

## The Opening Phase 15

It was realised in a flash by all the scattered people of the Empire that the Fleet, with its tentacles in every sea, maintains the Empire in unity: when "the earth was full of anger," the seas were full of British ships of war.

It was in these circumstances that the war opened. Every incident tended to remind the people of the British Isles and the subjects of the King who live in the far-flung Dominions and those who reside in the scattered Crown Colonies and Dependencies of the essential truth contained in the phrases which had come so trippingly to the lips in days of peace. Men recognised that the statement of our dependence upon the sea as set forth in the Articles of War was a declaration of policy which we had done well not to ignore:

"It is upon the Navy that, under the good Providence of God, the wealth, prosperity and peace of these islands and of the Empire do mainly depend."

How true these words rang when, in defence of our honour, we had to take up the gage thrown down by the Power which claimed supremacy as a military Power and aspired to primacy as a naval Power. Those who turned to Mr. Arnold White's admirable monograph on "The Navy and Its Story," must admit that this writer, in picturesque phrase, had set forth fundamental facts:

"Since the first mariner risked his life in a canoe and travelled coastwise for his