

"The instant the enemy's order of battle was thus broken, the signal for the line a-head was hauled down, and the signal for Rear-Admiral Drake to tack and gain the wind of the enemy made, in order to secure the victory by reuniting his division to the body of the fleet. From the moment the Formidable led, as described, through M. De Grasse's line, victory declared for us; the count, finding himself separated from the Glorieux, and all ships astern of her in his line-of-battle, and all being consequently a scene of confusion and disorder from end to end throughout his fleet, so as to render the reunion of its parts impossible."

"This great battle was distinctly seen from an eminence on the Island of St. Dominica, particularly the act of penetrating the enemy's line by the Formidable, whereat the French spectators as much depended, as did the English ones exceedingly rejoice, whereupon some of the latter seeing the day thereby won by their countrymen, drank freely in honour thereof, not forgetting Rear-Admiral Francis Samuel Drake, whom they had seen lead his Majesty's fleet to battle, in a manner worthy of his country and his family. Commodore Affleck acted in the centre division, which, according to custom, was that of the commander-in-chief, the fleet having consisted of three divisions."

6. *Extract from Explanations written at the time, by the late Captain Rotherham.*

"A little before ten the enemy's line was broke, as represented by the third position in the accompanying plans, when one of the most

glorious naval prospects a Briton ever saw, presented itself on the smoke clearing away. The body of the French fleet to leeward, many of them much disabled in their masts, &c., and the whole in great confusion, one ship being entirely dismasted, and in tow of a frigate," &c. &c.

7. *Extract of the log of his Majesty's Ship Anson, taken down by the Master.*

"Admiral Rodney in the Formidable, followed by the *Namur*, broke the French line, which occasioned great confusion amongst them; three or four of their ships got foul of each other, one of which ships sunk,\* supposed to be the *Diadème*, of 74 guns.

"Twelve of these soon bore up and made all the sail they could in great confusion."

8. *Sir Charles Ekins's Naval Battles.*

From this plain narrative, taken by the master of the *Anson*, and copied by one of the young midshipmen, it is seen, that *breaking the enemy's line* occasioned confusion, and confusion led to defeat.

9. *From Dodsley's Annual Register, 1782.*

"Sir George Rodney, in the *Formidable*, with his seconds the *Namur* and the *Duke*, and immediately supported by the *Canada*, bore directly, with full sail, athwart the enemy's line, and successfully broke through it, about three ships from the centre, where *M. de Grasse* commanded in the *Ville de Paris*. Being followed, and nobly supported, by the ships astern of his division, he wore round upon his heel, and thus doubling upon the enemy, and closing up with their centre, completed the separation of their line, and threw them into inextricable confusion. This bold push decided the fortune of the day. The French, however, continued still to fight with the utmost bravery, and the battle lasted till sun-set, which in those latitudes is almost immediately succeeded by darkness."

10. *From Campbell's Lives of Admirals, vol. vii. p. 76.*

"As soon as the *Formidable* had broke the line, she wore round, and a signal being made for the van division to tack, the British fleet thus gained the wind, and stood upon the same tack with the enemy. By this bold and masterly manœuvre, the French line was completely broken, and the whole thrown into confusion: the consequences were decisively advantageous and glorious to the British; for though the enemy still continued to fight with great gallantry, it was evident that the victory was with Admiral Rodney. The action hitherto had been chiefly supported by the van and centre of the British; for the rear, under Sir Samuel Hood, being becalmed, did not for some time get into the engagement; and when the breeze did spring up, it was so trifling, that Sir Samuel Hood, in the *Barfleur*, took an hour and a half to reach that part of the enemy's line where it had been broken through by the *Formidable*: during all this time, however, he kept up a most tremendous fire."

\* This was a mistake.

11. *From the Leyden Gazette, June 11, 1782.*

(EXTRACTED FROM THE PARIS PAPERS.)

“ A sept heures et demie notre avant-garde commença l'action et prolongea la ligne Française de près ; mais lorsque le tour vint au Formidable d'entrer en action, il coupa hardiment la ligne ennemie et fut intrépidement soutenu par le Namur, le Duc, et tous les autres vaisseaux de la division du centre, qui les suivirent. Alors nous nous trouvâmes au milieu des ennemis, et nous les jetâmes dans une si grande confusion, que jamais ils ne parvinrent plus à se former durant l'action, quoiqu'ils en fissent plusieurs fois la tentative.”

12. *From the Leyden Gazette. Maidi, June 4, 1782.*

(EXTRACTED FROM THE PARIS PAPERS.)

“ Selon des avis particuliers, elle a été principalement gagnée par le bonheur, que Sir George Rodney, précédé du Duc, Captain Gardner, et suivi du Namur, Captain Fanshawe (qui s'acquit beaucoup d'honneur en cette journée) eut, de rompre par le feu violent de ces 3 vaisseaux de 98 canons, la ligne Française, de façon que l'ayant percée entre le 8<sup>me</sup> et le 9<sup>me</sup> vaisseau, à compter de la queue de la flotte Française, il fut suivi par le reste de son centre et de son arrière garde. Parvenus ainsi au vent du centre et de l'avant-garde Française et les ayant doublés, ils se rangèrent en ligne de l'autre côté ; et deslors la confusion fut si grande dans l'armée ennemie, coupée en deux, que l'ordre ne put plus s'y rétablir.”

13. *From the Leyden Gazette, Juin 11, 1782.*

(EXTRACTED FROM THE PARIS PAPERS.)

“ La ligne une fois rompue, les armées combattirent par pelotons. Les Anglois s'acharnèrent contre la Ville de Paris, et, malgré les efforts du Triomphant, et du Pluton, et de quelques autres vaisseaux pour leur faire lâcher prise et les détourner de leur proie, 7 ou 8 vaisseaux ne cessèrent de la canonner.”

14. *L'Art de la Guerre sur Mer, par M. le Vicomte de Grenier, p. 5.*

“ Je ne parlerai point de la journée du 12 si ce n'est pour la citer comme un exemple qui prouve que, dans toutes les occasions, les Anglois se portent en nombre infiniment supérieur sur une seule partie de l'armée de leur ennemi, dans l'idée qu'après l'avoir détruite ils peuvent plus aisément se rendre maîtres du reste.”

From this moment the gallant De Grasse thought of nothing, speaks of nothing in the journal given in to his government in his defence, but to rally his scattered forces. As soon as possible after his line was *coupée* he made the signal for a ralliement général, and signal followed signal, for the van to shorten sail—to tack—to wear—for the rear to close up, to endeavour to restore some order. But all in vain; all was lost for the brave De Grasse. All he hoped for was “imposer aux

ennemis de ralentir leur retraite. Mon malheur me parut inévitable. Je continuai seul le combat, pour satisfaire à mon honneur, à celui du vaisseau où le sort me fixait, et pour occuper les vaisseaux ennemis qui auraient pu inquiéter la retraite de l'escadre qui m'avait si dignement secouru; mais que pouvoient le nom et les cent canons de mon vaisseau, contre dix autres qui le foudroyoient par plus de quatre cents tous à la fois, en ne lui prêtant qu'un seul côté."

Thus De Grasse himself—Rodney—the other admirals on both sides—professional persons of all countries—journalists—biographers—numerous documents published and unpublished—all concur in ascribing the victory to the Formidable having led suddenly through the French line. From a mass of other testimonials, I select the subjoined, to show the terms in which this evolution is recorded and extolled by French historians.

*Histoire de France, depuis la mort de Louis XIV., jusqu'à la paix de Versailles de 1783, par Antoine Etienne Nicolas des Odoards Fantin. Tome huitième, p. 274.*

"L'action s'engagea de 12 Août à huit heures du matin: l'armée Française avait l'avantage du vent: les Anglais, pour profiter de toute leur supériorité, s'appliquèrent à rompre la ligne Française, et y réussirent à dix heures, en profitant, avec lâcheté d'une variation dans les vents, qui passèrent de l'est au sud est. Le *Sceptre* et le *Glorieux* avaient vigoureusement repoussé les premiers vaisseaux Anglois qui se présentèrent pour exécuter cette manœuvre; mais le dernier se vit bientôt démâté par un vaisseau qui l'avait malheureusement accroché, et il fut forcé d'arriver: le désordre, qui fut la suite de ce mouvement, donna à l'amiral Anglais la facilité de traverser la ligne Française, en arrière du vaisseau amiral; alors les escadres Françaises ne pouvant plus combattre que par pelotons et sans ensemble, la bataille fut perdue."

*Extrait de l'Histoire de France pendant le dix huitième Siècle, par Charles Lacretelle. Tome cinquième, p. 291-2.*

"Le *Sceptre* et le *Glorieux*, avaient soutenu le choc d'une grande partie de l'avant-garde Anglaise: mais le vent changea et passant de l'est, au sud est, servit les desseins de Rodney. A l'impétuosité de ses mouvemens on eût dit qu'il commençait seulement la bataille. Les vaisseaux Français du centre et de l'avant-garde avaient beaucoup souffert: l'arrière-garde restait un peu en arrière. Le *Glorieux* étoit démâté: quatre vaisseaux Anglais viennent d'assailler; il cède et se retire: la ligne des Français est coupée: les signaux de Rodney sont entendus: tous ses vaisseaux viennent, dans un ordre savant, suivre la route que leur indique le *Formidable*. Les Français vont combattre partiellement et sans concert; mais leur courage n'est point épuisé."

*Description du Combat du 12 Avril, 1782.—Tactique Navale de M. Daniel Lescallier, p. 120.*

"Les 30 vaisseaux Français ne formoient plus une armée: le désordre et la désunion étoient extrêmes. L'Amiral Français avoit alors



le signal de ralliement à la ligne babord amures dans l'ordre renversé; il courroit lui-même presque vent-arrière sur la deuxième escadre, laquelle étoit beaucoup sous le vent du reste de l'armée; il indiquoit par-là expressément la formation de la nouvelle ligne sur cette seconde escadre, et imposoit à tous ceux des vaisseaux du vent qui pouvoient manœuvrer, l'obligation d'arriver pour prendre leur poste dans cette ligne.

“ Il abandonnoit par-là les vaisseaux dégrésés du corps-de-bataille et de la troisième escadre, qu'une douzaine de vaisseaux Anglais établis déjà babord amures, et peu maltraités, chassèrent aussitôt que le vent recommença à souffler. Ce signal de ligne babord, joint aux manœuvres de l'Amiral Samuel Hood, qui commandoit cette division de l'armée Anglaise, firent bientôt séparer, sans ressources, les vaisseaux dégrésés d'avec le reste de notre armée: et plusieurs autres furent ensuite coupés et dans le plus grand danger.”

The following is from an officer of the French navy, who, though not in the service at that time, heard the battle often discussed by those who were in the action.

“ I have an authority of some weight for being of opinion that the victory of the English, in that action, is to be attributed solely to the bold manœuvre of breaking through the enemy's line—that authority is Admiral Trogoff, who commanded the French fleet at Toulon in 1783. I was two years under his immediate command; he entertained much friendship towards me, and often took pleasure in talking to me upon naval tactics, by way of giving me instruction, and showing his satisfaction for the enthusiasm he saw I had for my profession. I recollect perfectly well his mentioning more than once the action between Admiral Rodney and Comte de Grasse, and attributing the victory of the English entirely to their taking advantage of the vicious formation of the French line, which was, according to his expression, *sottement trop étendue*, which not only exposed it to be broken through, but rendered it impossible for several ships to take any share in the action.”

The rear and part of the centre of the French fleet having thus been thrown into “ inextricable confusion,” by the blow that took such prompt advantage of the fatal error of not keeping in compact order, were unable to close to their leaders; and the van, instead of taking and regulating distance from the centre, increased the confusion by drawing a-head out of interval. The result of this, as an effect produced by the manœuvre that had been executed, was, that, at about 11 A. M. another opening was observed to have taken place in the French line. Thus the disorder and confusion into which it had been thrown, extended throughout, and gave the most abundant prospects of capturing or destroying a great portion of the French fleet.

