

Preface

drawbacks of her size without realizing their advantages. In future, if the aeroplane does not usurp them in weight-lifting, airships will be built larger and will be able to fly higher ; they will carry long-range guns ; and they will be protected against aeroplane attack, as is the battleship against that of torpedo craft, by a screen of small, fast-flying, defensive craft.

The sea-plane has an achievement to its credit in the raid on Cuxhaven ; and it has served the British well as a coast-patrol. For us indeed, from a naval point of view, it is a weapon of the first importance. But in this war, through its frailness and low power, and the risk of destruction it runs when it is compelled to ride on the surface of rough water, the uses of a sea-plane have been restricted. The Cuxhaven raid was possible only because sea conditions were unusually favourable. These drawbacks will be overcome, but only by a free expenditure of money on suitable tests.

It has been our aim, in the pages that follow, to avoid dogmatic statement ; partly for the reason that detailed reports, as compiled from official records, are not yet to hand ; partly also because, in all its uses in this campaign, the military aeroplane is in its infancy, and can give us no more than a suggestion of what will be possible in