

Aircraft in the Great War

the air was free to all the combatants, and each of the corps rendered such service as its numerical strength would permit. Then, by degrees, owing first to their boldness and the superiority of their machines, and afterwards to the use of craft which would carry machine-guns, the aviators of the Allies were able to establish a supremacy in the air which, while being only partial, restricted considerably the activities of German craft. With more machines available, this supremacy might naturally have been rendered more effective ; but it seems clear that, so far as a definite command of the air is concerned, we must await the next war. With machines that exist to-day, armed and handled as they are, it would be difficult in the extreme to gain absolute supremacy. War in the air is, at present, a guerilla war. Not until there are large craft, handled in squadrons and capable of dealing a crushing blow, can there be aerial fighting which will be decisive, in the sense that a sea battle is decisive.