

## Aeroplane *v.* Airship

weapon that will keep aeroplanes at a distance, he is virtually lost. The airship's hull is vulnerable; she lies open to attack from above; her only chance, indeed, is to deal with her antagonists at long range. But it is scarcely the mission of an airship to fight aeroplanes. She has, apart from her work as a long-distance scout, one main task; and this is to make use of her weight-lifting power, to carry bombs over some position, and drop them to the best advantage. And in such a flight it is her object not to meet, but to elude, hostile aeroplanes.

The airship is a type of craft which, owing to the large sums necessary for carrying out even simple tests, has developed very slowly; and so it is hardly fair, in this war at any rate, to pass judgment upon what she has done. She is, indeed, in this unhappy position: she is burdened by all the drawbacks of her bulk, without having been able, as yet, to realize its advantages. An example may make this clear. It was realized by German experts, some time before the war, that Zeppelins would be susceptible to attack from above, and that, if an aeroplane manœuvred into position directly over them, it would be able to drop bombs on their hulls without the gunners in the cars below—obstructed as they would be by the gas-chambers above them—being able to reply to the attack. To meet this drawback, therefore, a top-platform was constructed on the airship's hull, and on this a machine-gun fitted, the idea being that the gun