

PREFACE

CERTAIN facts are now beyond controversy, even as regards the use of aircraft in war. Aeroplanes, at the outbreak of hostilities, were reasonably efficient in two respects: (1) as scouts; (2) as range-finders for artillery. But machines were not available for all the work that could be done; nor were there sufficient pilots.

The scouting aeroplane, flying through wind, fog, rain, and hostile gunfire, has enabled a Commander-in-Chief to see, as Wellington longed to see, what is "on the other side of the hill." Several times its work, as will be our purpose to show, has been of supreme importance; and almost always its flights have been useful—augmenting, but not superseding, the patrol work of cavalry. To determine its exact effect on strategy is not easy; the factors are confusing. There is the abnormal length of battle-fronts to be considered, the huge masses of men employed, also the use of motor transport and the general speeding up of operations. But this much can