

THE FRINGES OF THE FLEET

'Who does?' I wanted to know.

'If you'd been here a little while ago, you'd seen a Commander comin' in with a big 'un slung under his counter. He brought the beastly thing in to analyse. The rest of his squadron followed at two-knot intervals, and everything in harbour that had steam up scattered.'

THE ADMIRABLE COMMANDER

Presently I had the honour to meet a Lieutenant-Commander-Admiral who had retired from the service, but, like others, had turned out again at the first flash of the guns, and now commands—he who had great ships erupting at his least signal—a squadron of trawlers for the protection of the Dogger Bank Fleet. At present prices—let alone the chance of the paying submarine—men would fish in much warmer places. His flagship is a multi-millionaire's private yacht. In her mixture of stark, carpetless, curtainless, carbolised present with voluptuously curved, broad-decked, easy-stairwayed past, she might be Queen Guinevere in the convent at Amesbury. And her Lieutenant-Commander, most careful to pay all due compliments to Admirals who were midshipmen when *he* was a Commander, leads a congregation of very hard men indeed. They do precisely what he tells them to, and with him go through strange