

## CHAPTER II.

THE STRUGGLE WITH BONAPARTE: (1) THE NAVAL WAR.

1803-1806.

THE peace from which so much had been hoped was to endure for no more than thirteen months. But in March, 1802, well-nigh all men on this side of the Channel believed that the struggle with France had reached its end, and thought that a period of rest, economy, and retrenchment had set in. Britain was to turn to account the complete sovereignty of the seas and the new Indian empire which she had gained, and, by a careful development of trade and manufactures, was to free herself from the burden of her vast national debt. The army and navy were reduced with a haste that was to produce much trouble ere the year was out. So great were the expectations that were entertained of the prosperity that was to result from the peace, that when the French ambassador arrived in London, his carriage was actually drawn through the streets by the populace, and a general illumination testified to the national joy. Great numbers of English at once embarked on continental travel—a pleasure which had been denied them for more than eight years, and for which many of them were to pay dearly in 1803.

Bonaparte's objects in coming to terms with England had been twofold. He wished for an interval of quiet in which to prepare for that assumption of regal power which he had already determined to carry out. But he also wished to