

THE FRINGES OF THE FLEET

RACIAL UNTRUTHS

This is trivial enough, but what would you have? If Admirals will not strike the proper attitudes, nor lieutenants emit the appropriate sentiments, one is forced back on the truth, which is that the men at the heart of great matters in our Empire are mostly of an even simplicity. From the advertising point of view they are stupid, but the breed has always been stupid in this department. It may be due, as our enemies assert, to our racial snobbery, or, as others hold, to a certain God-given lack of imagination which saves us from being over-concerned at the effects of our appearances on others. Either way, it deceives the enemies' people more than any calculated lie. When you come to think of it, though the English are the worst paper-work and *viva voce* liars in the world, they have been rigorously trained since their early youth to live and act lies for the comfort of the society in which they move, and so for their own comfort. The result in this war is interesting.

It is no lie that at the present moment we hold all the seas in the hollow of our hands. For that reason we shuffle over them shame-faced and apologetic, making arrangements here and flagrant compromises there, in order to give substance to the lie that we have dropped fortuitously into this