

According to Pigapheta, a Knight of Rhodes, Magellan's arrangements for the governance of his fleet were not the least wonderful thing in the life and actions of this great navigator.

His fleet could be manœuvred both by day or night signals, his arrangement for the watches to be kept, the divisional regulations, the messing of the men, all showed a master mind in the art of command ; and his system of night signals showed ingenuity of a rare sort. This latter will be easily understood by the naval man, as they somewhat approached our present flashing system.

The light was supplied by a torch, composed in most cases of dried reeds, prepared by softening them first in water then drying them in the sun, these when steeped for a while in oil, gave a good light, and would be lit up one, two, three, or four at a time, according to the signal required.

One signal will suffice as an example, I give it in the quaint words of the historian already mentioned :—

“Likewise when the captain wished the other ships to lower the sail, he had four lights shown, which, shortly after he had put out and then showed a single one, which was a signal that he wished to stop there and turn, so as the other ships might do as he did.”

Our present signals to shorten sail and wear ship could scarcely be executed in less time !

During Magellan's stay in Port St. Julian, a mutiny broke out, which came well nigh cutting short the voyage that was to make his name so famous and to add so much to nautical knowledge. Three of his ships gave out that they intended to go no further but would take him back to Castille for they believed he was only leading them on to destruction ; one Luis de Mendoza, who was treasurer of the whole fleet, was