

AIRCRAFT OF THE NATIONS.

M. GUILLAUX'S VIEWS.

Chatting on the subject of the aeroplane in war prior to his accident, M. Guillaux, the well-known airman, expressed the view that aerial machines would prove perhaps the greatest factor in the present struggle. "Austria," he added, "is probably the most poorly equipped of all the European nations, compared with its size, and has only about ten military 'planes, but there are also a few bi-planes.

"Serbia depends upon France for the supply of her aircraft," M. Guillaux continued, "and she has, I believe, about 12 Bleriot monoplanes. Her airmen were trained at the Bleriot schools in France, and, while they cannot be classed as first-class airmen, they certainly can fly, and fly well.

"But it is not by judging the rival strengths of the two aerial forces that we can gauge the extent to which aircraft will be used. Airmen will crowd to the theatre of the war from all quarters of the earth, and there will be some thrilling incidents. In the night-time the dirigible balloon will rise for reconnoitring purposes. But if perchance one is sighted by the enemy's aeroplanes it will quickly be destroyed. The engines of the military aircraft, of course, will be silenced just in the same manner as a motor car engine. The whistling of the wind over the planes will be the only indication of their headlong progress through the night. The 'planes in such circumstances will prove to be impossible targets for the gunners beneath, while their crews, unobserved, can wreak vengeance with explosives on the crowded trenches or on the bulky and almost helpless airships.

"Germany lays great forte in her dirigible airships, and possesses more of both the rigid and semi-rigid types than any other nation. The German 'planes are heavy and slow." The airman of France, according to M. Guillaux, are equipped with quick-rising 'planes, which are also very fast. "With one of the latest type," M. Guillaux remarked, "I could locate an army within an area of 200 miles from my base without, I firmly believe, the enemy being any the wiser. To hide themselves from the eyes of the airman they must be under cover of a roof. Great as is Germany's strength in dirigibles, she would not remain in the field long against these fast-flying 'planes. While the heavy German bi-planes were rising 3000 feet a French squadron could have risen 6000 feet, and then," M. Guillaux added significantly "there would be the bombs!"

Russia is the "dark horse" of the aerial armies of Europe. She is credited with having spent more money in that particular branch of her military forces than any other nation. Russia also possesses the largest practicable flying machine and the most heavily armed aeroplanes in existence.

The 700 citizen soldiers who are to be used as a garrison for Thursday Island are to be drawn from the Townsville district in Queens-

land, and the force which is necessary to guard the defence works in New South Wales will be taken from the Australian Garrison Artillery units in the immediate neighbourhood of the places they are to protect.

It is understood that urgent telegrams were despatched late on Sunday night and this morning to officers commanding units throughout Australia, calling upon them to be prepared to act upon secret instructions, which had already been communicated to them under seal. Every rifle club captain throughout Australia has been given information as to the action it will be necessary for him to take on receipt of instructions to bring his men into touch with the fighting force. It is understood that the part riflemen would be called upon to play in the case of hostilities would be that of cable guards, and no provision will be made for attaching them to the technical and skilled units. Members of railway clubs, however, would be re-

quired to act in association with the transport corps.

As an indication of the extraordinary interest which has been aroused amongst all classes of the community in the steps that are being taken by the Commonwealth Government to prepare for any contingency, offers have been received by Ministers individually, by the Navy Office, and the Defence Department from a considerable number of people—ex-soldiers and sailors, nurses, cyclists, motorists, and others.

Senator Millen has been forced to cancel all his engagements and confine his attention to defence work.

Retired naval men in the neighbourhood of Sydney are willing to man a cruiser for service if required.

The Croatians in Auckland have asked permission to join the New Zealand expeditionary force.

The war has not so far had any effect upon the produce trade in Sussex-street. Prices show little change.

M. Maurice Guillaux, French airman, Mr. Lebbous Hordern, the owner of the only hydro-aeroplane in Australia, and Captain Penfold offer their services to Australia should the mobilisation of an aviation corps be necessary.

Queanbeyan, Monday.—The principal officers at the Duntroon Military College will leave to-night. They have been summoned to attend the military conference in Melbourne.

Melbourne, Monday.—The State Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock, referring to the decision of the Federal Government to-night, said:—"I have communicated with the Prime Minister, and have told him that all the resources of the State are absolutely at the disposal of the Commonwealth in any action it may take in connection with the troubles that have arisen."

In the event of German troops appearing in Belgian territory Britain's duty is plain. Under the provisions of the Treaties of London, 1831 and 1839, she is bound—along with the other Powers that signed the treaties—to take up arms in defence of Belgian neutrality. The Powers that signed those treaties were Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia.