

AVIATION EXTRAORDINARY

MAURICE GUILLAUX' THRILLING EXHIBITION


15,000 PEOPLE WATCH HIM LOOPING THE LOOP

WONDERFUL FLIGHT OVER CITY AND SUBURBS.

"Sensations! Mais non. Why should I have sensations! It is nothing."

As he divested himself of his leather coat and knitted woollen headgear M. Maurice Guillaux gave that characteristic reply to a pressman's question. The brilliant Frenchman's modest disclaimer might have been expected. He had just stepped from his Bleriot monoplane at Cheltenham on Saturday afternoon after having roused 15,000 people to a pitch of wild excitement. Such a display of aviation had never been seen in South Australia before. Until the science is developed to a far greater degree than is the case at present such another may never be seen. Remarkable is a word hardly expressive enough to describe those wonderful aerial evolutions. Nine times he turned back somersaults and looped the loop at an altitude of quite 2000 ft. The white, moth-like machine had circled gracefully upwards and ever upwards until it became a dim outline in the blue vault of the sky. People had gasped in utter amazement at the unaccustomed sight, and had cheered and cheered again in an ecstasy of enthusiasm. Yet Guillaux said it was nothing, and one can understand his reason. To this intrepid Gaul flying is not a novelty. It is at once his business and his pleasure. He loops the loop because he likes it, and it pays him. And so while the wondrous feat affords him recreation, it stirs within him no emotion. With the huge crowd over whose head he hovered it was different. Their afternoon's outing had sufficed in it to make it a red-letter day in their lives. Different sensations, sometimes of alarm, sometimes of relief, occurred with cinematographic suddenness. They were witnessing for the first time that great wonder of the century—man's mastery of the air. To them was presented the accomplishment of what had up till recent years been regarded





MAURICE GUILLAUX PRIOR TO GIVING HIS WONDERFUL EXHIBITION OF LOOPIN G THE LOOP.

as the impossible. What an afternoon! Guillaux smiled at their wonder. It pleased him. Yet the exhibition was to him nothing out of the ordinary.

What a perfect day it was. A genial sun tempered the sharpness of a crisp winter's afternoon. There was no wind, and long narrow banks of white cloud hung motionless against the blue. On the meadows quite 25,000 people were gathered. Special trains brought them from Adelaide and Port Adelaide, and the Port road was alive with vehicles of every description, all hurrying towards the one destination. The top "deck" of the new grandstand at the course was at once seized upon as a fine coign of vantage, and long before the flight commenced was crowded. Round the rails of the seat sat the rest of the people, but the flat itself was kept clear. M. Guillaux insisted on this, and the precaution was a wise one. A terrible accident is quite likely to happen should the crowd get too close to the monoplane's whirring propeller, and he was not taking any risks of that sort. His Excellency the Governor (Sir Henry Gairney) was present, and with him were Lady Gairney and Captain Hopwood, A.D.C. The viceregal party evinced the very keenest interest in the afternoon's proceedings, on the conclusion of which Lady Gairney, who speaks French fluently, chatted for a while with the aviator and complimented him on his fine display. The Railway Band was in attendance, and submitted an enjoyable programme of music.

The flights were not due to start until after the arrival of the Governor. In the interval the waiting thousands took the opportunity of closely scrutinising the monoplane, which was drawn up by the course fence and facing the grandstand. Really there was not much to see. Merely two broad, flat wings, a long thin body terminating in a flat tail with a vertical rudder, and the curiously shaped Gnome engine which, with the propeller, fronted the blunt nose of the machine. It was a weird-looking affair, something like

a wind-socking affair, something like those big white moths one sees pinned to cards in the glass cases of a museum. Possibly in the dusk it would present an eerie, ghostlike appearance, but as it stood there in the bright sunlight it gave one an impression of the swooping speed of which it was capable. That a man should trust his life to its slender framework thousands of feet above the earth seemed incredible, and the thought at once occurred, "What if those flimsy wings should smash?" One might be pardoned for the shudder that would not be repressed. But at the end of the day any one of the thousands who commented upon the unstable looking structure would have marvelled in it with pleasure. Such a degree of confidence had Maurice Guillaux inspired in them.

Shortly after 3 p.m. all was ready. With his mechanic (M. Ribot) and his manager (M. Reppusseau) Guillaux carefully inspected his machine. Not an item escaped their close examination. The supporting wires and frames were tested. Levers were moved, and the planes and rudder raised and lowered. Then, having satisfied himself that all was well M. Guillaux climbed into the narrow pilot's seat and had adjusted the straps which cross his shoulders and prevent him from falling out when flying upside down. Ribot went round to the front and twirled the propeller. Reppusseau and another hung on to the sides of the car. There was a sputter of smoke, and a loud crackling as of a Maxim gun. The engine had started, and a fierce wind created by the rapidly whirling propeller caused dust to fly in clouds. Guillaux raised his hand and the monoplane was released. For 20 yards it sped across the grass. Then a great sheer burst forth as it rose gradually and gracefully into the air, a roaring white devil of flight.

