

THE AIR KING'S FEATS.

WONDERFUL AVIATION.

LOOPING THE LOOP.

IMPRESSIONS AND COMMENTS.

A DARING FRENCH AVIATOR.

HIS SENSATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

HOW THE PUBLIC LOST A THRILL.

(By "Spark.")

MELBOURNE, Saturday.

This is undoubtedly the age of flight. One naturally looks back to the pioneering days of motoring, and compares the progress of aviation with that of motoring. The advance made in flying compared with terrestrial motoring is most pronounced. Aviation will in the next decade become commercially practicable. Of this there is not the slightest doubt, after witnessing the superb performances of Mons. Guillaux at the Royal Show Ground, Melbourne, this afternoon.

A crowd, variously estimated at from 25,000 to 30,000, witnessed the flights and evolutions from within the grounds, whilst fully 15,000 were content with outside tickets. No clergyman has ever succeeded in keeping the eyes of his congregation heavenwards nor aroused such intense, rapt interest as was displayed by the thousands of spectators who viewed the bird-man to-day.

One went out looking for thrills—and found them. Many will have stiff necks and kinked backs. From a rapid course of deductive reasoning, your scribe at once adapted a reclining position on the open stand, a plan quickly followed by numbers of others, who soon found this the most comfortable position, commanding the best range of view.

In addition to "looping the loop," M. Guillaux included in his exhibition a fine display of upside-down aying, side-slipping, tail-slipping, and perpendicular diving. Of his sensational and hair-raising aviation display there is much to be said, M. Guillaux most certainly deserves his title of "king of the air."

Compared with the elegant, smooth, graceful flights of the air king on his Bleriot monoplane, the flight of most birds is a jerky, uncertain method of progression. His machine in flight and during its evolutions resembles a huge dragon fly in appearance, whilst the reverberating hum of the exhaust when the monoplane is flying low is akin to the humming of a bee, crescendo to diminuendo, as the machine falls or rises through space.

Favoured with a dull day, spectators were able to watch every movement of the big dragon fly. There was no sun to dazzle thousands of eager eyes. Each evolution was greeted with salvos of applause. M. Guillaux was the recipient of many floral tributes after his first 40 minutes in the air. The huge crowd was most enthusiastic. The excess of enthusiasm, however, proved their undo-

ing after the second flight. They carried M. Guillaux shoulder high across the arena to the accompaniment of tumultuous cheering. The air king wanted to get back to his machine—a frail-looking little thing—in order to do his great dive head-foremost from 300ft. altitude, but the crowd was too dense, and their very hero-worship robbed them of the piece-de-resistance. Although police and M. Guillaux's staff made strenuous efforts to clear a path to the machine, the third flight had to be abandoned, and the public lost the big thrill.

The couple of dives made from 1000ft. to 1500ft. in the second flights were thrillers. My breathing was suspended as the Bleriot came down like a bullet directly above the stand upon which I reclined. Forty feet more, and —! Just then a graceful curve, and away on skywards shot the big dragon fly, the wind rush from the big screw lifting hats and blowing coats about like a hurricane. One lay there fascinated, like a rabbit when a brown hawk swoops down to capture it.

Guillaux smiles serenely and waves his hand gaily as he sweeps by at a terrific pace. He has a most captivating smile, and his sangfroid is remarkable. Viewed through a powerful pair of Zeiss glasses as he turns back somersaults and makes terrific dives, the air king sits, cool, smiling, and nonchalant, even when upside down flying. He is imperturbable. Nerves—well, we motormen know something of nerve control in times of danger, but Guillaux—he is a physical and mental phenomenon.

His departure from the ground is a mechanical movement, clothed with the grace of a spring song-dance of Miss Maud Allan's. It is beautiful and graceful to the last degree. His landings are just the same—no fluster or exaggerated movements, just the merest flicker of the planes, and a gentle deflection of the rudder, and the Bleriot mounts cloudwards in a great graceful curve.

Guillaux and his machine are one unit—his mastery is superb. He is an artist who handles his tricky monoplane as Kubelik does his violin, infinite skill and gracefulness being the dominant feature. He tests every wire, every strut, lever, and pull control with a nonchalant but methodical carefulness. This is a precaution absolutely necessary when one imagines the terrific strains imposed. When flying low the wires vibrate like a stringed instrument with the enormous strain. Looking light and fragile, the Bleriot is a wonderful example of immense strength without weight. The engine is a source of great interest for and admiration of anyone who is mechanically minded.

