

Aeroplane v. Airship

course, seek to escape by rising ; and until she reaches her limit of altitude—which is at the present time about 10,000 feet—she can climb more quickly than the aeroplane. But the latter, though its rate of ascent grows slower the higher it ascends, may still climb when the airship has stopped, and so win a final advantage and deal the airship her death-blow.

Theoretically, and particularly at the present stage of its development, the airship should be guarded against the attack of aeroplanes, in the same way as a Dreadnought is protected from hostile torpedo-boats, by a screen of light and quick-moving craft. On a raid, for example, in which airships are carrying high explosives to drop them above a certain spot, they should be surrounded as they fly by a patrol of defensive aeroplanes, which should meet and do battle with hostile craft of their own type, and prevent them from coming within striking distance of the airships. But aerial warfare, as practised to-day, has not emerged from its haphazard stage ; and the airship, if she sets out upon a raid, shields herself only by the cloak of night. The Zeppelin is, to a large extent, "a white elephant" in this war ; huge, costly, expected by the German public to do great things, yet placed at such risks, owing to a lack of weapons and organization, that it is only on rare occasions that she has hope of success.

It may be taken for granted that the airship has no chance against aeroplanes during the