

INTRODUCTION

THERE is still a delusion that war is conducted and controlled by gentlemen in red tabs, gold lace, and spurs; that it is an affair in which infantry fights in formation, cavalry charges gallantly upon field-guns, and supply-trains of horse-drawn wagons follow up the Napoleonic manœuvres of the various generals. Some such idea seemed to prevail even in the highest quarters until the Battle of the Aisne. Things had happened at Liège and Namur that were a little perplexing, but it was only by the end of 1914 that the mass of people began to realize that there was a new sort of war in progress. The bright bayonet-blade of the old warfare had broken off and we were fighting with the butt-end. The armies of the world to-day are undergoing, rather belatedly, the same revolution that overtook our navies in the 'seventies and 'eighties. The engineer has got hold of them. The avalanche of change has started; it will not rest again until it has buried every scrap of the soldier's solemn paraphernalia of horse and drill as completely as it has buried the frigates and three-deckers of fifty years ago.

The form and texture of the coming things are not yet to be seen in their completeness upon the modern battlefield. One swallow does not make a summer, nor a handful of aeroplanes, a "tank"