



A stone memorial, roughly in the plan-form of the machine, now marks the spot at which Bleriot landed. On the right, the author of this article is seen, with Charles Gardner of the B.B.C., recording a talk on the Channel flight, to be broadcast on July 27th in the "Eye-witness" programme.

form of invasion of the future which might come by way of the air. And it did something more than that. It made our naval and military strategists sit up and take notice. They realized that the flying machine could no longer be looked upon just as an inventor's toy, and that its influence on strategy and tactics must now be taken quite seriously into account.

What the flight did, more than any other had done, was to mark clearly and definitely the dawn of the age of the air. But I do not think any of us, watching that tiny machine vanish above mid-Channel early on that morning in 1909, imagined that in less than 40 years from then armadas of bombers would be laying waste cities and munition areas, that pilotless flying bombs would be streaming across the Channel, or that huge rockets would be crashing down in the London area.

It makes one wonder what another 40 or 50 years may

bring. Such a great pioneer as Bleriot, though he realized well enough the grim possibilities the air conquest might open up, told me he was confident in his own mind that the ability to travel through the air at speeds impossible by land and sea would, in the end, prove a boon rather than a menace to mankind, promoting world understanding and making the peoples of the globe less and less inclined to resort to the folly of war. Bleriot, and others of the pioneers, were always most insistent in their long-range optimistic view of the air conquest. All we can hope, today, is that their prophecies may still come true. It is not too late, even now, for the world to make that universal, fully civilized use of flying which these great heroes of the early days envisaged so clearly.

*Anniversary celebrations in connection with Bleriot's flight are being held this week-end; details appear elsewhere in this issue.*

A strong gust caught the monoplane as it came in over the cliffs near Dover Castle, and a precipitate landing on a grassy slope resulted in a broken undercarriage and damaged airscrew. A newspaper reporter, who has arrived in the car seen in the background, is interviewing the pilot.