It has lately been said, (and the tendency of the stricture is not only to disparage the manœuvre of the Formidable, but to lower this battle in the estimation of the public,—in the review of the historian,—and consequently in the consideration of posterity,) “ that the Bedford,

as well as the Formidable, made her way through the enemy's line, though in a different part;" and that "Commodore Affleck was just as deserving as Sir George Rodney, or the Captain of the Fleet, of the honour of executing the over-vaunted manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line, for that the gallant Affleck achieved an exploit precisely similar to that which Sir Charles Douglas advised and Rodney executed." Affleck was a gallant and most excellent officer.—No one knows this better than I—no one was more assured of this than my Father—for no one respected Affleck more. I know a great deal of this part of the battle too; and in no part of this exposition of the real circumstances of this celebrated action shall I be found to vindicate more effectually the skill of those who conducted it, and the character it ought ever to retain, than by the following proof that the passage of the Bedford through the enemy's line was not fortuitous, simultaneous with, or similar to the breaking of the line by the Formidable; but a movement directed by signal from the Admiral to take advantage of the disorder which had ensued in another quarter from the manœuvre which he had executed nearly three years earlier. The Bedford did what she was ordered, and she did it most gallantly. I have not, as the reader will have perceived, advanced a single argument in the whole of this controversy which is not founded upon, and supported by, authentic documentary proof which cannot be disputed; and here I refer to the log of the Bedford, an extract from which is given at page 26, in which the reader will find entries by which it is proved, that the Bedford, after commencing fire at 9 A.M., stood-on, engaging, to leeward, the French van, till *she came opposite to an opening ready made to her hands*, in the manner I have already explained, when, *having no enemy to fire at*, she ceased firing at about 11 A.M.: at *twelve minutes* past 11 the Admiral made her signal to come within hail, and at *fifteen minutes* past 11 the signal to tack,—obeying which, and the signal for close action, the Bedford led through the interval which was then open to her, and at noon bore down in pursuit of the enemy's van. A compound fracture, the resultant of the first, was thus inflicted—by signal—on the French fleet, and the enemy fled in three different directions!

Now there, in the centre division of the enemy's fleet, thus cut off from both wings—surrounded—in confusion—and, as it appears by numerous accounts, in dismay—*there*, as well as in the crippled rear, at this auspicious crisis, were abundant fruits, in prospect, of a victory more productive of trophies—of a defeat more signal—than any that had ever been achieved. That part of the dispersed fleet, ought not to have been suffered to reunite with the others; but that portion was not pursued; it remained separated from the other fragments, which were flying in two different directions, till the ensuing night, when it rejoined the ships of the southern division which had likewise escaped. There is no part of the transactions of that brilliant day which exhibits more distinctly the value and vigour of the sudden and unexpected evolution, than the opportunity which it afforded to the rear of the British fleet, to complicate still more De Grasse's

disaster. Whether we refer to the position of the French fleet as proved by De Grasse—or to Admiral Ekins's standard work—or to Clerk's sixth plate, page 255, fig. 9—or to plates 3 and 4 of Captain White's work—or to any other authority that ever was published, or is extant—no one can dispute that the French fleet was, at this time, in a state of the greatest possible confusion: and either all that body of authentic record and evidence, which I have amassed from all quarters, is erroneous, or that confusion was produced by the *manceuvre*. That the British fleet was itself divided, by the central movement which broke the line of the enemy, is so true, that two lines in position and movement cannot be made to divide each other, by their respective centres, without "breaking their own continuity;" and to object that a *manceuvre* which should have the effect of breaking the continuity of your own line, ought, on that account, to be avoided, would be to renounce, under all circumstances, the "severing that of the enemy" by central operations or by divisions, and to reject all combinations by which a part of an enemy's fleet may be cut off, or attacked on both sides. According to this, indeed, Rodney and my Father were wrong, and so was Nelson at the Nile and at Trafalgar; and so no more need be said upon the subject. I do acknowledge that Lord Rodney was placed in a situation of great difficulty and responsibility, in deciding whether to follow up his successes by a close and vigorous pursuit, or to bring the fleet to. By what he had done, when the expediency of pursuing became a question, Rodney had gained a splendid victory, which he might very fairly consider would defeat the purpose for which the fleets of France and Spain had been sent to the West Indies; and his reasons for not pursuing, as stated in his memoirs, are certainly entitled to great consideration, and may acquit him of all blame. No person ever did, nor can any one doubt, the gallantry of Rodney's spirit: to this day, many approve his decision not to attempt more; and, judging by the misconduct of the French and Spanish admirals, no prejudicial consequence resulted to the country, from this decision. But then, there was great want of enterprise on the part of the enemy, in not making use of the superiority which, after the battle, they still had. The propriety of a decision, formed in such a case, should not be judged by what the enemy *did not do*, but by what they *might have effected*; and, as at Cintra, so in this case, such resolves become the legitimate property of professional writers and historians, to investigate, and deal with, as may be for the advantage of the country, in like cases, for the future. Without saying more upon this point, I must here declare, that *pursuit* was my Father's opinion and advice. He earnestly and urgently recommended a close, vigorous, and continued pursuit by those ships which appeared to have suffered the least, and which were most at hand to pursue; and if, in consideration of having done so much, it may not be regretted that this advice was not adopted, yet, *if any doubt* is to be entertained, whether everything that could be done, was done, to capture more ships, *that doubt* can only be resolved by investigating whether, in the state of the battle towards the after-

noon, there were, or were not, circumstances decidedly propitious to the prospect of picking up many more winged birds, flying in every direction, and whether in this way *the* victory might not have been made more complete.

Reasoning upon the probable issue of the advice which my Father gave, it appears to me, that there is far less of risk in following up a successful operation on the sea, than on the land. The effect that has been produced in the preceding battle, is usually more apparent on the flood than on the field. The enemy may be obscured, occasionally, at sea, by clouds of smoke hanging on the surface of the water: so is he in the field, and, moreover, enveloped in dense clouds of dust. The sphere of naval operation is an apparent plain, open to view when not interrupted by passing smoke: not so the movements of an army taking proper advantage of the inequalities of the earth's surface,—profiting by the concealment which woods and bushes afford, and availing themselves of the natural defences which are to be found in all countries. The order and direction in which a discomfited fleet retires or runs away, are soon seen; and are necessarily limited in combination, course and speed, by the force, and direction of the wind—by the degree of injury, likewise apparent, which the ships of the enemy may have sustained. The capability or incapability of further resistance, may therefore be pretty accurately estimated at sea, by observing the condition to which the material of the enemy's fleet is reduced; and no limit is assigned to the intensity of pursuit, by the wasted physical energies of men, exhausted, as on shore, by the "heat and burthen of the day." The seaman, his exertions in the fight over, finds rest, and is restored to strength by an immediate supply of good food, whilst his vessel carries him onward to reap the fruits of his recent victory. Dismasted ships of the largest size, may be picked up, and secured, by very inferior vessels; and as to a night pursuit, there will be no difficulty in making out what direction the enemy's ships take, if victorious vessels stick close to them. It appears to follow from all this, that an Admiral who has succeeded in throwing the enemy's fleet into confusion, and in driving it into disorderly flight, whilst a large portion of his own fleet is in efficient condition, has done but half his business if he do not follow up his successes vigorously, and that a decided advantage gained over an enemy in battle at sea, should *always* be attended with great results.

Entertaining such opinions, the Captain of the Fleet advised and earnestly recommended a close and continued pursuit of the enemy's flying ships. The signal was actually bent, and ready to hoist, when Sir George Rodney determined to bring the fleet to. Forced into this part of the subject, by the assertion that, "whether of his own will, or by the suggestion of others, Rodney imprudently broke the continuity of his own line, and so suffered twelve or thirteen ships to escape, which might otherwise have been captured," no reflection will, I trust, be cast upon me for entering upon this very delicate part of the proceedings of the day, which it was not my intention to touch. It is, however, no less incumbent upon me to vindicate my

Father from this stricture, than it was to defend him upon the **other** point; and this I have effectually done, by proving, first, that it was **by** breaking the continuity of the British line, in order to sever that of the enemy, that the victory was gained; and secondly, that in the confusion which that evolution produced, there manifestly was, in the opinion of the most experienced officers, a prospect of capturing many more ships than were taken; and, consequently, since a question has been raised why *the* victory was not made more complete, it can only be to the state of the case as I have proved it, that this question can be referred.

The operation, which it is contended should have been adopted by Rodney, in place of standing through the French line, is, that he should have followed his van, in line a-head, as the signal at his own mast-head designated; and then cause the van to tack, in succession, to windward of his enemy's rear, after having sufficiently passed it to be able to double upon it. This stricture proceeds upon the *hypothesis*, that *if* the British fleet, instead of breaking the French line, had stood-on, and then tacked in succession from the van, it might have fetched to windward of, and overtaken the French rear, and so placed it between two fires. Now the skill and tact which perceived, at a glimpse, the decisive importance of taking advantage, of the opportunity so unexpectedly offered, of breaking the enemy's line—and so crippling and intercepting a part, as to expose it, unavoidably, to whatever subsequent operations might appear best calculated to reap the fruits of that decisive operation,—had no sooner effected that object, than the Admiral and the Captain of the Fleet saw in what manner that decisive evolution might be improved, by combining with it the very movement which it is contended should have been applied solely. It is in proof on all sides, as I have shown, that it was consequent to the breaking of the line that the French ships on the larboard hand suffered such dreadful havoc as to impede the progress of the centre and rear. If therefore that operation had not been executed, the British fleet, after having passed, would not have been able to overtake the French fleet on the other tack, because the ships of the British van, in running down under the lee of the French line, were, in general, very severely crippled; some incapable for a very considerable time, and others altogether, of tacking and keeping their wind to windward of the enemy; far less of overtaking them. The following is an extract from the Log of the leading ship, the Marlborough:—

“ 12th April, 1782.—At five A. M. saw the enemy's fleet bearing E. S. E.; at six saw one of the enemy's ships with her foremast gone, a frigate having her in tow steering to the S. W.; Admiral made the signal for the Valiant and Monarch to chase ditto, and the signal for the line a-head two cables distance; the Admiral made the signal for the rear division to lead; half-past ditto the Admiral made the signal for the commander of the second post to send out ships in chace, and the signal to form the line N. N. E. and S. S. W.; the signal to form the line a-head one cable distance; quarter-past seven the signal to engage the enemy, and to keep in closer order of sailing. At forty

minutes past seven we began to engage the van of the enemy's fleet; at forty minutes past eight hove to, to repair damages, after passing and engaging twenty-two of the enemy's line; found four main shrouds, five fore ditto, main and fore-top-mast spring stays, all the fore-top-mast back stays, main-top-gallant stays and rigging shot away; all the sails much shattered; people employed knotting and splicing the standing rigging; five shot between wind and water; two lower deck ports much damaged; great many shot holes starboard side; the lower sill of one of the upper deck ports shot away; the upper deck shot through in two places; one of the upper and lower deck guns dismantled; the fore and main-top-masts and top-gallant-masts wounded in several places; the fore mast cross-tree shot away and main yard wounded, also mizen and cross jack yard, and spare main-top-sail yard. Eighteen minutes past nine the signal made to tack; twenty-three minutes past ditto to wear; wore ship, as per signal. Had killed in the action John Porter and Laurence Lyne, seamen, and George Hunt, marine; seventeen wounded, two of whom lost a leg each. Ten the signal to come to a closer engagement; twenty-five minutes past ditto the signal for the Rear-Admiral and his division to make more sail; at meridian the N. W. end of Dominica, N. E. by E. dis. seven leagues."

