

Preface

be said: the aeroplane has rendered trebly important the factors of time and distance; and the Commander-in-Chief is most successful who, adapting the tactics of Napoleon to these new conditions of war, strikes a blow so rapid and crushing, at a point where his enemy is weakest, that even if this blow is seen by the air-scouts as it impends, it is struck so quickly, and with such irresistible force, that detection cannot rob it of success.

The co-operation of aeroplanes with artillery, in directing the fire of long-range guns, has proved extraordinarily effective, influencing operations almost as much as has the scouting by air. But it is scarcely probable that such success will be obtained in future wars. The aviator, when range-finding, is obliged to haunt one definite section of the air; and this renders him susceptible to attack from hostile craft. Even in this war, in its later stages, aerial range-finders were interfered with seriously. In campaigns of the future, unless one flying corps can obtain supremacy in the air, its range-finding machines will be harassed constantly by the enemy's fighting craft.

Of purely fighting aeroplanes, when the war began, there were none—save at least a few experimental craft which had been mounted with