



distant crowds lining the roads burst into delighted cheers.

Steadily the party walked the ship across the open ground to the tower. The cable had been paid out from the head of the tower and its end lay on the ground. The airship also paid out her cable, and the ends were rapidly connected on the ground. Then the walking party let go their hold, the ship discharged some water ballast and began to rise slowly and gradually into the air. The side guys were secured to two bollards on the ground. Then the winches took charge and the nose of the ship was hauled up to the mast and made fast with the permanent coupling. As soon as this was done the cables were parted and wound in by ship and tower respectively, while the moving arm on top of the tower was locked rigidly in a vertical position. R.101 was moored at last.

While this great airship was in the shed, it was impossible for the eye to take in her shape and size, and to form any opinion of her. Out in the open air she looks grand. The streamline shape, with the $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 fineness ratio, gives her a perfectly graceful appearance. There is not a straight line about her anywhere. Everywhere she curves, and the curves look as though they had been designed by nature for a fish of the air. The fins, too, look in perfect proportion, while the absence of any excrescences, apart from the engine cars, the control car, and the steam radiators, gives her a clean appearance such as no previous airship has ever been able to boast. The only point which might be said to detract from her appearance is the dope on her outer cover. The



Three photographs which illustrate the beginning of the first flight of R.101 : The airship attached to the mast and, below, just cast off. Note the dropping of water ballast. (" FLIGHT Photos.")

panels of fabric were doped separately before being put in place, and so different shades can be seen from the ground. The ocular effect is better when the fabric is doped all together after being put in place ; but there are advantages in the new method which outweigh any loss of skin-deep beauty.

For 48 hours the ship rode steadily at the tower head, with a crew of 50 living on board. The commander of this