

PREFACE.

THE history of naval warfare during the nineteenth century is not as replete with incidents or with great fleet actions as its predecessor, although its opening years witnessed the final scenes in that great Napoleonic drama which convulsed Europe from 1793 to 1815, and during which period the Sea Power of England rose to its greatest power and glory.

During the eighteenth century, by means of her navy, England laid the foundations of that great Colonial Empire which has brought to her in the present century both wealth and power. Many colonies, indeed, acquired during that period were surrendered after conquest, a doubtful policy which may perhaps never be repeated. The sailing period which began about 1571 at the time of the battle of Lepanto, and during which all this great work was accomplished, came gradually to its death about the middle of the nineteenth century, when it was supplanted by steam power. Thus the nineteenth century saw one of those revolutions in the methods of naval warfare which mark the beginning of a new epoch.