

INTRODUCTION

monplace but inevitably to be supplanted by speeds even more staggering.

Again, it is amazing, even when in his company at the Front, to step back out of the world of flying, so to speak, and survey the modern Flying Officer. A few short months before, and he had probably never even sat in an aeroplane or known how and why it flew. Yet now he regards a fight conducted at nearly three miles a minute, and three and a half miles above the earth as the veriest commonplace, scarcely worthy of mention, while all the technical business connected with artillery control, reconnaissance, photography, gunnery, bombing, etc., is to him an open book! But to a Flying Officer the nature of his training has rendered the metamorphosis as absorbing and seemingly natural as it is surprising to the onlooker.

Predominant amongst types, War flying has always drawn the man of action; above all else, it has appealed to the lover of individual adventure and initiative. And today, even though our flying operations are on a scale almost undreamt of before the War, the watchlike precision of the huge flying organisation has in no way lessened a pilot's unbounded scope, but rather increased it. As in no other Arm is a man's initiative and grasp of an unusual situation called upon. The very nature and setting of his work affords opportunities for individual distinction which flying of necessity renders unparalleled.

But it must not be supposed that a pilot is allowed to fly about over the Front haphazard. Far from it. His very flight is part of one huge programme. On his shoulders there rests a real and potential responsibility