COLLECTION OF BRITISH AUTHORS, VOL. 3351. A FLEET IN BEING: NOTES OF TWO TRIPS WITH THE CHANNEL SQUADRON, IN ONE VOLUME

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649039289

Collection of British Authors, Vol. 3351. A Fleet in Being: Notes of Two Trips with the Channel Squadron, in One Volume by Rudyard Kipling

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RUDYARD KIPLING

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OF

BRITISH AUTHORS

TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

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A FLEET IN BEING

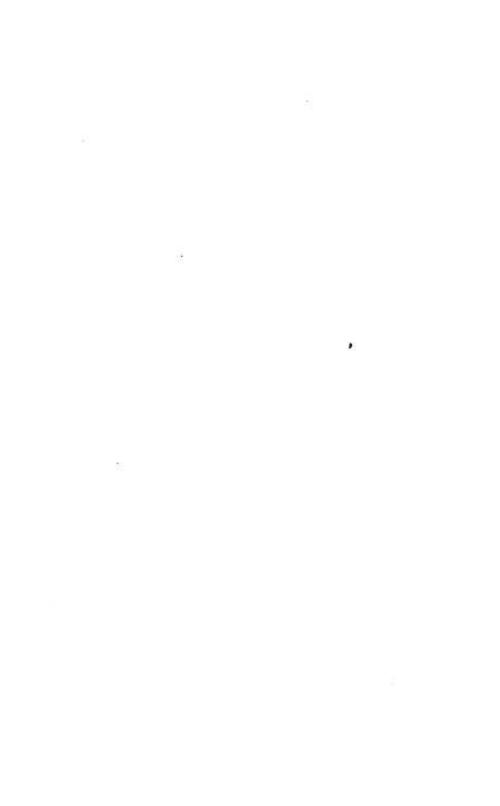
NOTES OF TWO TRIPS WITH THE CHANNEL SQUADRON

BY

RUDYARD KIPLING.

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A FLEET IN BEING.

CHAPTER L



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"... the sailor men

That sail upon the seas,

To fight the Wars and keep the Laws,

And live on yellow peas."

"A Gun-room Ditty-Box." G. S. Bowles.

Some thirty of her Majesty's men-of-war were involved in this matter; say a dozen battleships of the most recent, and seventeen or eighteen cruisers; but my concern was limited to one of a new type commanded by an old friend. I had some dim knowledge of the interior of a warship, but none of the new world into which I stepped from