

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST AERIAL MAIL.

MELBOURNE TO SYDNEY.

M. GUILLAUX AT WANGARATTA.

The news that M. Guillaux, the French airman would make Wangaratta one of his stopping places on his journey from Melbourne to Sydney was the means of a large crowd gathering in Mr. J. Sisely's paddock, Racecourse Road, on Thursday morning. The day was an ideal one, and at 11.30 fully 2000 pairs of eyes were eagerly scanning the horizon just beyond Warby's Range for the first sight of the visitor. For a few minutes there was disappointment, but ere long the first glimpse was obtained of the bird man; just a faint speck against the clear blue of the sky. For some seconds he appeared as a swiftly moving bird; and not until the hum of the powerful Gnome engine could be clearly heard, did he appear to be anything like a stranger to North-Eastern skies. Following the railway line M. Guillaux soared majestically along some hundreds of feet up, until he came directly opposite the landing place, when with a beautiful sweeping movement, first one wing dipping and then the other, he slowly circled round over the heads of the people, and landed about 20 yards from the signal fire. To those who had never seen man in this new element before, the arrival of M. Guillaux was a revelation. He seemed so perfectly at home, so assured of his safety, and demonstrated so clearly that if man had not already completely conquered a new realm he was not very far from success.

The arrival of the mail train, just as M. Guillaux was preparing to depart, and which had left Melbourne three hours before the airman, had many wondering as to whether or not trains were becoming a trifle old-fashioned.

To the disappointment of many no flying exhibitions were given. It seemed to be understood that something of the kind would take place; but doubtless so pleased was M. Guillaux with the success of the initial stages of his undertaking that

Guillaux with the success of the initial stages of his undertaking that he was eager to continue his journey. Time was only taken to refill the petrol tanks and attend to other minor details, which occupied about 25 minutes. The supply of fuel and oil was obtained through Mr. J. Hickey.

Then waving his hand to the spectators the airman sped off down between the lines of onlookers and rose gracefully into the air. If the landing was graceful, the soaring upward was superb. No tremor, no flutter of a wing as with a bird; but just as if some invisible power was lifting the machine it rose from the earth; then, sweeping round, the latest Australian mailman came back over the crowd's heads, over the town, and sped off direct for Albury.

It was a wonderful sight—so devoid of the mechanical (apart from the hum of the engine) so swift—he was not in view five minutes altogether coming and going.

Leaving town at 9 o'clock, word was received in Wangaratta at 10 o'clock that M. Guillaux was just arriving in Seymour, where he stayed 20 minutes. Again at 11.20 he was just soaring over Benalla, a fact that caused an immediate rush from the town to Mr. Sisely's paddock, where he arrived about 12.45; two hours and three quarters to travel from Melbourne, over three hours ahead of the train. Then he only occupied forty minutes on the journey to Albury; and when passing Beechworth Junction was only about 40 to 50 feet in the air, and travelling at a great speed. At one time he attained an altitude of over 12,000 feet.

The aeroplane was closely inspected by the large crowd, many being particularly struck with the engine. It was of the Gnome type, a seven cylinder, and its appearance proved that in man's new element there is at least freedom from the grime of earth. It looked as if it had just come out of the maker's hands, without a fleck of dust about it, and its roar as it sped the propeller round gave indication of its power.

Probably the most disturbed at the airman's arrival was a large flock of crows, who as soon as they caught sight of their formidable rival in the air, with the accompanying noise of the engine, made rapid flight for

the air, with the accompanying noise of the engine, made rapid flight for more congenial quarters.

M. Guillaux arrived at Albury at 12.50, where he stayed 45 minutes; the journey thence to Wagga occupied 80 minutes. The aviator has been detained at Harden by rain.
