later that the French and British fleets came into serious conflict. The first great battle, “ The Glorious First of June,” though a tactical victory for Great Britain, was a strategical defeat. Villaret Joyeuse manoeuvred so as to cover the arrival in France of a fleet of merchant vessels carrying sorely needed supplies of food, and in this he was completely successful. His plan involved the probability, almost the necessity of fighting a general action which he was not at all sure of winning. He was beaten, it is true; but the French made so good a fight of it that their defeat was not nearly so disastrous as the later defeats of the Nile or Trafalgar, and—at the most—not more disastrous than that of Dominica. Yet no one even alleges that there was disorder or disorganization in the French fleet at the date of any one of those affairs. Indeed, if the French navy was really disorganized in 1794, it would have been better for France— judging from the events of 1798 and 1805—if the disorganization had been allowed to continue. In point of organization the British navy was inferior, and in point of discipline not much superior to the French at the earliest date; at the later dates, and especially at the latest, owing to the all-pervading energy of Napoleon, the British was far behind its rival in organization, in “ science,” and in every branch of training that can be im- parted without going to sea. Great Britain had the immense advantage of counting among her officers some very able men. Nelson, of course, stands so high that he holds a place entirely by himself. The other British chiefs, good as they were, were not conspicuously superior to the Hawkes and Rodneys of an earlier day. Howe was a great commander, but he did little more than just appear on the scene in the Revolutionary War. Almost the same may be said of Hood, of whom Nelson wrote, “ He is the greatest sea-officer I ever knew ’’ (Laughton, *Nelson's Lett. and Desp.* p. 71). There must have been something, there- fore, beyond the meritorious qualities of the principal British officers which helped the navy so consistently to victory. The many triumphs won could not have been due in every case to the individual superiority of the British admiral or captain to his opponent. There must have been bad as well as good among the hundreds on the lists; and we cannot suppose that Providence had so arranged it that in every action in which a

British officer of inferior ability commanded, a still more inferior French commander was opposed to him. The explanation of the nearly unbroken success is, that the British was a thoroughly sea-going navy, and became more and more so every month; while the French, since the close of the American War, had lost to a great extent its sea-going character and, because it had been shut up in its ports, became less and less sea-going as hostilities continued. The war had been for the British, in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, “ a continuous course of victory won mainly by seamanship.” The British navy, as regards sea experience, especially of the officers, was immensely superior to the French. This enabled the British government to carry into execution sound strategic plans, in accordance with which the coasts of France and its allied countries were regarded as the British frontier to be

watched or patrolled by British fleets.

Before the long European war had been brought to a formal

ending we received some rude rebuffs from another opponent of unsuspected vigour. In the quarrel with the United States, the so-called “War of 1812,” the great sea-power of the British in the end asserted its influence, and the Americans suffered much more severely, even absolutely, than their enemy. At the same time the British might have learned, for the Americans did their best to teach it, that over-confidence in numerical strength and narrow professional self-satisfaction are nearly sure to lead to reverses in war, and not unlikely to end in grave disasters. The

British had now to meet the *élite* of one of the finest communities of seamen ever known. Even in 1776 the Americans had a great maritime commerce, which, as Mahan says, “ had come to be the wonder of the statesmen of the mother country.” In the six- and-thirty years which had elapsed since then this commerce had further increased. There was no finer nursery of seamen

than the then states of the American Union. Roosevelt says that “ there was no better seaman in the world ” than the American, who “ had been bred in his work from infancy.” A large proportion of the population “ was engaged in sea-going pursuits of a nature strongly tending to develop a resolute and hardy character in the men that followed them ” *(Naval War of 1812,* 3rd ed.,ρp. 29,30). Having little or no naval protection, the American seaman had to defend himself in many circum­stances, and was compelled to familiarize himself with\* the use of arms. The men who passed through this practical, and there­fore supremely excellent, training school were numerous. Very many had been trained in English men-of-war, and some in French ships. The state navy which they were called on to man was small; and therefore its *personnel,* though without any regular or avowed selection, was virtually and in the highest sense a picked body. The lesson of the War of 1812 should be learned by Englishmen of the present day, when a long naval peace has generated a confidence in numerical superiority, in the mere possession of heavier *matériel,* and in the merits of a rigidly uniform system of training, such confidence, as experience has shown, being often the forerunner of misfortune. It is neither patriotic nor intelligent to minimize the American successes. Certainly they have been exaggerated by Americans and even by the British. To take the frigate actions alone, as being those which properly attracted most attention, the captures in action amounted to three on each side, the proportionate loss to the Americans, considering the smallness of their fleet, being immensely greater than to the British. We also see that no British frigate was taken after the first seven months of a war which lasted two and a half years. Attempts have been made to spread a belief that British reverses were due to nothing but the greater size and heavier guns of the enemy’s ships. It is now established that the superiority in these details, which the Americans certainly enjoyed, was not great, and not of itself enough to account for their victories. Of course, if superiority in mere *matériel,* beyond a certain well-understood amount, is possessed by one of two combatants, his antagonist can hardly escape defeat; but it was never alleged that size of ship or calibre of guns—greater within reasonable limits than the British had—necessarily led to the defeat of British ships by the French or Spaniards. In the words of Admiral Jurien de la Graviere: “ The ships of the United States constantly fought with the chances in their favour.’’ All this is indisputable. Nevertheless in any future war British sea-power, great as it may be, should not receive shocks like those that it unquestionably did suffer in 1812.

We have now come to the end of the days of the naval wars of old time. The subsequent period has been illustrated repeatedly by manifestations of sea-power, often of great interest and importance, though rarely understood or even discerned by the nations whom they more particularly concerned. The British sea-power, notwithstanding the first year of the War of 1812, had come out of the great European conflict unshaken and indeed more pre-eminent than ever. The words used half a century before by a writer in the great French *Encyclopédie* seemed more exact than when first written. *“ L'Empire des mers,"'* he says, is “ le plus avantageux de tous les empires; les Phœniciens le possédoient autre fois et c’est aux Anglois que cette gloire appartient aujourd’hui sur toutes les puissances maritimes” *(Encyclopédie,* 7th January 1765, art. “ Thalassarchie ”). Vast outlying territories had been acquired or were more firmly held, and the communications of all the oversea dominions of the British crown were secured against all possibility of serious menace for many years to come. Her sea-power was so ubiquitous and all-pervading that, like the atmosphere, Great Britain rarely thought of it and rarely remembered its necessity or its existence. It was not till a late date that the greater part of the nation—for there still are some exceptions— perceived that it was the medium apart from which the British empire could no more live than it could have grown up. Forty years after the fall of Napoleon she found herself again at war with a great power. She had as her ally the owner of the greatest