

It seemed as if the magic wand of science had been waved over the face of the waters, transforming all that moved thereon into new and more powerful shapes. Navies were changed from wood to steel; from unarmoured to armoured, the motive power from sails to steam, and the guns from muzzle to breech-loading.

The changes of tactics and methods of naval warfare produced by the introduction of steam carry us back, singularly enough, in many respects to the starting points of all navies, the Galley Period. This period goes back, as far as we have any records, to 1400 B. C. and lasted to about 1571 and was then gradually succeeded by the Sail Period.

As far as Naval equipment goes the latter part of the nineteenth century may be regarded as a period of incubation and a preparation to take up the unknown tasks of the next century. It is true that several nations have tried this new naval weapon with destructive effect, sufficiently indeed to test its temper and indicate the future, but its greatest work involving large fleet actions at sea, remains yet to be accomplished. Thanks to Captain Mahan, who demonstrated to the world, in a luminous and masterly argument, the great importance of Sea Power, the interest in naval matters has never been so keen and so universal as it was at the close of the nineteenth century and the advent upon the ocean of nations with rapidly increasing navies renders it certain that in the twentieth century the influence of the Sea Power of the world is going to be, more than ever, a factor in the settlement of disputes.