Guillaux was flying. There was not a sound beyond that of the quick-firing engine. Almost breathlessly the crowd watched the gradual graceful climb towards the clouds. Soon he was up 50 ft., and still climbing in wide spirals. At length he was well above the top of the grandstand, quite 100 ft. from the ground, and here the real exhibition be-

The grandstand, quite 100 ft. from the ground, and here the real exhibition began. First the Frenchman drove his

machine in circles. This was succeeded by some sharp turning and "side-slipping;" then the planes tilted, and up he climbed again. What followed brought people's hearts into their mouths. The monoplane tilted downwards. Like a stone it shot earthwards, and people cried in terror "He's falling." It was one of Guillaux's little jokes. He was merely "diving," and when he thought he had gone far enough he moved a lever, and the machine rose sharply as does a swimmer who rises to the surface of the water. The crowd breathed freely again, and then cried out in hearty admiration as he commenced a series of turns known as "banking," which can only be compared to the movements of an expert skater as he glides on first on one leg and then the other in the very poetry of motion. It was perhaps the most graceful part of the afternoon's exhibition, and the charm of it was added to by the fact that to Guillaux it seemed so ridiculously easy and natural. This finished, the aviator waved his hand to the thousands watching him in rapt amazement, and up he sped in lofty spirals until he reached so great a height that the clamor of the engine was reduced to a faint purr. Lascily the birdman circled round, the strong sunlight glinting from his machine, and as he hovered there an opportunity occurred of judging the relative gracefulness of the aeroplane and the bird. A flock of seagulls flew past on their way to the gulf, and the comparison was not in their favor. Alongside that hardly moving shape in the clouds they seemed to move heavily and jerkily. A hawk hovering over a field or an albatross wheeling in the topmost ether might have provided a more fitting analogy to Guillaux and his wonderful aeroplane.

"He might be taking a rest in the sunlight, he looks so steady." That was one

opinion expressed, and it served to illustrate just how Guillaux—always associating with him that great white bird—appeared to be loafing along. But there was no loafing in what followed. In a flash restfulness was replaced by action. He had begun to "loop the loop." Fifteen thousand pairs of eyes watched the tail of the machine drop down until it pointed earthwards. And fifteen thousand hearts jumped violently as the broad planes fell over sharply and the machine was bottom upwards. Then there was another "head-on" dive, a sharp upward tilt, and once more the aeroplane was skimming along on an even keel. Guillaux was doubtless the most unperturbed man round Cheltenham at the time. But if he could have heard the roar of cheering that burst forth he must surely have smiled

burst forth he must surely have smiled his genial smile of pleasure. Once again he climbed skywards, and once again his machine twisted and somersaulted in the death-defying operation. That concluded the first portion of the exhibition. A sharp, spiral volplane brought him to earth almost in the same spot as that from which he first soared. In a trice he was surrounded by a wildly cheering throng, which rushed the flat and defied the efforts of a quartet of troopers to clear them back again. Guillaux acknowledged the plaudits with a bow, then took his seat in a motor car, and was driven round the course to the accompaniment of enthusiastic acclamations.

Little time elapsed before the second flight commenced. A dense crowd had gathered round the aeroplane, but a clearance was soon effected once Guillaux clambered into his seat and the engine was started. The gale created by the propeller fairly deluged the curious ones with dust, and they almost fell over one another in their hurry to escape the visitation. When the aviator left the ground he did not stop rising till he was quite 3000 ft. above the course, and at this safe distance—he calls it safe because it gives his machine a chance to recover should anything out of the way occur—he began a perfectly bewildering succession of loops and somersaults. No less than nine times he twirled over and over, the interval between each somersault being devoted to a brief climb. The emotions of those who in London first saw Guillaux' compatriot, Pegoud, loop the loop were faithfully reproduced among the crowd at Cheltenham. Each time he turned over there was a general exclamation of "Oh!" and then an "Ah!" of relief when he righted himself. Never did a man earn for himself the title of "Wizard of the air" in more convincing fashion than did Guillaux on Saturday. The first Australian that proves himself capable of equalling the volatile little Frenchman's great performance will be idolised throughout the nation.

After he had looped the loop to his heart's content, Guillaux essayed a flight across the city. Darting southwards he entered the suburban boundary at Prospect, crossed over North Adelaide, and sped away towards the southern suburbs. The people watching the football games at the Adelaide, Jubilee, and Unley ovals had a splendid view of the flight, and the game on the Jubilee Oval had to be stopped temporarily, so eager were the players to see the great aviator above them. Crowds watched him from the city streets, and even as far away as Glenelg the aeroplane was plainly visible. Right round the southern suburbs and out towards the foot of the Mount Lofty Ranges he flew, then turned and travelled back to Cheltenham at a speed of over 60 miles per hour. Guillaux was absent from the course for nearly half an hour, and during that time he saw more of Adelaide than most of its citizens will ever see. So far away did he go that he was beyond the radius of even the strongest binoculars. Yet it seemed

the strongest binoculars. Yet it seemed only a couple of minutes between the time that he and his machine materialised as a black dot out of the haze that overhung the city until he was hovering over the racecourse again. His reception on his return from this splendid flight quite surpassed any other that had been accorded him during the afternoon. The great crowd evinced its thorough understanding of his marvellous achievements in no uncertain manner. Hats were flung into the air, and as soon as Guillaux alighted from his monoplane a hundred hands were outstretched to extend him the very warmest and most cordial of welcomes. Flying for the day was over, and in the gathering dusk the thousands of people made their way homewards each m^r outdoing his

neighbor in the extent of his praise for the gallant Frenchman.

After Guillaux had conversed with Sir Henry and Lady Galway, and while he was divesting himself of his overalls, he chatted briefly with the press representatives. It was, he said, an ideal day for flying, and his exhibition was among the most successful of any he had given in Australia. Adelaide and the hills appeared to him to be remarkably pretty from mid-air, and he commented on the fact that the city's outspread suburbs gave it a larger appearance than Melbourne. At one period of his flight he reached a height of 11,000 ft., but mostly flew at an altitude of about 2500 ft. He was genuinely pleased with the warmth of feeling expressed by the spectators. "The people of Adelaide," said he, "appeared to appreciate my flying more than did the people anywhere else in Australia." M. L. Maistre, who is M. Guillaux' assistant manager and interpreter, remarked that the attendance had exceeded expectations.

M. Guillaux will give his next exhibition in Geelong, and will probably leave Adelaide by the Melbourne express this afternoon.