

The Lady and the 'Plane

The Interest and Influence of Women in American Aviation

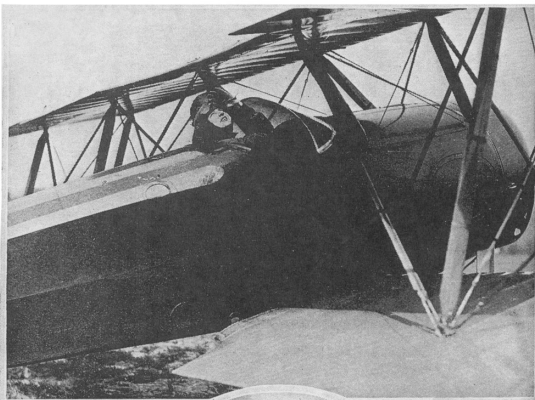
By GEORGE W. SUTTON, Jr.

ARE airplanes suitable vehicles for women? Are women suitable passengers and drivers for airplanes?

Three years ago Victor Carlstrom, a big, husky, masculine, professional aviator, made the first airplane flight from Chicago to New York. His feat was accompanied, both before and after, by much big-type newspaper publicity and much cash in the way of prize money and other emoluments. His flying equipment was the finest it was possible to obtain at that time. His machine was the last word in the art of the flying industry, specially built and carefully nursed and pruned for the trip by the best mechanics in the business. A few days later General Leonard Wood, commanding troops at Governor's Island, New York, was greatly surprised when a frail-looking girl in a ramshackle, obsolete type of 'plane, zipped out of the skies onto his nicely policed parade ground. It was Ruth Law, who had just dropped in from Chicago, without advance public notice, at a rate of speed which totally eclipsed Carlstrom's record. She had made the trip at her own expense, "just for fun," and had set up incidentally a new American record for a non-stop flight.

There were two general results of Miss Law's journey. One was that she was regarded as a phenomenon, an exceptional human being, a sort of a he-woman. The other was that people began to wonder if flying, by any stretch of the imagination, was or would ever become a suitable sport for the supposedly weaker sex.

To-day it is possible to give a positive answer to that question. Women—not all of them, but a large



Mrs. Irene Castle Treman, between films, is preparing to add "aviatrix" to her list of well earned titles



Miss Marion Cassidy, a 17-year-old licensed pilot of Toronto, who, among other accomplishments, has ascended alone to an altitude of 9,000 feet

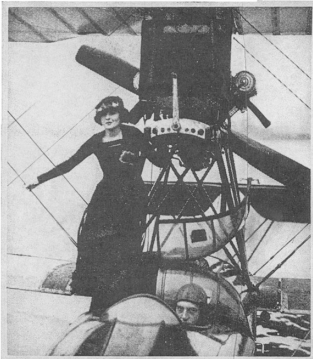


Miss Margaret Lawrence expects to transport, in a large bombing 'plane, her company of five in "Tea for Three" on its tour of one night stands

proportion—are ideally fitted for flying, and they are giving daily proofs of their ability to compete successfully with men in this newest of human activities. And this is true not only of women's participation in flying purely as a sport, but in its development for warfare and in the industry itself.

We shall have to begin

with the two girls who, at present, stand supreme in the flying accomplishments of American women—Ruth Law and Katherine Stinson. They are both young and pretty and, contrary to the opinions of those who do not know them, both are distinctly and completely feminine. There is no masculine note about either of them. To see Miss Stinson half an hour after a flight, with her brown curls down her back, you would find it hard to realize that she had just returned from a journey aloft, alone in a flimsy biplane, in which she did dozens of loops, tail spins, side slips and other death-defying stunts at tempted by only the most ex-



The joys of life for Miss Corine Griffith, most charming of screen stars, mean being actually up in the clouds in an Aeromarine "flying boat limousine"



Mrs. Castle Treman poses for her millionth picture with her thousandth dog before going aloft in a Thomas-Morse biplane with pilot Frank H. Burnside

performed and daring male pilots. Neither Miss Stinson nor Miss Law suggests, in any way, the flashy, tin-seled circus rider type of woman. They are more modest and retiring than the usual run of girls and neither seeks undue notoriety or public rewards. I think Miss Law told me once she had been a school teacher. It was easy to believe. Now she is married, but continues to fly.

Both have done much traveling in the course of their work and as a direct result of their exhibitions in the land of Nippon, there is much interest in aviation among the Japanese women, almost the last women in the world you would expect to come abreast of this modern science. Miss Law did 24 loops over the city of Tokio, for which the Imperial Aero Club of Japan awarded her the first of the medals it struck off for its war heroes—with 24 rubies—one for each loop.

The flying germ was born in both Law children—Ruth and her dare-devil brother, Rodman. They did not inherit it from their New England parents. W. Starling Burgess, of Marblehead, Mass., well-known for having built a number of famous little sailboats of the Sonder class, was pioneering in building airplanes eight years ago. He gave Miss Law her first ride in a 'plane and she liked it. Moreover, she was determined to go further with it and learn to fly. Many were the difficulties, because airplane manufacturers, in those days, *knew* what they have had to *know* recently—that women were not suitable for flying. So Miss Law saved up \$2,500, with which she purchased a \$5,000 'plane, paying the balance in instalments. She won her pilot's license in 1912 and ever since she has been skimming the clouds to her heart's content and to the growing fatness of her purse.

