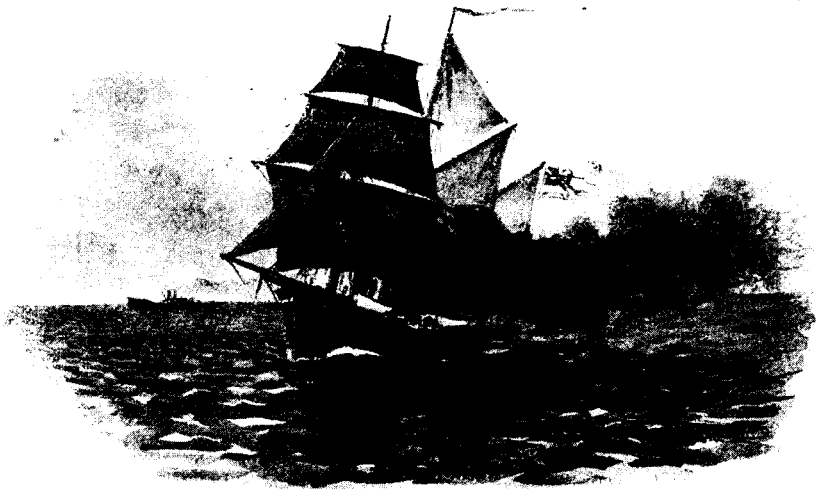


done much to change the conditions of fighting at sea, nevertheless there are certain underlying principles which are immutable. This work shows that the Power who acts consistently upon these principles, is the one, barring the elements of chance and accident, who will retain command of the sea. The safety of the British Empire depends not merely upon the ability of our fleet to get the best of it in a hardly-fought action—we must be able almost at the outset to so cripple the enemy as to compel him to retire to his own ports, and we must there blockade him and prevent his war-ships or extemporized cruisers from getting out and preying on our vast mer-

14 Coast defence ships.....	3,000
28 Sloops and gun vessels.....	3,500
33 Torpedo gunboats (including <i>Passey</i> and <i>Assage</i>).....	3,000
18 First-class gunboats.....	1,400
42 Third-class gunboats (<i>Staunch</i> Cl. ss.).....	1,500
Special Vessels.....	800
42 Torpedo-boat Destroyers, say.....	1,500
163 Torpedo boats, say.....	2,000
23 Merchant cruisers, say.....	3,000
Total.....	97,700

The designers of our Navy, the chief of whom is Sir William White, the Chief Constructor of the Navy, have had a most difficult task to perform, inasmuch as provision has had to be made for the carrying on of war in all parts of the world, and it can readily be understood that a ship which has to carry on operations at a long distance from its base of



DRAWN BY L. R. O'BRIEN.

THE THRUSH.—FIRST CLASS GUNBOAT.

cantile marine, which does roughly about 70 per cent. of the entire carrying trade of the world. Bearing in mind, then, the duties which will be cast upon our fleet, I now subjoin a short statement showing the numbers of the various classes of vessels in the service which are now available or can be made so at very short notice, together with an estimate from the current number of Brassey's Naval Annual of the number of officers and men required to man them.

	Men.
20 Battleships, 1st class	18,800
12 " 2nd "	6,000
12 " 3rd "	6,000
30 Cruisers, 1st class	17,500
46 " 2nd "	17,600
46 " 3rd "	11,700

supplies, must, in important features of its construction, differ from one operating close to its base.

The British Navy, having regard to its functions, may perhaps be divided into three principal classes:—The line of battle, the cruisers, and the torpedo vessels. The line of battle, exclusive of coast defence vessels, will be seen to consist of 53 ships; of these some few of the *Majestic* class are not yet quite completed. The cruisers, first, second and third-class, consist of 122 ships, but this number may be largely increased from vessels of the mercantile marine. The torpedo vessels may be subdivided into torpedo-boats