

THE FRINGES OF THE FLEET

marines especially built for the work, or by neutral ships, all fairways must be swept continuously day and night. When a nest of mines is reported, traffic must be hung up or deviated till it is cleared out. When traffic comes up Channel it must be examined for contraband and other things; and the examining tugs lie out in a blaze of lights to remind ships of this. Months ago, when the war was young, the tugs did not know what to look for specially. Now they do. All this mine-searching and reporting and sweeping, *plus* the direction and examination of the traffic, *plus* the laying of our own ever-shifting mine-fields, is part of the Trawler Fleet's work, because the Navy-as-we-knew-it is busy elsewhere. And there is always the enemy submarine with a price on her head, whom the Trawler Fleet hunts and traps with zeal and joy. Add to this, that there are boats, fishing for real fish, to be protected in their work at sea or chased off dangerous areas where, because they are strictly forbidden to go, they naturally repair, and you will begin to get some idea of what the Trawler and Auxiliary Fleet does.

THE SHIPS AND THE MEN

Now, imagine the acreage of several dock-basins crammed, gunwale to gunwale, with brown and umber and ochre and rust-red steam-trawlers, tugs, harbour boats, and yachts once clean and respect-