

The mode of doubling and fortifying the ships differed in no material circumstance from that before employed, which was found to have afforded the greatest degree of strength, consistently with the requisite attention to the stowage and sailing qualities, of which perhaps any ship is capable. In the exterior equipment of the hulls, the only alterations worthy of notice consisted in increasing the thickness of the doubling to six inches, to give the ships some additional stability; and in making the rudder-cases much larger, in order to allow the rudders more room for shipping and unshipping, whereby that operation is much facilitated. The ships were barque-rigged as before; but in order to increase our resources in stores of every kind, it was suggested by my friend, Captain George Cheyne, that it would be advantageous to adopt the plan of "equalized" fore-masts and main-masts, which had of late been partially introduced into our naval service, at the recommendation of Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Byam Martin, Comptroller of His Majesty's Navy. An advantage somewhat less obvious than that just mentioned, was the appointment of two ships of exactly the same size in every respect. The idea usually entertained of the necessity of having one of the two vessels thus employed, a small one for the purpose of going into shoaler water, is in my opinion an erroneous one. The examination of shoal and uncertain passages is best conducted in boats, which may be equipped and despatched at five minutes' warning, while a small vessel intended more expressly for this purpose will, after all, draw as much water as the larger one within two or three feet, which difference is in reality but a trifling one. Allowing, however, that some benefit may be derived in this way from the services of a smaller vessel, it is by no means to be put into competition with the inevitable disadvantages