

THE AUXILIARIES

able, now dirty and happy. Throw in fish-steamers, surprise-packets of unknown lines and indescribable junks, sampans, lorchas, catamarans, and General Service stink-pontoons filled with indescribable apparatus, manned by men no dozen of whom seem to talk the same dialect or wear the same clothes. The mustard-coloured jersey who is cleaning a six-pounder on a Hull boat clips his words between his teeth and would be happier in Gaelic. The whitish singlet and grey trousers held up by what is obviously his soldier brother's spare regimental belt is pure Lowestoft. The complete blue serge and soot suit passing a wire down a hatch is Glasgow as far as you can hear him, which is a fair distance, because he wants something done to the other end of the wire, and the flat-faced boy who should be attending to it hails from the remoter Hebrides, and is looking at a girl on the dock-edge. The bow-legged man in the ulster and green-worsted comforter is a warm Grimsby skipper, worth several thousands. He and his crew, who are mostly his own relations, keep themselves to themselves, and save their m. The pirate with the red beard barking over the rail at a friend with gold earrings comes from Skye. The friend is West Country. The noticeably insignificant man with the soft and deprecating eye is skipper and part-owner of the big slashing Iceland trawler on which he droops