The following is an extract from the Log Book of the Prince George, the sixth ship from the van:—

"April, 12th, 1782.—At eight the van of the British fleet having fetched near the enemy's van, began to engage, which became general as the ships came up, the fleets passing on different tacks; three minutes after eight Rear-Admiral Drake made the signal for battle; eight minutes ditto for the fleet to close and for close action; ten minutes after nine, having passed the French line, left off engaging; had in the action all our sails, standing and running rigging cut to pieces; the yards and masts all wounded, the mainmast in several places, the foremast dangerously; *forty minutes after nine carried away the foremast about a third above the deck*, which fell within board, and stove the pinnace and flat boat to pieces, and broke down the skeids, by which they came on deck; at ten Rear-Admiral Drake made the signal to tack, and soon after changed it to the signal to veer; forty-five minutes after ten to renew the action; at eleven to tack, and gain the wind of the enemy; the Triton came with orders to stay by and give us all the assistance in her power; employed clearing the wreck, refitting the rigging, &c.; the fleet in action standing to the southward. Had in the action nine men killed and twenty-four wounded."

The following is an extract from the Log Book of the Anson:—

"April 12th, 1782.—At forty minutes past seven we began to fire at the enemy; the first ship that we engaged was the twenty-fourth ship from the enemy's rear: we kept our wind, and passed close alongside, to leeward of their line. At eight we received the whole broadside from the Ville de Paris: at half-past eight Captain Blair was killed: at nine, having passed all the French line, we ceased firing. Our centre and rear still engaging the enemy, the admiral made the

signal for a closer action. We began to repair our rigging (it being much cut), so as to enable us to keep our station in the line. At half-past nine the admiral made the signal to tack: ditto hauled down, and the signal made to wear. We wore ship, but were so much disabled that we could not keep up with Admiral Drake: our damages received were, the main-top-sail yard, cross-jack yard, fore and main-top-gallant masts shot away; the fore, main and mizen yards much wounded; the fore and main masts and bowsprit slightly wounded; all our stays and rigging shot away; two shots betwixt wind and water; and our sails shot all to ribbons."

It is unnecessary to refer to the Logs of the other ships; but it is plain,—(from the preceding extracts on the one hand, and from what is in proof at pages 87, 88, *et seq.* as to the tremendous havoc produced in the French fleet by, and consequent to, the manœuvre of breaking their line,) that *if* the previous movement had passed off indecisively—that is, *if* the Formidable had not stood through the French line,—the condition of our van ships would still have been as shown in the preceding Logs, because their operation and exchange of cannonade in passing along the lee of the French line was in no way subject to alteration, by what might follow in their rear—whether the decision of Rodney had been to follow his leaders, or to stand through the enemy's line; whilst, on the other hand, it is in proof, that it was by breaking the continuity of his own line, and standing through that of the French, that their whole fleet was thrown into a degree of confusion that rendered its defeat certain. If that evolution had not been executed, *that* effect would not have been produced. Then as to the other mode, if adopted exclusively, how was the Marlborough, the Prince George, the Anson, and other ships—"their masts wounded in several places—most of the shrouds, stays and running-rigging shot away,"—how was a vessel without a fore mast and bowsprit—how was another without a main-top-sail yard, to tack, fetch to windward of, and overtake a fleet which, in this case would, actually, have been in a far better condition than ours, and in a position more favourable for getting away and avoiding a general action, as De Grasse was enjoined to do? It is, therefore, extravagant to assert that, if the opportunity, which it is in proof stopped the progress of the French fleet and brought on a close decisive battle, had been declined, the British fleet would have been able to overtake the French on the other tack, after having permitted it to pass, and so might have gained a more brilliant victory.\*

\* It is an extraordinary circumstance that the very work (Naval Researches, p. 101) which asserts that this might have been done, contains the most direct admission, and affords the strongest proof, that the French fleet would, on the contrary, have been able to avoid close action, if their line had not been broken; for it is affirmed, in that work, that the French ships possessed a decided superiority in sailing—that they had ever been able to get away to windward of our fleets, when they did not wish to engage—and that had it not been for accidents which happened to some of their ships, Sir George Rodney might not have been able to overtake the enemy. Those observations were, it is true, written with reference to the battle of the 9th; but they attach, equally, to all the other rencontres of that time. The following is a copy of the

The officer who, in manœuvring or in battle, declines to seize any present advantage that fortune may place within his reach, in the expectation of finding some more favourable opportunity thereafter,—and he particularly who acts thus in the uncertain contingencies of naval operations—does not deserve success. The advantages which presented themselves on the 12th of April were not problematical; they were real, as the issue proved. I have incontestibly shown that the van of the British Fleet was not in a condition to execute the movement upon which the author of the Naval Researches would, it appears, have entirely depended for the expected “more complete victory.” What then would have been Sir George Rodney’s situation—what would he not have deserved, if, under the circumstances which I have proved, he had refused my father’s advice, and, thus permitting the opportunity which he urged of striking so decisive a blow to pass, the greater part of the British Fleet had been left a-stern of the enemy, not only disabled, but becalmed? Where and how, and when would Sir George Rodney have been able to retrieve this, and make up for the disappointment which assuredly would have ensued? Why, it was this very standing-on to tack in succession that blemished the battle of the 14th of February, and left the brunt of the conflict upon Nelson, supported by a few ships which followed him in defiance of signal; and it were easy to point out great errors in other cases from the manœuvre of standing-on, and then tacking in succession.

Whatever importance professional men may be disposed to attach in principle to the manœuvre of tacking the British van in succession to double upon the French rear, it is greatly to my satisfaction, and vastly to the credit of the tactical skill displayed in the operations of that great day, to be able to show that this very manœuvre was combined in the best way, with the evolution of first intercepting the enemy’s progress, in a manner calculated to produce effects which the suggested manœuvre could not have effected singly, and that it was directed by signal from the Formidable as soon as she had executed the daring and decisive movement. The Logs and Journals which I have cited at pages 96 and 97 prove this. It is thus entered in the Formidable’s log, and recorded by my Father in the journals and letters which I have inserted at page 88.—“The instant the enemy’s order of battle was thus broken, the signal for line a-head was hauled down, and the signal made for Rear Admiral Drake to tack and gain

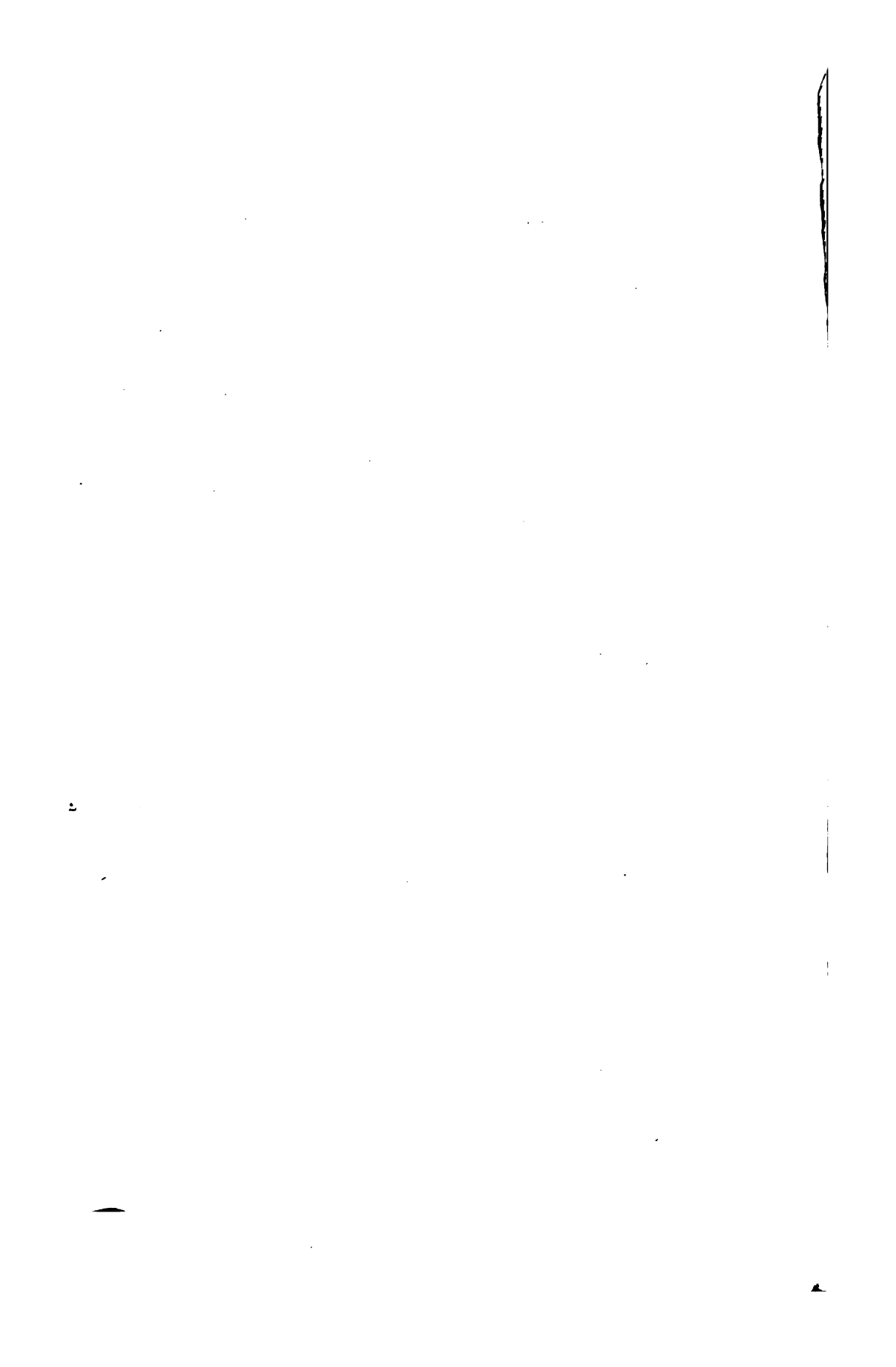
passage :—“The French naval architecture had attained a degree of excellence in the construction and capacity of the ships of that nation, which gave them serious advantages over us in point of sailing, either on a wind, or going large; and from their having a greater depth of hold, they possessed a decided superiority in the most essential point of keeping a better wind. The fineness of their construction gave them important facilities in smooth water: hence, in a fine-weather climate, where nautical skill is not so frequently required as under an inconstant sky and on our more boisterous ocean, they could at all times either commence or avoid close action at pleasure: hence also the facility with which they got away to windward of our fleets when they no longer wished to engage; and, most likely, had it not been for the accidents which happened to some of their ships in consequence of the battle of the 9th, Sir George Rodney might not have been able to overtake the fleet of the enemy, even had both been equally in possession of the breeze.”