M. Guillaux's exhibition of turning completely over, sideways, and ways, side-slipping, tail-slipping, and banking, is superb. Just as naturally and easy as a big trout slowly and gracefully disports itself in a pellucid pool, so Guillaux handles his Bleriot. The comparison to a lazily-moving trout aptly describes his evolutions, no fuss, no hurry, just a flash-

a lazily-moving trout aptly describes his evolutions—no fuss, no hurry, just a fish-like movement, that is all. Bird-like doesn't describe it. His Bleriot has a sinuous, graceful movement quite apart from the flight of birds.

The writer was afforded an opportunity of closely examining the Bleriot monoplane and its engine to-day. The seven-cylindered Gnome is a masterpiece of internal combustion engine design. The finish is beautiful. The seven cylinders are machined from solid nickel steel; the walls are less than 1-25th of an inch thick—about the thickness of two visiting cards. Strength is gained just at the right part by thin ribs, which also help to keep the cylinders cool. Twelve hundred revolutions per minute is the engine's speed, and about 75 h.p. is developed.

M. Guillaux purposes an altitude record next week. A flight from Melbourne to Sydney is also en tapis. He certainly cannot fail to appreciate the reception accorded to him at his initial performance in Melbourne. An article by M. Sissons well describes M. Guillaux's remarkable evolutions. What all manufacturers and experimentalists are striving for as "safe" aviation, and, to M. Sissons' mind, if only proper consideration

be given to these feats of M. Guillaux, the science of aviation will be greatly advanced, and the death-roll reduced to an extraordinary extent. In the S-dive, after climbing to a sufficient altitude the machine is controlled for a time in a position parallel with the ground. When sufficient steadiness has been obtained, the machine is actuated so that it enters upon a vertical headlong dive, which terminates by the machine being turned completely over upon its back. After flying upside down for quite a considerable time, another dive, head first, is taken, and from this position the machine is righted to its normal flying position. When looping-the-loop, the vertical headlong dive is continued for some distance in order to gain sufficient momentum to fly in a complete circle or loop. As regards the machine with which these exhibitions are carried out, there are but two departures from the standard Bleriot model. In the first place, a longer pylon, or mast, situated at the head of the machine, has been made use of; and, secondly, the original tail has been substituted by one usually employed on a standard tandem-seated model. Neither of these alterations, however, affects the principle of the machine or its natural stability. It is apparent that the purpose of the taller pylon is to set the top bracing wires to the wings at a less acute angle, and thereby to reduce the stress upon this. This is a very natural precaution in a machine that flies, so to speak, habitually on its back, and in which the top wires, therefore, so frequently take all the weight of the machine in the air. Ordinarily the top wires merely support the weight of the wings when the machine is on the ground, and their severest stress usually arises from a bumpy landing. Similarly, the

and their severest stress usually arises from a bumpy landing. Similarly, the advanced position of the pylon places the top front wires in a better position to reinforce the wing against the force of direct resistance. The tandem model tail is larger than that on the single-seater, and gives the greater measure of control that is desirable for extraordinary feats of this description, but not necessarily so for every-day flying. We have, therefore, a perfectly normal aeroplane combined with a perfectly abnormal pilot; and the pilot is abnormal, not in performing complicated and rapid movements of the control with the dexterity of a Paderewski, but in having the nerve to sit still in the most trying attitudes while his machine continues properly to carry out the evolution upon which he initially caused it to begin. If M. Guillaux became flustered and wriggled his control lever in nervous uncertainty, he would end up in a heap on the ground just as surely as any pilot does in a similar plight. Instead of controlling the machine, M. Guillaux lets the machine control itself. From the standpoint of the scientific experimenter, he is the ideal pilot, for he has the intelligence to eliminate himself at the moment that the machine enters upon its appointed task. Eliminating all question of the man himself, and his remarkable nerve, the recent exploits in the air of M. Guillaux demonstrate, on a practical scale, the whole of the fundamental theory of aeroplane design. His exhibitions have proved that the aeroplane, provided its controller has nerve and knowledge enough to know when to leave things alone, is an absolutely safe and stable machine in the air. To that extent, therefore, he has added to the sum total of our knowledge of the conditions and dynamics of flight, and beyond doubt his contribution in this respect is an immensely valuable one.