

## INTRODUCTION

THE word Romance, and all it means, is so closely allied to the average conception of the present day War Pilot that the layman can scarcely visualise the many sides of military aviation alone, nor yet the immense growth of the Corps to which he belongs.

From an inconsiderable beginning—inconsiderable in the light of our present size—with few machines and few aerodromes, has grown a mighty organisation; and from a mere handful of pioneers there has arisen a vast band whose deeds have created a great Flying Service. In France, Russia, Italy, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Macedonia and Syria the pilots of the Royal Flying Corps have fought the enemy and wrung from him the uttermost respect for the familiar red, white and blue rings. But this respect and our supremacy has not been won without many a bitter struggle; and it is the details of the ever changing phases of aerial warfare which, even if described with a truth akin to baldness, are by far stranger than fiction.

At the outset of the War, seventy or eighty miles an hour was thought quite fast; a height of fifteen thousand feet was a vision to conjure with. Yet now, machines are often doing their every day jobs at twenty and twenty-two thousand feet, and flying at an air speed of 140 to 160 miles an hour—speeds not only com-