

## OVER THE SHIPS.

### FLIGHT WITH M. GUILLAUX

#### IN A SEA-PLANE.

Two thousand feet above Sydney Harbour! The huge fabric of the sea-plane suspended, apparently motionless in mid-air, while between the wings the great engine thundered, and in front, seated behind his little wind-shield, M. Guillaux grasped the curved levers which directed the machine against every force which nature could bring to bear in that short half-hour.

Guillaux the *debonair!* glancing over his shoulder in a mischievous way to watch the effect upon his passenger of a 50 yards flat drop into an air-pocket over Circular Quay; waving his hand to a party of lilliputian tennis players, playing on a secluded court in North Sydney; but always secure, always ready for an emergency.

The sea-plane canted on its side, and the whole panorama swung around as on a pivot. Diminutive ferry boats were leaving Circular Quay, but before the noise of their white-steam salute could ascend, the sea-plane was over the funnels of the Australian fleet, snugly anchored in Farm Cove. The thought of how easily an explosive could be dropped on the battle-cruiser was irresistible.

"C'est dommage que nous n'avons pas de bombes!" said the reporter, having in mind M. Guillaux's views on aerial warfare.

"Oui pour la bas!" was the laughing reply, as the gloved hand released the control, and pointed straight down to the unprotected decks of the Australia.

What could have been easier than to have dropped explosives? Even at that great height the veriest tyro could have found the mark.

But it was more pleasurable by far to look elsewhere. There was a sense of security in the broad white planes with their mathematically exact rows of wooden struts, or in watching the working of the busy engine at the back of the passenger's seat—but, "la bas!" It gave one the sensation of being too near to the edge of a precipice.

It was not far away to Botany, and the big white rollers could be seen breaking along the Coojee shore. Passing over the southern bays there was a disturbance in the air, caused M. Guillaux said, by the hot air rising from the land. The sensation was similar to that experienced when a fast motor launch is travelling over a ruffled sea. The machine would fall bodily for an appreciable distance, and then bump, bump, bump, as a solid air cushion was reached, and the machine once more began to glide forward. M. Guillaux had a cure for this, however, and with a tilt of the tail the machine would ascend in such a hurry as to leave the passenger breathless.

But as the elevation increased so did the panorama expand. Nothing lost its colour, the Parramatta was silver; Government House

the Parramatta was silver; Government House grounds with the neatly laid out flower beds were intensely green, and the harbour itself the blue of the sky. But that was only in the deep parts. From the highest elevation a great area of the bottom of the harbour could be seen. When ascending, at first the water appeared yellow, but this proved to be the sand, and afterwards it was possible to watch the change in the formation of the bed of the channel.

To shelter themselves from aeroplanes in Sydney Harbour, the new submarines must have a coat of paint the nature of the chameleons, otherwise they might just as well remain on the surface. The translucent depths of Sydney Harbour apparently have their disadvantages from a strategical point of view.

High over Fort Denison the roar and vibration of the engine suddenly ceased. The volplane to the water had commenced, and slowly the machine tilted forwards, the wind commenced to whistle, and then shriek through the planes, and M. Guillaux's shoulders sank until the passenger saw sheer down to the water beneath. As the machine fell everything raced to meet it. A ship grew in size with incredible rapidity; the bottom of the harbour disappeared and instead were dancing wavelets, white-topped by the brisk breeze. A moment later and they were slapping the heels of the yellow wooden floats as the tail came down and the seaplane came to rest.

#### A BUSY DAY.

During the day M. Guillaux made no fewer than 13 flights with Mr. Hordern's seaplane. In the morning he made Double Bay his headquarters, and made an ascent with Miss Louise Carbasse, who described her experience as "Magnifique et pas dangereux."

In the afternoon, having Mr. Lebbeus Hordern on board, he flew to Manly, where several flights were made from the vicinity of North Harbour.