

INTRODUCTION

THE OPENING PHASE

PEACEFUL VICTORIES OF BRITISH SEA POWER

THE declaration of war against Germany, followed as it was by similar action against Austria-Hungary, was preceded by a sequence of events so remarkable in their character that if any British writer had made any such forecast in times of peace he would have been written down as a romantic optimist.

Owing to a series of fortunate circumstances, the British Fleet—our main line of defence and offence—was fully mobilised for war on the morning before the day—August 4th at 11 p.m.—when war was declared by this country, and we were enabled to enter upon the supreme contest in our history with a sense of confidence which was communicated to all the peoples of the British Empire. This feeling of assurance and courage furnished the best possible augury for the future.

Within a fortnight of diplomatic relations being broken off with Germany, and less than a