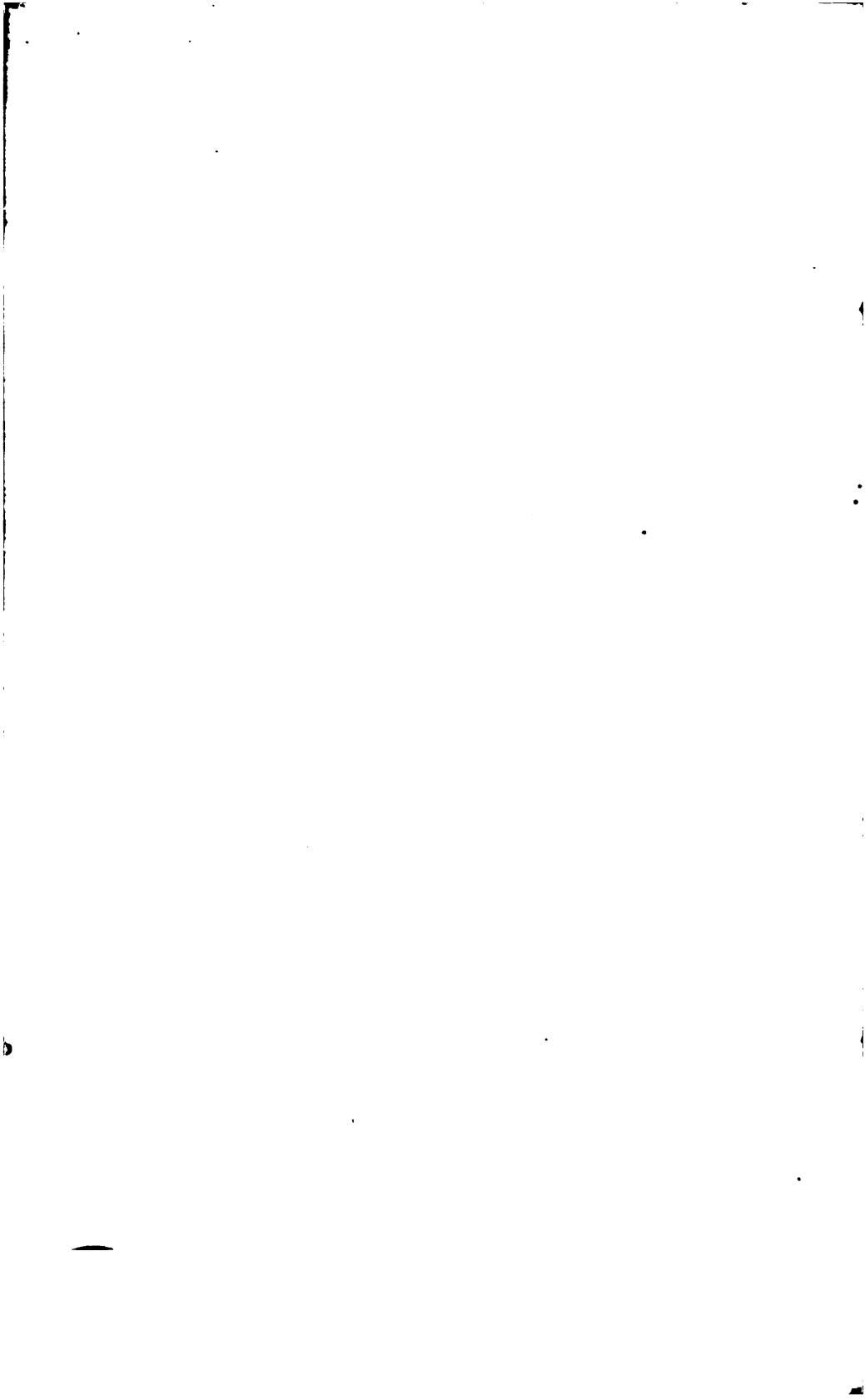
the wind of our enemy, in order to secure the victory, by re-uniting his division to the body of the fleet." The Marlborough's log acknowledges this signal at eighteen minutes past nine, when she tried to tack, but could not, on account of the damage she had sustained; and at twenty-five minutes past nine, wore by signal. After this, a succession of signals was made to the van—for close engagement—for the division to make more sail—for the van to close to the centre, &c. These signals were obeyed, with every practicable promptitude, by the Rear Admiral, and by every ship in his division—all gallantly emulous to close, as directed, with the enemy. If to this it be objected, that this *double* was not speedily or fully effected, that assertion of the inability of the van to do so, is the strongest admission of the grievous error there would have been, if, depending upon the feasibility of that ulterior operation, Sir George Rodney had declined the advice to deviate from the continuity of his own line, and had, consequently, neither severed nor crippled that of the enemy in the manner which I have put in proof. The signals directing the van of the British Fleet to tack and double upon the French rear, were made quite as soon as they could have been, if that evolution had been the only, and not the secondary object. The Marlborough did not cease firing on the rear of the French fleet till 40 minutes past eight, A. M. Having passed, she hove to, to repair damages; and at eighteen minutes past nine, acknowledged the Admiral's signal to tack and double on the French rear. Thus, all the effect which such a movement was capable of producing, was superadded, with additional facility, to a decisive effect previously produced; and the combination was so skilful, that I have no doubt the proofs which I have exhibited in reply to strictures, which (though this might not have been intended) would reflect much discredit on the tactical character of this great battle, will not only *vindicate*, but *illustrate* the skill and conduct of those who gained that important victory, and still more indelibly establish it in naval history, as the best tactical battle that ever was fought.

I here need but a few words to conclude. Opinions similar in some respects to the preceding, appear to have been entertained by some other persons, and in particular by a literary gentleman of great celebrity, who condemn the manœuvre of breaking the line from the leeward, as laid down by Mr. Clerk; and who, dissatisfied with the result of this battle, in number of ships taken, have thereby been led to inquire, whether a more satisfactory result might not have been obtained. I have demonstrated the errors and extravagancies of Mr. Clerk's theory, and the absurdity of the pretensions which have been urged for him; and I have proved the futility of these strictures, and clearly shown, that an indecisive disgraceful issue must have been the consequence, if the Admiral had declined to adopt the advice of the captain of the fleet to stand through the enemy's line. Mr. Clerk's notions of the conditions of the cross attack, and the vain pretensions urged for him, may therefore be treated as they deserve, without touching a sprig of the wreath, or altering a word of the inscriptions, which have hitherto been to the glory of the unpremeditated, unex-

pected, and masterly evolution, which the *enemy* whom it defeated had so much reason to *regret*. If, therefore, there be any thing for *us* to regret in the proceedings of that day, it can only be that more had not been made of the confusion into which the French fleet were thrown by that decisive evolution. Those who assert that *we* should regret that Sir George Rodney, "whether upon his own opinion or upon the advice given him, had been induced to stand through the enemy's line," must be sensible that this observation imposes upon me the necessity of vindicating the advice that was given throughout that memorable day. If any there be who still entertain such regrets, they must not only themselves utterly disbelieve, but by overpowering facts must disprove and discredit all the authentic documents, entries, letters, opinions, and other British evidence by which the reverse has been established in these pages. This would discharge from the pages of our own history, the eulogies which up to this day have been ascribed to the excellence and efficacy of that blow, and release all foreign authorities from the acknowledgments which the successful evolution won, to the glory and security of our country, fifty years ago. Who shall venture to set about this? Who shall proclaim to those who suffered and acknowledged defeat from the application of that masterly manœuvre, that they may write down their discomfiture to have been but the offspring of error?—Who shall declare our glorious victory to have been but a favour bestowed undeservedly by capricious Fortune, upon a false, faulty, and much-to-be-regretted movement?



## **APPENDIX.**



## APPENDIX I.

### NOTES WRITTEN BY LORD RODNEY,

UPON THE MARGINS OF MR. CLERK'S TRACT,

Sent to His Lordship in 1788 or 1789,

AS PRINTED IN THE

FIRST EDITION OF MR. CLERK'S ESSAY,

IN 1790.

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“ADMIRAL BYNG, . . . by flying to Gibraltar,\* abandoning Minorca.”—Part I., Introduction, p. 14.

\* “*Note.*—His orders were, to be most attentive to Gibraltar, by the Council of War, which was unanimous, and of course equally to blame with their Admiral; but his orders were vague from the Admiralty.”

“During the course of the wars with the Dutch, before mentioned, much improvement was made, particularly in the invention of signals. But the naval instructions\* then framed,” &c.—Part I., Introduction, p. 16.

\* “*Note.*—The naval instructions want a thorough reformation; but 'tis not in the power of every commander-in-chief to make what additions he pleases.”

“ . . . A circumstance which is plainly a confirmation that their system or mode is different from ours, and that they are uniformly determined never to be brought to make the attack, if it can be avoided.”\*—Part I., Introduction, p. 17.

\* “*Note.*—This is too true.”

“ . . . That, in bringing a single ship to close action, and in conduct during that action, the British seamen have never been excelled.”\*—Part I., Introduction, pp. 17, 18.

\* “*Note.*—And it is well known, that attempting to bring to action the enemy, ship to ship, is contrary to common sense, and a proof that that Admiral is not an officer, whose duty is to take every advantage of an enemy, and

to bring, if possible, the whole fleet under his command to attack half or part of that of the enemy, by which he will be sure of defeating the enemy, and taking the part attacked, and likewise defeating the other part by detail, unless they make a timely retreat. During all the commands Admiral Rodney has been entrusted with, he made it a rule to bring his whole force against a part of the enemy's, and never was so absurd as to bring ship against ship, when the enemy gave him an opportunity of acting otherwise; and, as he told the King before any of his actions took place, that he would always take the lee gage; first, because it prevented the enemy's retreat; secondly, because if any of his ships were disabled, by putting their helm a-weather the next ship closed the line, and secured the disabled ship."

"Hence, if the American colonies shall accomplish their wished-for separation, Britain, by her force being more collected, and with these resources, will yet be more powerful than ever."\*—Part I., Introduction, p. 20.

\* *Note.*—This I believe to be the fact; for I am convinced that the British fleet, when full manned, never had 2,000 Americans on board them: they were never to be trusted."

"Let us suppose a ship of eighty guns wishing to avoid the effects of a close engagement, but, at the same time, lying-to."\*—Part I., Sect. I., p. 24.

\* *Note.*—By lying-to, she would expose herself to be attacked with advantage by the enemy. The only way to be on her guard, is to be on easy sail, and ready to make more sail, bear away, or wear, as occasion may require."

". . . Outsailing B, who would be obliged to repair his rigging, before he can be in order to follow, and make a second attack?"\*—Part I., Sect. IV., p. 31.

\* *Note.*—This is incontrovertibly true, and what an enemy who wishes to fight at a distance will always do, and keep the enemy from closing with him."

". . . Two or three miles to leeward."\*—Part I., Sect. IV., p. 33.

\* *Note.*—The French almost always act in this manner."

"That F will also have a greater facility of withdrawing from battle, the whole, or any one of the disabled ships of his line."—Part I., Sect. IV., p. 40.

\* *Note.*—All this will certainly be the case."

". . . The French, have never once shown a willingness to risk the making of the attack, but invariably have made choice of, and earnestly courted a leeward position."\*—Part I., Sect. IV., p. 40.

\* *Note.*—A lee gage has certainly a very great advantage, and should always be taken when a proper opportunity offers of being close; and in case the enemy retreats, the heaviest ships should be placed in the van, to attack the enemy's rear, which, as the heavy ships advance along the enemy's line, will leave an easy conquest to the fleet that follows."

". . . The Intrepid having lost her fore-top mast, and her way by

that means being stopped, occasioned a disorder among the ships immediately astern, some endeavouring to pass her to windward, and some to leeward."\*—Part I., Examples, Sect. I., p. 49.

\* "Note.—They ought all to have gone to leeward, as the enemy were to leeward."

"IV. Admiral Graves' Engagement with the French Fleet off the Mouth of the Chesapeake, the 5th of September, 1781."\*—Part I., Examples, p. 79.

\* "Note.—In this battle, the whole of the British rear (though to windward) never came within two random shot, though the signal was for close battle. This I had from Count de Grasse, who commanded the French fleet, and seemed astonished at the behaviour of the British rear.—Vide Admiral Graves' letter of complaint to the Admiralty."

"... Who had been before greatly hurt in their rigging, by making the attack as they did, insomuch, that hardly a ship was able to stand after, and prevent the enemy from forming a new line to leeward."—Part I., Examples, Sect. IV., p. 84.

\* "Note.—Had Admiral Rodney's letters or orders been obeyed, the British fleet had been six more line of battle ships; and the British fleet had been off the Chesapeake before the French, and of course Lord Cornwallis' army had been preserved.—Vide letter to Sir Peter Parker at Jamaica, and his letter to the commanding Admiral in America, both of which were timely received, but neglected to be complied with.—Vide his letters of correspondence 1781, which have been printed."

"'At forty-five minutes after six, I gave notice, by public signal, *that my intention was to attack the enemy's rear with my whole force.*'"\*—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 87.

\* "Note.—And never altered."

