

The machine used for reconnaissance by the Blue army was a Farman bi-plane carrying an aviator and a passenger who was an intelligence officer from the general staff. Its performance will be historic because of the valuable information of the enemy's movements gained in its two flights by observing from a height above 1,500 feet with a success in contrast to the performance at the German manoeuvres and on account of its rapid work. The flights were each of about 30 miles and the time occupied from 50 to 70 minutes. In one case, the report was in the hands of General Picquart, commanding Blue army, within 50 minutes after the landing of aeroplane several miles distant from army headquarters. The contents of reports were exceedingly full and accurate considering the rapid movement, some of the observations recorded being only 2 or 3 minutes apart. As a result of one of these flights the movements of the enemy (Red) were exposed to the aviator's view in a flanking retreat where only a rear guard and cavalry screen were left on the former position; the Blue army was consequently ordered to promptly advance to take the Red movement in flank, which was done with success.

These French manoeuvres have shown that the whole service of reconnaissance can and will be revolutionized by the use of aeroplanes in rapidly obtaining and reporting movements of the enemy, but that the aeroplane or airship cannot—in the near future at least—entirely supplant cavalry for reconnaissance on account of darkness or misty or windy weather. As to vulnerability, it has been observed by British critics of these manoeuvres that, although the enemy had three-inch guns mounted on 40 H.P. motors capable of high angle fire, a rapidly moving aeroplane, owing to its great speed and its power to rise and fall and twist and “jink” is about as hopeless a target for artillery as can be imagined, and a hit will probably be nothing better than a fluke.

In some U. S. manoeuvres held at San Antonio, Texas, the present month, several aeroplanes were used in manoeuvres against field guns. Although at no time within effective range of rifle or the ordinary field guns the report says that the aviator brought in “startlingly accurate reports” as to strength of men, horses and guns and their dispositions. The report concludes that “army officers admit that this operation shows the need of aerial guns and an aeroplane corps in the United States army.” A feature of this operation is the statement of the aviator Simon in a Bleriot that the firing of blank form field artillery at short range was so disturbing to the surrounding air that it “perceptibly jarred his aeroplane.”

Organization and Training of Aerial Corps.

It is not at all surprising that, with all this progress and the swift application of aerial navigation to uses of warfare as the first employment, the nations are seriously organizing and training aerial corps. Next to the development of the machine and equipment, the training of experienced expert aviators and aeronauts is paramount. This is harder than it seems for the