

## M. GUILLAUX'S EXPLOIT.

A few years ago if anyone had ventured to prophecy that in 1914 mails would be carried from Melbourne to Sydney by aeroplane he would have been regarded as the most visionary of dreamers. Yet the impracticable has been accomplished. On Saturday afternoon M. Guillaux swooped down out of the wind and rain upon Moore Park, his flight from Melbourne at an end, and his achievement a landmark in the history of Australian aviation. It was a noteworthy performance in every way. We must remember that M. Guillaux was unfamiliar with the region he had to traverse. For the most part his only guide was the railway line. He had to pass over many miles of inhospitable and broken country, where, if for any reason he had been compelled to descend, his situation would have been extremely awkward. He had to cross mountain ranges where the navigation of the air is liable to be beset with unforeseen and unavoidable perils. And finally the latter stages of his journey were performed amidst bolsterous atmospheric conditions. M. Guillaux bears his laurels modestly, but although he may belittle his exploit, everyone knows that it was a remarkable one. He was not out to break records, indeed, there was none to break, but his actual flying time was only six hours for a journey of almost six hundred miles. He came to earth on several occasions for rest and relaxation, and for the entertainment of the townships en route, and on Friday he was weather-bound. But these halts, save the last, were dictated by convenience rather than necessity, and M. Guillaux has shown us that given reasonably favourable conditions an aviator could fly from Melbourne to Sydney, descending here and there to renew his petrol, in half the time that the train takes to cover the distance.

Thus M. Guillaux's flight is not merely a sensational achievement without much practical value. It teaches us a useful lesson, for it brings home to us all as nothing else could have done the practical possibilities of the aeroplane. In Australia we have been somewhat slow to recognise these. We are apt still to regard aeroplanes as ingenious toys, which have not yet passed the experimental stage. We read of their successful employment in military operations for reconnaissance and other purposes, of "aerial Derbys" and reliability tests, where it has been proved that man is surely and steadily realising his immemorial ambition of conquering the air. But these accounts, and even the exhibitions we have recently witnessed, have left us, perhaps, not wholly convinced. M. Guillaux's feat has dispelled any lurking doubts that may have remained with regard to the practical possibilities of

ing doubts that may have remained with regard to the practical possibilities of aviation on a serious scale in Australia. For one thing, we have been told that the uncertainty of our climate, with its prevailing winds, was unfavourable to any prolonged flights. M. Guillaux has shown that to an experienced pilot a journey of six hundred miles over the most varied types of country, and in weather which for half the flight at least was very far from ideal, presents no insuperable difficulties, and the difficulties are likely to grow less every year as mechanical appliances are perfected. The great handicap to aerial navigation used to be lack of stability, which placed the aeroplane at the mercy of puffs of wind, and air pockets, and cross currents. Thanks to the stabiliser, this state of affairs has been to a great extent remedied. Pilots nowadays mount their aeroplanes with as much equanimity as they would mount a bicycle in conditions which a year or so ago would have spelled disaster. No doubt, much remains to be done before the navigation of the air is made entirely safe, but when one considers the extraordinary progress in this direction that the recent past has shown, one is inspired with fresh confidence for the future.

**Picture Films in the Islands.**—The natives of the South Sea Islands are very susceptible to the influence of moving pictures, and the dramas illustrative of life in the "Wild West" of America are said to be unsettling them. The captain of the German schooner *Samoa* told a New Zealand interviewer last week that the native mind was as impressionable as a child's, and that the numerous melodramatic films that were being exhibited in Samoa and in other groups were, in his opinion, responsible for breeding a rather dangerous temper among the less civilised inhabitants. The average Samoan, for instance, though a peace-loving man, was easily incited to riotous behaviour, and the more sensational variety of the cinematograph drama seemed to act as the necessary stimulus. Some time ago three native ex-policemen, who had evidently taken the bloodthirsty films too seriously, had, he said, stolen a brace of revolvers from the gavel arsenal and started off on a bushranging expedition of their own. They went to a plantation in a lonely part of the island, and held up the manager and his assistant. When the latter resisted the ex-policemen shot them dead, and then made for the bush, where two of the outlaws were shot down. The third was captured, and subsequently executed.

**More Immigrants.**—The steamer *Demosthenes*, which is to arrive to-day from London, is bringing 12 domestic, 38 Dreadnought Farm lads, and 29 agriculturists. The last are all skilled farm workers.