"'At thirty minutes after eight A. M. I made a signal for a line of battle a-breast, each ship bearing from the other N. by W. and S. by E., and bore down upon the enemy.' "†—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 87.

† "Note.—In a standing line."

"'At fifty minutes after eleven A. M. I made the signal for every ship to bear down, and steer for her opposite in the enemy's line.' "—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 88.

\* "Note.—That was in a slanting position, that my leading ships might attack the van ships of the enemy's centre division, and the whole of the British fleet be opposed to only two-thirds of the enemy. The moment before the battle began, the signal for the line was hauled down, and no other signal kept up but for battle, and close battle, which signals were repeated by the frigates appointed for the purpose."

"F, The enemy in line as before."\*—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 92.

\* "Note.—Standing on in a very extensive line of battle, which gave the



Admiral an opportunity of bringing the whole British fleet against a part of the enemy; and had his orders been obeyed, the whole of the enemy's centre and rear divisions had been disabled before their van could have made a motion to assist them."

"Why did Sir George change his resolution?"\*—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 94.

\* *Note.*—It was never changed. His fleet disobeyed his signal. His rear tacked without orders, and his van disobeyed and stood to windward of the enemy's van at a distance, and scarce within random shot."

"It has been said, that the French Admiral, upon perceiving the approach of the British fleet, according to the first intention, broke out with an exclamation, That six or seven of his ships were gone!"\*

\* *Note.*—This is true, and he sent him word that if his signals had been obeyed, he should have been his prisoner. The Marquis De Bouillie told him the same afterwards."

". . . He might have been assured of getting every ship so disabled by the raking fire of the enemy, as to be incapable of any future pursuit."\*—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 95.

\* *Note.*—The Sandwich, the Admiral's ship, was totally disabled; her foremast gone, her mainyard down; yet in that condition she beat the French Admiral and his two seconds, though unsupported; but in less than twenty-four hours, such was the diligence of his officers and seamen, that all was aloft again, and in pursuit of the enemy."

"'. . . And as they sailed far better than his Majesty's fleet.'"\*—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 99.

\* *Note.*—All the British fleet but four very foul, leaky, and much out of repair."

"His Majesty's fleet, by this manœuvre, had gained the wind.'"\*—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 100.

\* *Note.*—Though the wind would then have permitted the British fleet to get to windward, the moment the British van had got near the enemy, the signal was ready to take the lee gage close, had not the wind changed six points at once."

"The enemy kept an awful distance till the 19th instant, when I was in hopes that I should have weathered them.'"\*—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 101.

\* *Note.*—Though the British ships might have had it in their power to have weathered the enemy's van, Sir George never intended to have taken the weather gage, but to have bore away close under the enemy's lee, and prevented their getting into Martinique, and have engaged them close to leeward."

"'. . . His Majesty's ships being such as not to allow a longer pursuit.'"\*—Part I., Examples, Sect. V., p. 102.

\* *Note.*—Every day during the cruize Admiral Rodney had letters from many of his captains that their ships were sinking, and many of them were never in a condition again to go to sea, and two sunk in St. Lucia."

“ Extract of a letter from Rear-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, May 4, 1781.”\*—Part I., Sect. III., p. 107.

\* *Note.*—There is a mistake in this letter. The Amazon joined Sir Samuel Hood the day before, and gave intelligence that a superior fleet was to windward of the island. Sir S. Hood, instead of turning to windward of the Diamond Rock, amused himself in forming a line of battle, and lay-to all night, holding a council, and gave the four sail he had been so long blockading an opportunity to get out and join their fleet; whereas, had he been to windward of the Diamond Rock, he had prevented the junction, and had it in his power either to have given battle, or retreated into the Bay of Gross Islet, St. Lucia. By laying-to, the lee current drove him to leeward, and afterwards, by keeping from the wind, gave the enemy an opportunity of cutting him off St. Lucia, where all our stores and provisions were deposited.”

“ . . . Though the French Admiral had ten sail astern of him, and three others to windward, he did not make a nearer approach.”\*—Part I., Sect. III., p. 109.

\* *Note.*—See Admiral Rodney’s letter to the Governor of Barbadoes on this occasion, to know the real truth of this strange affair.—Vide his correspondence with the Governor, &c. 1781.”

“ At seven, made sail to the northward, it being the opinion of the officers of the squadron acquainted with this country, that it was the only way of getting to windward, as the currents run very strong to leeward, to the southward of St. Vincent’s.”\*—Part I., Sect. III., p. 113.

\* *Note.*—The whole affair, and Admiral Hood’s letter to Sir G. Rodney, was such that he sent the original letter to the Admiralty, that it might not be thought he had made a mistake in copying.”

“ Mr. Lestock still astern.”\*—Part I., Sect. III., p. 128.

\* *Note.*—The conduct of Admiral Lestock from the beginning, was such as plainly showed he meant to betray his country, even to his Admiral. The night before the battle, when Mathews made the signal to bring-to, Lestock, instead of coming into the wake of his commander-in-chief, agreeable to the known practice, brought-to three leagues to windward, by which means, when the signal was made in the morning for the line abreast, the whole was greatly delayed, and he never was in his proper station. Had any Captain under his command acted in that manner, he would certainly have broke him. Yet this very man, from party and faction, found friends to support him, and from a partial jury, gave him an opportunity of disgracing a brave and honest Admiral; but impartial posterity has done justice to his memory, and execrated the memory of Lestock.”

“ That if Mr. Mathews and his seconds had been properly supported, the greatest part of the Spanish rear might have been cut off.”\*—Part I., Sect. III., p. 133.

\* *Note.*—This is too true. Few ships followed the example of their truly brave Admiral and his seconds.”

“ After so many circumstances being allowed to take place, can the distance be thought to be less than 400 or 500 yards at least.”\*—Part I., Sect. III., p. 135.

\* “ *Note.*—I believe none of the ships were in what I call close action, and in which Britain will always succeed.”

“ For, if this deficiency is a truth, would it not have been more natural, upon a chase of the enemy, to make sure of the slowest sailing vessels to be found in the rear, than to attempt to get up with the swiftest ships to be found in the van?”\*—Part I., Sect. III., p. 140.

\* “ *Note.*—Certainly, and a good officer will act accordingly.”

“ From hence the enemy ahead must either abandon his three sternmost ships, or he must double back to support them.”\*—Part I. Sect. III., pp. 145, 146.

\* “ *Note.*—There will ever be a manifest advantage in obliging your enemy to depart from their original intention, and attacking them in a different mode from that they offer you.”

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## APPENDIX II.

### DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE FACTS OF EXECUTION.

#### I.

*'Copy of a Letter from Captain Sir Charles Dashwood, K.C.B., &c. &c. &c.*

*Torquay, July 8, 1829.*

DEAR SIR,

I AM very much obliged for the trouble you have taken in forwarding me the various documents, (which I herewith return,) relative to the glorious battle of the 12th of April, because, if I cannot throw any new light on this interesting subject, I can, at all events, corroborate the statement made by Admiral Ekins.

Whether Sir George Rodney, or Sir Charles Douglas, had any conversation with Mr. Clerk previous to their leaving England, relative to the practicability of breaking an enemy's line; or whether these great and gallant officers ever conversed or consulted together on such a subject, is impossible for me to say; but I think I can sufficiently prove from circumstances that eventually occurred, and which came within my own knowledge, the absolute improbability of such a conversation having occurred with Mr. Clerk, or, that the Admiral and Captain of the Fleet had previously consulted together on the important subject; but, that the idea emanated from the mind of your excellent Father, in the hour of battle.

I shall simply relate facts, to which I was an eye witness, and can vouch for their truth. Being one of the aide-de-camps to the Commander-in-Chief on that memorable day, it was my duty to attend both on him and the Captain of the Fleet, as occasion might require. It so happened, that some time after the battle had commenced, and whilst we were warmly engaged, I was standing near Sir Charles Douglas, who was leaning on the hammocks, (which in those days were stowed across the fore part of the quarter-deck,) his head resting on one hand, and his eye occasionally glancing on the enemy's line, and apparently in deep meditation, as if some great event was crossing his mind: suddenly raising his head, and turning quickly round, said, "Dash! where's Sir George?" "In the after cabin, Sir," I replied. He immediately went aft; I followed; and on meeting Sir George coming from the cabin close to the wheel, he took off his cocked hat with his right hand, holding his long spy-glass in his left, making a low and profound bow, said, "Sir George, I give you joy

of the victory!" "Poh!" said the Chief, as if half angry, "the day is not half won yet." "Break the line, Sir George!" said your Father, "the day is your own, and I will insure you the victory." "No," said the Admiral, "I will not break my line." After another request and another refusal, Sir Charles desired the helm to be put a-port; Sir George ordered it to starboard. On your Father ordering it again to port, the Admiral sternly said, "Remember, Sir Charles, that I am Commander in Chief: starboard, sir," addressing the Master, who, during this controversy, had placed the helm amidships. Both the Admiral and Captain then separated; the former going aft, and the latter forward. In the course of a couple of minutes or so, each turned and again met nearly on the same spot, when Sir Charles quietly and coolly again addressed the Chief—"Only break the line, Sir George, and the day is your own." The Admiral then said, in a quick and hurried way, "Well, well, do as you like;" and immediately turned round and walked into the after cabin. The words "Port the helm!" were scarcely uttered, when Sir Charles ordered me down with directions to commence firing on the larboard side. On my return to the quarter-deck, I found the Formidable passing between two French ships, each nearly touching us. We were followed by the Namur, and the rest of the ships astern; and from that moment the victory was decided in our favour.

You may naturally suppose I was very young at the time; but the circumstances made such an impression on my mind, that they are as fresh in my memory as if it occurred but yesterday; and I much doubt if there is a man now living who saw and heard so much of the transaction as myself, except, probably, my friend Sir Joseph Yorke, who was also a brother aide-de-camp.

Having thus stated mere matters of fact just as they occurred, and within my own knowledge, I leave any man to draw what inference he pleases; but I would ask him, supposing the Admiral had had such a conversation, either jointly or separately with Mr. Clerk, previous to their leaving England, or that these great and gallant officers had ever consulted together on the subject of breaking the enemy's line, would such a difference of opinion have existed, or such a kind of controversy, as I have related, have taken place? I say, no. I am most clearly convinced, and my mind most thoroughly satisfied, that the idea of beaking the line never entered into the imagination of even your gallant Father, till the moment of his leaning on the hammocks, and looking towards the enemy's ships. His deep thought at that instant—his sudden raising his head from his hand, as if he had just then settled something in his mind—the quick way of his turning round, and the anxious look he gave when he said, "Dash, where's Sir George?"—all convince me that the idea of breaking the line first entered his mind at that moment, and that he seized it with avidity.

I think I have sufficiently shown, to the satisfaction of every impartial man, the great probability, if not *absolute certainty*, that the idea rose in the mind of your excellent Father at the very time I have pointed out; and that this great event decided the battle is beyond doubt. This is my firm opinion; I have held it for seven and forty years, and I shall continue in the same sentiments to the last moment of my existence.

I had the good fortune to be much noticed by the Captain of the Fleet, daily and hourly in his cabin, and my time was much occupied in copying various documents; amongst them was a "Comparative Statement of the Force of the French and English Fleets, showing the Weight of Metal and Shot thrown in a Broadside from each." If, peradventure, you could find such a document amongst your Father's papers, I shall be thankful for a copy. I am sure I wrote some hundreds, and kept one myself, but it has disappeared in the lapse of time.

I shall feel great satisfaction in giving the son of so good and so great a man any further information in my power.

I have the honour to be,  
 With great esteem,  
 Your very obliged and devoted  
 humble servant,  
 CH. DASHWOOD, Capt. R.N.

Major-Gen. Sir Howard Douglas,  
 &c. &c. &c.

## II.

*To the Editor of the United Service Journal.*

(Copy.)

