

## Aircraft in the Great War

there can be little doubt ; it would possess hardly a sporting interest. But at night, if their opportunity is chosen with care, and they are skilfully flown, airships might creep up to a city guarded by aeroplanes, drop their bombs as quickly as possible, and endeavour to escape without being brought to conflict. The exploit would not be glorious, even should it succeed, but it might conceivably prove of value to the enemy attempting it. In such a case, of course, when the city they were protecting was menaced, aeroplane pilots would ascend, running the risks that attend night flying. Their finding of the airships, and the fortunes of the conflict that might follow, would depend largely upon atmospheric conditions, and also upon what warning the airmen had received of the airships' attack. The latter would, at any rate in the first instance, have the tactical advantage : they would be already in the air, that is to say, and in a position to deliver their blow ; while the aeroplanes, at the word of warning, would need to be drawn from their sheds and then climb upward to find their foe ; and these operations, of course, would take time. If the warning came late, and the raiders were actually delivering an attack when they were perceived, they might escape before the aeroplanes could rise within striking distance. And it would scarcely be feasible, unless an attack by airship was known to be imminent, for aeroplane patrols to be sent up regularly by night. There would be the constant