Miss Law has recently returned from the Philippines where she inaugurated the first Filipino aerial mail service—between Manila and Baguio, a flying distance of 128 miles. Now she wants to fly across the Atlantic.

Miss Stinson, for years, has con-

tinued a successful school of aviation. She has taught every member of her family to fly and in her aerial achievements vies with Miss Law for honors and accomplishments.

The war called many thousands of women into the aviation industry, where they learned the construction and operation of 'planes and motors. Now many of these women are pilots, driving their own 'planes. The old idea that women were unstable has been exploded into a thousand bits. The war proved that. In aviation this has been proven particularly true. Flying has nothing at all to do with physical strength. Some of France's best flyers had lost limbs previously in other branches of the service. It depends greatly upon three things, all readily acquired or put into practice by women:

- 1—Mechanical knowledge.
- 2—Co-ordination of muscle and mind.
- 3—Ability to make quick decisions.

Here is what Miss Law says:

"I have had hundreds and hundreds of letters from women in all parts of the world asking that I open a school for women, and I would like nothing better than to do this if I had the time. I believe there are lots of women who can and will make expert aviators, and flying will receive its real impetus in the future through the insistence of women to enter into it.

"Danger? There's no danger in flying if the flyer will keep her eyes open, study her 'plane, understand it thoroughly and keep her nerve. I've been flying for eight years and have never broken any part of any airplane I ever flew.

"The answer is that I know my airplane. When the thing begins to do strange tricks I know what to do with it. One night I was flying in the dark and suddenly my machine began falling. I afterwards found I had passed over the chimneys of several steel furnaces and they created air conditions of which I knew nothing. My machine dropped 1,500 feet, but I knew what to do with it and I just sat tight and pulled through.

"There are only two things essential to successful flying: absolute, complete, never-say-die confidence, and knowledge of how to land properly. These are equally important.

"There is only one sort of flying that is dangerous. That is the flying done by a person who is afraid to do anything but just merely fly. Stunt flying is essential because it is

the only way in which a flyer may become familiar with her plane and know what it will do and what to do with it."

Just to test out the ability of a woman unused to flying to make a flight and keep her nerve, I made up a party consisting of two of the most feminine girls I know, one of them my wife, and the other Miss Corinne Griffith, of the Vitaphone Co. A flight was arranged with Mr. Inglis M. Uppercu, President of the Aeromarine 'Plane and Motor Corporation. One of his beautiful new flying boat limousines, the "Sport" boat shown in the photographs in this article, was flown up the Hudson River and the girls boarded it. A thirty-five-mile wind was blowing but neither showed the slightest timidity or hesitation. They took a real flight, over the battleships in the river, the Statue of Liberty and parts of the Jersey meadows. They went up about a mile and traveled at the rate of 90 miles an hour. When they came down they were absolutely delighted with the experience and wanted to go up again right away. Miss Griffith is going to take a large 'plane of her own, if she has to forego all the other pleasures of life.

Up in Ithaca, N. Y., Mrs. Irene Castle Treman is learning to fly. Her former husband, Captain Vernon Castle, was an expert flyer and used to take his wife on many long air trips, in the course of which he performed all of the stunts known to England's best aviators. Mrs. Treman inherits brains and ability to think quickly. The success which she and Captain Castle attained in dancing was due to a combination of a perfect co-ordination of muscle and mind, and the possession of charming personalities. With her determination to master the intricacies of anything new and her ability to think and act almost simultaneously, Mrs. Treman should make a capable, fearless flyer.

Mrs. E. Mason's school for girls, "The Castle," at Tarrytown, N. Y., has a course for girls who wish to learn flying. This is one of the most exclusive boarding schools around New York, attended by daughters of people of wealth and prominence. It has a landing field and a full equipment of flying instructors and airplanes. This is a development which may have important results. If other girls' schools take up this subject, we may, in a short time, see a great number of girls who have received pilots' licenses along with their diplomas. The University of California, Fordham University and other men's colleges are including a thorough course in aeronautics in their schedules.

Here is an example of feminine nerve, and if you doubt that it takes nerve, try it. Miss Sylvia Borden, of England, recently went up in an airplane, piloted by Eddie Stinson, brother of Katherine Stinson, at Atlantic City. When the machine was a thousand feet high Miss Borden dived head first into the air, to test a new type of parachute. She landed safely, but the feat called for courage of high degree.

Miss Josephine Dunn, of Mississippi, recently celebrated her graduation from the Stinson School of Aviation by performing, at Atlantic City, the first top-the-loop ever done there by a woman. Miss Dunn piloted her own machine, with her brother Richard Dunn, a former Army flyer, as passenger. And she is only sixteen years old.

And now that women are learning to fly they will soon be as important an influence in aviation as they are in motoring. Among other things, it is probable that many of them will select the type of airplanes they wish their husbands to buy.



The cockpit or tonneau of the Aeromarine flying boat has a windproof and water-proof transparent top.

When the celluloid top is down, the passengers are everything without discomfort from the elements

That exhilarating moment when you realize that you are actually off the ground