*Torquay, Devon, January 30, 1830.*

MR. EDITOR,—I have just seen in the last Quarterly Review, a very long statement on the subject of Lord Rodney's battle on the 12th of April, 1782, in reply to the one published by Sir Howard Douglas, and in which my letter to that officer is canvassed with no small degree of acrimony. I am not so weak as to enter the list of controversy with such fearful adversaries, yet it is necessary I should give some explanation in my own defence; and though they may turn, and twist, and criticise all and every expression contained in that letter, it does not alter the case one iota; and whatever ridicule they may endeavour to cast on what they have been facetiously pleased to term the "wheel-scene," the whole is, nevertheless, substantially true, and with all their ingenuity they cannot confute it;—they must at least do me the justice to believe that I could not have been actuated by interested motives when I tell them that to this hour I have not the honour of even a personal acquaintance with Sir Howard Douglas; nor did I know he was a son of the late Captain of the Fleet until about six months ago, when he wrote, requesting I would give him such information on breaking the enemy's line as came within my own knowledge. I did so without reserve, and I can assure you, Mr. Editor, it is a matter of no importance to me whether the merit of that great deed is fixed on the escutcheon of Lord Rodney, or on that of Sir Charles Douglas; but called upon by the son of the latter, a perfect stranger, I conscientiously imparted what I heard and saw. Beyond this, I have nothing more to say than to regret that such a delicate question should ever have been brought before the public, and to assure the friends of my Lord Rodney that it never was my intention to show the slightest disrespect to the memory of so great and so distinguished an officer. I cannot, therefore, but be much distressed that it should even be supposed that when I mentioned the Admiral's going into the after-cabin, it could be construed into his going off the deck; every naval officer is aware, though the Reviewers may not be, that the cabin is merely a continuation of the quarter-deck. It is certain the Admiral was in the stern and quarter-galleries the greater part of the battle, and it was in the latter situation, whilst leaning out of the window, viewing his own and the enemy's fleet, that I presented him with a glass of lemonade which he had desired me to make. I never said that the Admiral was not on the quarter-deck at the moment the Formidable was passing through the enemy's line, for he was repeatedly in and out, but merely observed that when he sanctioned that operation, he turned to the cabin; but how far he advanced, or how long he remained, is impossible for me to say, as at that moment I was ordered below to give the necessary directions for opening the fire on the larboard side. The whole of my observations do not, in point of time, occupy more than five or six minutes, commencing whilst the Captain of the Fleet

was leaning on the hammocks, meditating, as I still think, on some great design, to the conclusion of the "wheel-scene," and as it would not take up more than from ten to fifteen seconds to go from the wheel to the stern gallery, and about twenty more from thence to the gangway, it is both easy and clear the Chief was on that very spot at the critical moment of passing under the stern of the *Glorieux*, as stated by Sir Gilbert Blane, and then it was, I take for granted, the Admiral desired him (both the aides-de-camp being previously dispatched) to go down and order the guns to be depressed;—I do, therefore, most cordially join with, and beg to corroborate, the statement of the Reviewers, "that the Chief was on the quarter-deck, *before, during, and after* the *Formidable* passed through the enemy's line." No one ever asserted to the contrary, or doubted it: then how they can, even by possibility, construe this into the Admiral's retirement into the cabin, is best known to themselves. But it is neither candid nor just thus to torture my meaning to the dishonour and prejudice of so great a man. I disclaim it with indignation.

However, young as I certainly was when this great battle was fought, yet early impressions are the most lasting, particularly one of such an interesting nature as those described; but if they imagine it has lain dormant in my breast for seven and forty years, and only now brought forward for the first time, merely at the instigation of Sir Howard Douglas, or any other man, they are much mistaken; for I have mentioned it in all societies whenever it has been the subject of conversation during the whole of that long period.

I have the honour to be, Mr. Editor,  
Your most obedient humble servant,

CHARLES DASHWOOD,  
Captain, Royal Navy.

### III.

*Notes written at the time, by an Officer, (now a Flag Officer,\*) who served in the Formidable in the Battle of the 12th of April.*

"About six o'clock on the morning of the 12th of April, 1782, Sir Charles went into Lord Rodney's cabin, who was then a-bed, and told him that Providence had given him the French fleet on his lee-bow, on which the Admiral got up, and gave his general orders to prepare for battle. At half-past seven the engagement began. At eleven A. M. there appeared an opening sufficient for our ships to divide the French line. Sir Charles observed to the Admiral, that there was now a fine opportunity for severing the rear and half the centre from the *Ville-de-Paris*; to which Lord Rodney replied, that it was a very hazardous experiment. Sir Charles said, the more danger the more glory, if it succeeded, which he doubted not it would. But the Admiral still objected, and called out to the helm, (for we were then, as the wind favoured us, luffing up,) No nearer!

A discussion, which it is unnecessary to repeat, then took place between the Admiral and his First Captain, in which

"Sir Charles maintained his opinion, and again called out to the helm 'to luff.'"

Upon further consideration, Sir George Rodney determined, most gallantly, with true greatness of mind, to adopt the advice of the Captain of the Fleet; and the writer adds—

"The *Formidable* then pushed through the line, amidst the shouts and applauses of our fleet, and by this gallant manœuvre fixed the fortune of the day."

\* Vice-Admiral the Hon. Sir Joseph Sydney Yorke, K.C.B.

The gallant officer by whom the letter and narrative, of which the preceding are extracts, were written, had confidential access to the cabins of both those officers, and knew perfectly well all that was going on; and he has assured me that there was positively "no premeditated plan of breaking the line entertained."

## IV.

*Letter from Charles Thesiger, Esq.*

(Copy.)

13, St. Alban's Place, St. James's Square, 17th Feb. 1830.

SIR,—I have just seen a recent number of the Quarterly Review, containing a laboured article, endeavouring by specious argument to invalidate the facts you had adduced in support of the claim which you had so meritoriously asserted in favour of your lamented Father, as having been chiefly instrumental to the victory gained on the 12th April, 1782, by the daring exploit of carrying the British fleet through the French line; and knowing that I had in my possession a letter from my brother, the late Sir Frederick Thesiger, who acted as aide-de-camp to Lord Rodney on that important day, I have referred to it, and hope you will not consider me intrusive in having forwarded some extracts relating to the action, as strongly corroborative of the claim you have endeavoured to establish, and coinciding in a remarkable manner with the living testimonies which you have already been enabled to procure.

My brother, at the time of the action, was twenty-four years of age, and was well known in the navy at the time of his death, when he had attained the rank of post-captain. He accompanied Lord Nelson to Copenhagen, where he also acted as his aide-de-camp, and was charged by his Lordship with his letter to the Crown Prince, which caused a cessation of hostilities. His life is to be found in the Naval Chronicle, very minutely and correctly given; and he was not only a gallant officer, but a man of unquestionable veracity.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed)

CHARLES THESIGER.

*To Sir Howard Douglas.*

If you should have the least curiosity to compare the original with those parts which I have copied, I shall at all times be ready to produce my brother's letter.

## V.

*Extracts from F. Thesiger's Letters, commenced December, 1782, and continued till 25th of February, 1783.* He had before announced his safety, and the event of the battle of the 12th of April, and this was in answer to one of mine, desiring to be furnished with more particular information. C. T.

"About seven on Sunday morning, being the 8th, our cruizers made the signal for the enemy being under sail. We immediately made the signal for our ships to get under way; and in the evening, about nine o'clock, one of our ships hailed us, and informed us the French were close a-head of us. We kept on our course until we could plainly discern their lights, and then made the signal for the fleet to lay-to, being in the order of sailing. The Admiral called for his aides-de-camp on the 9th, before we began to engage, and finding they were mere boys, he told Captain Symonds to let him have somebody



he could depend upon; he immediately introduced me, who was his aide-de-camp, and the Admiral was satisfied."

The action of the 9th of April is then described, which was only partial, sixteen or seventeen of our ships being mere spectators, having no wind to manage them.

"The ship astern of us came into action; the rest of the centre and all the rear were prevented, from the cause I have mentioned: we lost three men and about ten wounded. Lieutenant Hale was among the killed—a very amiable young man."

The cause which led to the action on the 12th of April is then explained.

"We certainly sailed much superior to the enemy, our ships being all coppered, whereas the French had not twenty clean ships. The superiority of our sailing was very conspicuous, for although the French fleet had got off so great a distance to windward, yet before night we came up within three or four miles of them, and had we carried the same sail, we should have brought them to action long before; we may consider the accident which happened to the Zèle, as a very favourable circumstance to us. She got foul of the Ville-de-Paris in the night and carried away her foremast and bowsprit, which brought the fleet very much to leeward; in the morning of the 12th we saw the Zèle in tow by a frigate, which was going with her into Guadaloupe. We sent two or three ships after her, but the French fleet bearing down, we recalled them, and they formed themselves into the line of battle close to the wind: the enemy did the same, but they were too late, for they thought to pass our line at the distance they did on the 9th, and in every action this war; but they fairly entrapped themselves, and we chose our distance. The van and the centre divisions a-head of us, passed close along the French line. The Formidable went through, and the rest of the centre and rear divisions followed.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* neither should we have got through if his orders had been obeyed.  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Sir Charles Douglas is the man who had the sole merit of fighting the Formidable; \* \* \* \* \* As we were passing the French line, it was glorious and animating to hear Sir Charles giving his orders with so much clearness, and at the same time so much elated; it had a wonderful effect upon me, and I felt myself honoured fighting by a person possessing so much magnanimity. He conducted the Formidable as close along the French line as it was possible; the five or six last ships I could have thrown cold shot aboard them, they were so near. The Admiral cried, 'No nearer;' Sir Charles, 'Luff, my boys, and the day's our own.' 'No nearer, I say,' repeated the Admiral. 'Don't fall off,' answered Sir Charles. The Admiral came to me, and ordered me to go to the wheel and see the helm put up; but as Sir Charles kept incessantly crying, 'Luff, my boys, luff,' and it is always an inferior officer's duty to obey the last command, therefore I did not put the Admiral's orders into execution."

"The letter so often adverted to, and to which you attach some importance, contains matter of a private and domestic nature, which prevents me from trusting it out of my own possession; but those parts relating to the naval events of that period may be inspected by any one on either side of the question.

(Signed) C. T."

## VI.

*Extract of a Letter from Frederick Knight, Esq., now living at Stonehouse, Devon, who was Sir Charles Douglas's Secretary at the time of the action, was present on the quarter-deck, and whose peculiar duty it was to observe and note all that passed.*

(Extract.)

Union Street, Stonehouse, February 26th, 1830.

"In reply to your inquiries concerning the subject of breaking the enemy's line on the 12th of April, 1782, I beg to state, that the merit attached to that bold and fortunate manœuvre rests wholly on the late Sir Charles Douglas. Sir Charles saw an opening at the stern of the *Ville-de-Paris*, and, on meeting Lord Rodney, said, 'I give you joy of the victory; only break the enemy's line, and we shall have possession of the *Ville-de-Paris* before night.'—The writer then goes on to state, that at first the Admiral objected, and in very strong terms. "But Sir Charles persisted in the propriety of breaking the line, and said, 'Mr. Harris, put the helm a-port.' The Admiral ordered it a-starboard. The Admiral then went into the cabin. He remained a very short time, and then returned to the quarter-deck again, when Sir Charles repeated his desire to break the line, when the Admiral said, 'Do as you please.' The helm was then put to port, and the *Formidable* passed through the line, and was followed by the *Namur* and the other British ships in gallant style. The enemy were put into the greatest confusion, and were terror-struck by this new manner of fighting.

"From the situation I held at the time (Secretary to Sir C. Douglas), I think I may positively assert that the idea of breaking the line was never mentioned between him and the Admiral till the time of its being put into execution, and from what I have already stated, the thought was momentary, and originated with Sir Charles.

(Signed)

FREDERICK KNIGHT."

