

PATROLS

II

THE great basins were crammed with craft of kinds never known before on any Navy List. Some were as they were born, others had been converted, and a multitude have been designed for special cases. The Navy prepares against all contingencies by land, sea, and air. It was a relief to meet a batch of comprehensible destroyers and to drop again into the little mouse-trap wardrooms, which are as large-hearted as all our oceans. The men one used to know as destroyer-lieutenants ('born stealing') are serious Commanders and Captains to-day, but their sons, Lieutenants in command and Lieutenant-Commanders, do follow them. The sea in peace is a hard life; war only sketches an extra line or two round the young mouths. The routine of ships always ready for action is so part of the blood now that no one notices anything except the absence of formality and of the