

## THE FLYING FRENCHMAN

WAITING FOR GUILLAUX.

A DISAPPOINTED CROWD.

It is somewhat of an interesting coincidence that while Monsieur M. Guillaux, the famous French aviator, is making his initial flight from Melbourne to Sydney and carrying with him the first aerial mail that has ever been conveyed in the southern hemisphere, thus, it may be, earning distinction as an aerial pioneer in Australia, people at Penrith are celebrating the centenary of the opening of the great western road. Monsieur Guillaux was to have arrived in Goulburn, the scene of many historical events connected with pioneering days, on Friday, but owing to the bad weather and an attack of illness he was forced to postpone his flight after setting out from Harden. On Friday morning, before leaving Harden, the intrepid airman gave several exhibition flights in view of hundreds of spectators who had never seen an aviator in action before. M. Guillaux's manager, M. Maistre, was in Goulburn all day Friday, and so bad was the weather that he wired to his principal advising him to put off the continuation of his flight until the weather abated. M. Guillaux, however, is a man of iron will, as well as nerve, and stops at nothing once his mind is made up. Consequently, as weather conditions were fairly favourable at Harden, he decided to continue the journey, and left the township shortly after two o'clock. Light rain continued in Goulburn. Word had been passed round from one anxious inquirer to another that the flight had been put off. Quite unexpected at about ten past two in the afternoon word was received of the aviator's departure, and it was expected that he would arrive at about three. The news travelled at an inconceivable rate, and almost as soon as it was received scores of youngsters from the Bourke-street School scampered down Clifford-street and into Auburn-street, making with all haste to the racecourse. This of course aroused attention, and it was not long before motor cars made their appearance and proceeded to the rendezvous. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed, and the excitement amongst the kiddies was intense. A fairly large crowd gathered outside the racecourse gates, and kept on swelling in spite of the weather. Many people could be seen trudging along Auburn-street to take up positions on Wheatley's hill, which soon became the scene of a large crowd of spectators.

As the manager or other representative of the aviator had not arrived the people standing outside the racecourse gates could not gain access, and the time was passed away in discussing the probable time of arrival of the Frenchman and the direction whence he would come. The number of people likely to go inside the enclosure was also fully discussed, and one old gentleman who had been silently smoking his pipe listening to the conversation remarked that the only advantage to be gained by going in was the chance of shaking hands with the airman. "And he would be worth shaking hands with," ventured another veteran close by, "and I reckon his journey makes an important mark in the history of Goulburn."

A charge of 2/ was made for admission to the ground, and about a hundred persons passed through the gateway, while as many more waited outside. A heavy shower fell and drove the sightseers to shelter, but still the sole object of attention was the sky. For over an hour the people, mostly maids, waited patiently, and the suspense was at times broken by some practical joker announcing the appearance of the airman. Towards half-past three heavy clouds assembled and rain once more set in in a steady down-pour. The sound of a passing train brought the people from their sheltering places, thinking that the airman had suddenly dived from above the clouds and was soaring overhead, but nothing could be seen of him, and it seemed doubt-

ful if he would ever arrive. Even the Frenchman's manager was convinced that something had happened to the aviator, and his assumption was correct, for at about 4 o'clock particulars arrived that the airman met with bad weather when reaching Binalong, and, becoming ill, had returned to Harden. The news was received with much disappointment, and a rush was made for the gates. The money was returned to the patrons.

It was unfortunate that the weather was so unpropitious, for had it been fine M. Guillaux would have alighted before a record attendance.

The children at the Bourke-street School were granted a half-holiday, and it was the intention to assemble the cadets on the racecourse to encircle the machine.

The Mayor (Ald. Betts) was anxious to hold a reception or entertain the aviator in some way at the Town Hall, and it was proposed to hold the function during the afternoon. The aldermen and representative citizens were expected to attend.

The anticipated arrival of M. Guillaux in the city was not without its humorous side. Every one who knew he was coming was outside scanning the clouds, and people even clambered on to their housetops, thinking perchance they would get a first look at the aviator. A small boy remarked that there would be a good many sore necks to-day and aching eyes, and he was probably right.