"*Commissioner Edgecombe, Victualling-Office.*"

## VII.

*Extract of a Letter from Captain Blaney, who was a Midshipman on board the Formidable in the Action.*

Plymouth, February 3d, 1830.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am favoured with your letter of the 1st instant, and hasten to comply with your wishes.

"I do not think there was the smallest intention of breaking the enemy's line, until a few minutes before the opportunity presented itself of doing so with the effect that followed. There can be no doubt of an altercation between the Commander-in-Chief and the Captain of the Fleet, whether the helm should be put a-starboard or port, *which was alternately done*, and even a-port by the motion of Sir Charles's hand. In this situation was the *Formidable*, making an angle with the ship our second a head, when the helm was desired to be put a-port without further opposition. Sir Charles had frequently called to the man at the wheel, 'Luff, my man, luff; keep her close at it.' Almost in an instant were four of the enemy's ships opposed to our larboard broadside, who had, on our breaking through, fallen aboard each other.

"It was generally understood that Lord Rodney said, 'do as you please, Sir Charles,' and from this permission the helm was ordered down, that is a-port. The Admiral was mostly in his chair on the quarter-deck, and with difficulty could walk with the gout. My journal for the *Formidable* from December,

1781, to April, 1783, is at this moment before me: the transactions of the 9th and 12th April were wrote the next day.

“Should you have any wish to peruse them, you have only to say the word.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

With much esteem, your's very truly,

G. W. BLANEY.”

“*Commissioner Edgecombe.*”

### VIII.

*Extract of a Letter from Sir G. Blane.*

“My being late in coming home when I received your letter, prevented me from answering it so soon as you wished.

“I can have no objection to your inserting the note you propose. I certainly never heard either the name of Mr. Clerk, or his work, till some time after the peace, when in England.

“The Admiral certainly was a good deal in the cabin under the poop during part of the action, and I employed myself in assisting to work a nine-pounder there. But a short time before the breaking of the line, we were both on the quarter-deck, as must have been the case, when on observing us fast approaching the *Glorieux*, he looked round, and seeing none of his aides-de-camp, he sent me to the lower gun-deck to order them to lower their metal. I think it likely that it was while I was so engaged, that what Sir Charles Dashwood told you took place. I should like much that Sir C. Dashwood were to see my printed account of the action; and as I do not mention the circumstance of my being sent to the lower gun-deck, could you ask him whether he remembers it? I abstained from publishing it, as it would look vainglorious and out of character for me. There is not the smallest item of contradiction or inconsistency between my printed account and the statement you showed me.

(Signed) GILBERT BLANE.”

“It is not much out of place here to remark, that it was considered as a fortunate circumstance for the service that the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet in the West Indies, in the memorable campaign of 1782, should have had about his person to assist and advise him, so able an officer as Sir Charles Douglas, he himself being almost always in such bad health, either from illness or convalescence from the gout, from debility and unequal spirits, as to render him less equal to the fatiguing and anxious duties inseparable from such high responsibility.”—*Memoir on Military Punishment, by Sir Gilbert Blane.*

### IX.

*Extract of a Letter from Frederick Edgecombe, Esq.*

“*Victualling Office, February 5th, 1830.*

“Immediately after parting with you the other day, I committed to paper the impression on my mind of the transaction in question. It is as follows:—

“When opposite the *Glorieux*, Sir C. Douglas is reported to have said, ‘Now is the glorious moment for breaking the enemy's line;’ Lord Rodney to have replied, ‘Suppose the fleet should be scattered;’ Sir Charles to have rejoined, ‘The fleet will not be scattered;’—that *port* and *starboard* was alternately ordered by those officers; that in the end Lord Rodney said, ‘Do as you please,’ and went into his cabin, when Sir Charles said, ‘Down with the helm.’ Of course there were many versions of this conversation in circula-

tion, but I have the strongest recollection I have stated the substance of what I heard on joining the Formidable, in July 1782.

(Signed) F. EDGECOMBE."

"Sir Howard Douglas."

## X.

*Extract of a Letter from Lieutenant Cleiland, of the Fame, 74, who was present in the Action, to Sir Charles Douglas, dated Fame, Monday morning.—Selected from my Father's papers.*

"Fame, Monday Noon.

"SIR CHARLES,—I have been exceedingly unhappy in hearing of your indisposition, and more so by not having it in my power to have called in person.

"I pray to God, Sir Charles, for your health; which is of more consequence to the nation, than two-thirds of the nation are at present acquainted with. I have wrote as far as my humble abilities can scan over the ever memorable day, and this I'm sure, that Royalty, if not Majesty, will see. And it contains nothing but truth,—it will add lustre to those who gloriously fought and pointed out so masterly a stroke that records cannot show.

I have the honour, &c. &c.

(Signed) ROBT. CLEILAND."

"To Sir Charles Douglas, Bart."

## XI.

*Extract of a Letter from the late General Edward Smith, to Sir Charles Douglas, dated Charles Street, December, 13th, 1782.—Selected from my Father's papers.*

"Hughes in the East Indies has had hard blows, and has fought well; but I think if manœuvre was more fashionable, and Sir Charles Douglas's system with De Grasse closely copied and imitated, we should save lives and gain more glory, perhaps not so complete as yours, but still sufficient to master always the enemy we may have to deal with."

## XII.

*Letter from Captain Rotherham, Lieutenant of the Monarch, Collingwood's Captain in the Battle of Trafalgar.*

"Royal Hospital, Greenwich, November 7th, 1829.

"DEAR SIR,—I beg you will accept my sincere thanks for the honour done me by your having forwarded your excellent pamphlet, containing the important facts relative to the glorious victory obtained by our fleet on the 12th April, 1782.

"Being myself a lieutenant of H. M. S. Monarch, on that occasion, I have it in my power, by a reference to the plans and minutes I then made, to vouch for the truth and justness of your statement, being always of opinion that the success of that eventful day may be attributed to that masterly (but before unheard-of) manœuvre of passing through the enemy's line, and which, from conversations I have had with a distinguished officer in that fleet, now defunct, and who was Sir George Rodney's second astern, I am as fully convinced as man can be, that the invention originated with your zealous and revered Father, whose memory deserves to be retained in grateful remembrance by the service, to which he was an ornament, and our beloved country, which was benefited so materially by his able exertions.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

(Signed) EDWARD ROTHERHAM."

"Sir H. Douglas, Bart."

## XIII.

*Extract of a Letter, dated Stoke, Devonport, 6th February, 1830, from Captain Sayer, Royal Navy, to F. Edgewcombe, Esq.*

“ I was myself in the battle as a midshipman on board the Anson, Captain Blair, (*who was killed in the early part of it*), and was myself slightly wounded in the leg: our lieutenants were—1st, Anthony Gibbs; 2d, James May, and 3d, Sir J. Athol Wood, all since dead; and I remember perfectly the opinion was, on approaching the enemy’s fleet, Sir Charles Douglas signified the fine opportunity now coming for going through the line, which Lord Rodney was supposed to be much against, fearing it would cause great confusion among our own ships, and probably separate them; however, it was said, that Sir Charles being so firmly decided on making the attempt, that his lordship was induced to give it up to him to act as he pleased; and in consequence, the Formidable was kept to the wind by order of Sir Charles, and the enemy’s line was broken through: of course I was too young to know much about the matter, but I have always understood that the line would not have been broken but for the firmness of Sir Charles Douglas.

(Signed) GEORGE SAYER.”

## XIV.

*Letter from Sir David Milne.*

“ Coldstream, 18th February, 1830.

“ SIR,—I had the honour yesterday of receiving your letter of the 13th instant. In answer to which I can only state what was generally the opinion in the fleet regarding the breaking of the French, on the 12th of April, 1782.

“ It was generally understood, that at the time the centre of our fleet came along the French line engaging as they passed, that at that moment a difference of opinion prevailed between the Commander-in-Chief, Sir George B. Rodney and Sir Charles Douglas, Captain of the Fleet, regarding passing through the French line; that this was not settled until the event actually took place. The Commander-in-Chief, not approving of the measure, was calling to the man at the wheel to *starboard* the helm, while Sir Charles Douglas, who was for the measure, was calling out to *port* the helm; and during this altercation the Formidable passed through the line, followed by the ships astern, thus throwing that division of the French fleet between two fires. I was at that time in the Canada, commanded by the Hon. Captain Cornwallis, the third ship astern of the Formidable. This is, as far as was generally understood at the time, what occurred regarding the above-mentioned manœuvre, and I have never understood it otherwise; this was also corroborated by an old and intimate acquaintance of mine, now dead, a Mr. Norris, afterwards lieutenant Norris, who was on board the Formidable at the time, and, I believe, on the quarter-deck, who often mentioned the circumstances to me.

“ This is what occurs to my recollection respecting your queries, and the impression at the time was, and always has been, as I have stated above.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

(Signed) DAVID MILNE.”

“ Major-Gen. Sir H. Douglas, Bart.”

## XV.

*Letter from Admiral Lawford. Namur.*

“ MY DEAR SIR ALEXANDER,—Should you see Sir Howard Douglas, will

you have the goodness to thank him for the honour, I conceive, he does me, in sending me his Statement of Facts respecting the Breaking of the Enemy's Line in the Action of the 12th of April, 1782.

"I have read it with much interest, as it recals to my recollection all the circumstances of that important event. It was my good fortune to be a Lieutenant in the *Namur*, the ship immediately astern of the *Formidable*, and remember it was generally said, and believed, that Sir Charles Douglas had the merit of pointing out to the Commander-in-Chief the glorious opportunity which then presented itself of passing through the opening in the enemy's line.

"With best compliments to Lady Bryce, in which Mrs. Lawford begs to unite.

I remain, my dear Sir, &c. &c.

(Signed) JOHN LAWFORD."

"Major-Gen. Sir A. Bryce."

## XVI.

*Letter from Captain Tobin. Namur.*

*"Teignmouth, February 9th, 1830.*

"It is somewhat strange that I never knew any thing of a third edition of Mr. Clerke's *Naval Tactics*; nor can I now find any account of it in the periodical journals; but, whatever may be stated in the work, respecting the breaking of the line on the 12th of April, my mind has always been under an impression that it was put in force on a sudden suggestion of your excellent Father to the Commander-in-Chief, and the strong testimony recently adduced in your pamphlet, cannot but (of course) serve to give stability to such an opinion. Indeed, what right have I to doubt, when two officers, of high reputation and integrity, who were on the quarter-deck of the *Formidable*, and whose duty it was to watch every word, look, and motion of the Commander-in-Chief and Captain of the Fleet, declare such to have been the case?

(Signed) GEO. TOBIN."

"Major-Gen. Sir H. Douglas, Bart."

## XVII.

*Copy of a Letter from Admiral R. Dacres. First Lieutenant of the Alcide.*

*"Bathford, February 27th, 1830.*

"SIR,—In replying to your letter of the 20th instant, I beg to state that I cannot, after such a lapse of time, presume to give a positive opinion on the question you put to me. On the 12th of April, 1782, I was first lieutenant of the *Alcide*, the third ship in the van, therefore know little of what happened in the rear, but perfectly remember, on the smoke clearing up, seeing the *Formidable* and *Namur* to windward of both lines. The impression on my mind was then, and ever has been, that the breaking the line was accidental, and never contemplated; had it been so, the fleet ought to have known it. There, no doubt, were reports in the fleet that your Father was the person who suggested it to Sir George.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

(Signed) RICH. DACRES."

"Sir H. Douglas, Bart."

## XVIII.

*Extract of a Letter from Sir Arthur Legge. Prince George.*

*“ Blackheath, 27th January, 1830.*

“ In the action of the 12th of April, I served as midshipman on board the Prince George, and was quartered on the main-deck; we were second to Sir Francis Drake in the van; I could not, therefore, see what passed in the centre, but I perfectly recollect that it was reported among the officers of the fleet when we got to Port Royal, and generally believed, that the cutting through the enemy’s line was suggested to Sir George Rodney by Sir Charles Douglas, Captain of the Fleet, though I can’t say that I heard Sir George had objected to the measure.

Believe me, &c. &c.

(Signed) A. K. LEGGE.”

## XIX.

*Copy of a Letter from Lieutenant Frederick Maitland, in Garrison at Port Royal.*

*“ London, 28th January, 1830.*

“ I send you in writing the substance of what I expressed to you a few days ago, when I happened to converse with you on the subject now debated, relative to Admiral Lord Rodney and Sir Charles Douglas.

“ That I was in Jamaica, being then an officer in the 14th Regiment, when our fleet and the French captured ships arrived at Port Royal; that, at that time, the action which had just taken place was the common subject of conversation; and that it was very generally said and understood, that the manœuvre which had decided the victory, meaning the breaking the enemy’s line, originated with Sir Charles Douglas, and that it was Sir Charles who proposed to and urged the measure with the Admiral.

“ This I heard certainly then in general conversations, and I have often since heard the same opinion expressed among naval officers.

(Signed) FRED. MAITLAND.”

*“ Major-General Sir Howard Douglas, Bart.”*

## XX.

*Letter from Captain Fyffe. London.*

*“ Albany Street, Edinburgh, 19th February, 1830.*

“ SIR,—I was favoured with your’s some days since, but delayed replying to it till I could see some brother officers (here) that I knew had been in the action of the 12th of April, 1782. I was not in that fleet with Sir George Rodney, but was in the London, at Jamaica, when the squadron came down with the prizes, and the impression is strong on my memory that the prevailing opinion amongst the officers was that Sir Charles Douglas had the merit of planning and carrying into effect the breaking of the French line of battle on that day. Captain Alexander Robert Kerr (residing here), who was midshipman of the Endymion repeating frigate on that day, has the same opinion as to the officers. Captain Spear says, in his note to me, ‘ I was midshipman in the Marlborough, in the action of the 12th of April, 1782, but quartered on the lower-deck, therefore can only speak from hearsay; that ship led the line on

that day and fetched upon opposite tack to the enemy, within five or six ships of their van ship, then edged away along their line; recollects it was afterwards said that the breaking of the line was accidental, but had been suggested by Sir Charles Douglas to Sir George Rodney, and that Clerke's Naval Tactics had nothing do with it.' I am sorry that I cannot give you better information on a subject that you appear much interested in.

(Signed) JOHN FYFFE."

"Major-Gen. Sir H. Douglas, Bart."

## XXI.

*Letter from Dr. Black.*

"Kirkaldy, March 15th, 1830.

"SIR,—I had the honour to receive your letter of the 8th instant, in which you request to know what I recollect concerning the opinion in the fleet formed of the memorable engagement of the 12th of April, 1782.

"I was in the West Indies at the time, but not present at that brilliant achievement. The ship I belonged to was at Jamaica, where the victorious fleet with the captured ships came to, immediately after the engagement, and I had considerable intercourse with the officers of many of the ships. The facts generally stated were, that Sir Charles Douglas noticed the practicability of breaking the French line, and pointed it out to Lord Rodney, and urged the measure strenuously. I do not recollect hearing that Lord Rodney had premeditated or predetermined on this mode of attack whenever the fleets should meet.

"It is now near fifty years since, and I am fourscore years of age; yet I think my recollections are distinct still concerning the share of merit which was allowed Sir Charles Douglas, by those who were present, and knew all the circumstances of that eventful day.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) W. BLACK."

"Sir H. Douglas, Bart."

It would be superfluous to exhibit any additional evidence upon a point which has been pronounced, on all sides, to have been proved beyond all possibility of doubt: I need therefore, make no public use of the numerous, and very remarkable confirmations of my Father's case, which my publications have recently brought forth, and which, up to this time, continue, and I have no doubt will continue, to be addressed to me.

There is, however, one communication so interesting and remarkable, that I shall briefly state it:—The Surveyor General of Upper Canada, Mr. Hurd, had occasion, very recently, to remain for a few days at Utica in the United States, on his way from New Brunswick, in which Province he had held the like situation, to York. During his stay at Utica, he was waited upon by an aged person, who stated, that having been many years in the service of the late Sir Charles Douglas, and hearing that Mr. Hurd had recently been in New Brunswick, he, the applicant, (George Stewart,) wished to make enquiry respecting his old master's son, (myself,) who had been Governor of that province. Mr. Hurd received the applicant, and finding by documents which he produced, that he had long attended my Father in the capacity of Valet, and that he was on board the Formidable, in the



battle; he, Mr. Hurd, questioned him very closely as to all the particulars which passed under his own eye, in relation to my Father. The man detailed all the occurrences of the day, clearly and distinctly, and explained, that he had the best opportunity of seeing and hearing what passed, by being immediately about my Father's person, as his valet, before the action commenced, and by being posted to one of the quarter-deck guns during the battle, that he might be in the way to attend upon his master, if needful. Finding the account given by Stewart to corroborate remarkably what Sir Charles Dashwood and others affirm, as to the facts of the case, Mr. Hurd told the faithful old man, that the splendid service performed on that occasion by his late master, had been much disputed and obscured, and that if he, Stewart, was clear and positive as to the truth of his averment, that his deposition to that effect would no doubt be acceptable to the members of the family. The man immediately expressed the strongest and most affectionate desire to depose to the truth of what he stated, and this was accordingly done, in due form, in presence of Tho. Rockwell, Esq., Notary Public, at Utica, on the 19th of March, 1832.

I well remember the person named George Stewart—*Black George*; but to put beyond all doubt the fact, that the deponent was my Father's valet, in 1782, I annex certified extracts from the documents in his possession; and having referred to Sir Gilbert Blane as to the circumstance of George Stewart having been stationed to a gun on the quarter-deck, received an answer, of which the following is an extract. "June 9th, 1832.—I have great pleasure in certifying that George Stewart is no impostor. He was, and no doubt is now, (but I had no idea of his being in existence) a little, round, squat African, much attached to Sir Charles, and I have often heard Sir Charles express himself with great partiality towards him, as an honest and faithful servant." Further, Sir Gilbert states, that he perfectly recollects George Stewart assisted in fighting the quarter-deck gun at which Sir Gilbert stationed himself.

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*Copies of Certificates of Servitude and Character exhibited by George Stewart, the late Admiral Sir Charles Douglas's Servant, to Mr. S. P. Hurd, late Surveyor-General of New Brunswick, and now of Upper Canada, and Dr. William Turner, M. D. an English Physician, and compared with the Originals in the presence of the Gentlemen of Utica, State of New York, whose Declaration is hereunto attached.*

"I herewith certify that the statement drawn up by Mr. S. P. Hurd, late Surveyor-General of New Brunswick, and now of Upper Canada, is in every particular perfectly correct; that I was present during the examination referred to; that I afterwards asked the said George Stewart a variety of questions, most especially as to the conversation on board the Formidable between Sir George Rodney and Sir Charles Douglas, but found it impossible to stagger his evidence on any one point whatsoever.

"I also declare that the accompanying Certificates of servitude and character are faithful copies of the originals.

WM. TURNER, M.D."

"Utica, State of New York, March 19, 1832."

" *United States of America,* }  
*State of New York.* }

" On the 19th March, 1832, before me came the within-named William Turner, who, being by me duly sworn, made oath to the truth of the within Certificate.

" In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my name, and affixed my official seal, the day and year above written.

L. S.

THOMAS ROCKWELL, Notary Public."

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" Copy."

No. I.—*Sir Charles Douglas.*

" These are to certify, whomsoever it may concern, that George Stewart, a native of the Island of Barbados, and a free man, served me as my valet de chambre on board his Majesty's ships Duke, Formidable, and Resistance, and on shore as occasion required, from the beginning of the month of May, 1779, to the date hereof, during all which time he ever behaved himself with diligence, sobriety, honesty, fidelity, and respect towards me, and I hereby recommend him as a person deserving of having confidence reposed in him accordingly. He is of a good capacity, having taught himself to read, write, and tolerably well to cast accounts, and is discharged from my service at his own request.

" Given under my hand on board His Majesty's ship Hermione, in Halifax harbour, this first day of August, 1785.

(Signed) CHA. DOUGLAS."

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No. II.—*W. Bentinck, Esq.*

" This is to certify, that George Stewart lived with me six months, during which time he behaved himself with diligence, sobriety, and honesty.

(Signed) W. BENTINCK."

" *Halifax, Nova Scotia, March 9, 1786.*"

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No. III.—*Lady Douglas.*

" George Stewart lived with the late Sir Charles Douglas near ten years, during which time he behaved with remarkable diligence and attention, was an affectionate, honest, and trusty servant.

" Witness my hand, London, March 21, 1789.

(Signed) JANE DOUGLAS."

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No. IV.—*Captain David Knox, R. N.*

" The bearer hereof, George Stewart, was in the service of Sir Charles Douglas, Bart. during the space of ten years, and he has since served with me

for the space of two years more, until he was discharged by his own desire to reside in New York, during which time he served with great reputation as an honest, sober, and attentive man. As witness my hand, this 4th day of August, at New York, 1791.

(Signed) DAVID KNOX, Captain in the British Navy.

No. V.—*Jonas Platt, Judge.*

"I certify that the bearer, George Stewart, a black man, has resided in this town several years, and has uniformly maintained the character of a sober, industrious, and honest man, and as such I recommend him wherever he may go.

(Signed) JONAS PLATT."

"*Utica, 12th October, 1824.*"

No. VI.—*Rev. H. Anthon.*

"This is to certify that George Stewart is a Communicant of the Parish of Trinity Church, Utica, and that during my acquaintance with him I have noticed nothing inconsistent with his obligations as such.

(Signed) HENRY ANTHON,  
late Rector of Trinity Church, Utica."

"*Utica, State of New York, U. S.*  
*April 25, 1829.*"

"*United States of America, }  
State of New York. }*

"J. H. Rathbone, Counsellor at Law, residing in the city of Utica, State aforesaid, being duly affirmed, says, that he has for many years been intimately acquainted with the Honourable Jonas Platt, late Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, and with the Rev. Henry Anthon of the city of New York, late Rector of Trinity Church, Utica, that he has examined the original Certificates, of which the above (Nos. 5 and 6) are copies, and knows them to be in the proper handwriting of the gentlemen whose names are subscribed thereto: and further, that he has compared the above copies of Certificates, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, with the originals, and that they are true copies.

J. H. RATHBONE."

"*United States of America, }  
State of New York. }*

"On the 20th March, 1832, before me came J. H. Rathbone, to me known to be the same person described in, and who subscribed the above affidavit, and affirmed to the truth thereof.

"In testimony whereof I have hereunto affixed my official seal, and subscribed my name thereto, this same day and year above written.

THOMAS ROCKWELL, Notary Public." (L. S.)

*Copy of a Letter from John Barrow, Esq. Secretary to the Admiralty, to Commodore Barrie, C.B. touching the Claims of George Stewart to a Pension.*

(Copy.)

“ Admiralty Office, 19th November, 1829.

“ SIR,

“ Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 17th September last, in behalf of George Stewart, whose services and destitute situation you have recommended to their Lordships favourable consideration, I am commanded to acquaint you, that it appears that the said man served only \*six years and three months in the Royal Navy, from which he was discharged in the year 1785, then only twenty-six years of age, and that under these circumstances their Lordships have no means of affording him any assistance.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed) JOHN BARROW.”

“ To Commodore Barrie, C.B. &c. &c.”

\* See the annexed Memorandum touching this.



Memorandum.

“ The six years and three months seem to be made out thus:—from May 1779, when the said Stewart joined Sir Charles Douglas and his discharge by Sir Charles in August 1785. He, however, states that he was again borne on the Adamant's books after Sir Charles Douglas's death, when he accompanied Captain D. Knox. See his certificate. This point may increase the claim for servitude, and should be inquired into.

S. P. HURD.”