246 FLIGHT

WOMEN IN AVIATION . .

(Left to right) Miss Harriet Quimby, an early American pilot; she was the first woman to fly solo across the English Channel when she piloted a Gnome-engined B/er/ot from Dover to a point near Boulogne in April, 1912. Baroness Raymonde de Laroche—the first woman to obtain her pilot's licence. She made her first solo in October, 1909, and received her brevet on March 8th, 1910. Mile. He7ene Boucher, who set up many records in a Caudron Rafale before she was killed flying that aeroplane in November, 1934.

up in the air as a passenger at Milan and subsequently began training as a pilot. The first woman to receive a pilot's licence, however, was Baroness Raymonde de Laroche, who was accorded her Brevet No. 36 on March 8th, 1910, the same day as that on which Aviator's Certificate No. 1 was: issued to J. T. C. Moore Brabazon (now Lord Brabazon of Tara).
Until the outbreak of World War 1, many women—particularly
in France and Britain—took their licences; in our own country, in 1910, Mrs. Maurice Hewlett, along with the Frenchman Gustav Blondeau, opened a school of flying at Brooklands and there Mrs. Hewlett taught her son to fly. Later she opened an aircraft factory which produced, among other types, some of the B.E.s used at the beginning of the war.
More recendy we find in the production sphere Mrs. "Blossom" Miles, a designer in the company which produced the dainty air-craft which still give a good account of themselves at race meet-ings; and Mrs. Walter H. Beech, president of the Beech Aircraft Corporation of Kansas, U.S.A., which produces trainers, trans-ports and tourers (is it not possible that a woman's touch can be detected in the flourish of the butterfly tail of the Bonanza?)
In the hectic years between the wars women took to the air once more; they looped the loop and performed aerobatics and, having found their wings again, proceeded to extend their vision and their range on flights of long distance and endurance and oceans and records fell beneath them.

In 1921 Adrienne Bolland crossed the Andes in the little open Caudron whose lovely scalloped wings moved above the crowds at the 1953 Paris Aero Show. In 1928 Amelia Earhart was the first woman passenger to cross die North Atlantic, a claim to fame which must seem curious to those who now regard diat ocean as an obstacle only a comfortable berth, a couple of good al&and a few drinks in the bar are needed to surmount. Never-

theless Miss Earhart won crisper laurels when she flew solo in her single-engined Lockheed Vega from Newfoundland to Ireland, a challenge few would accept today, and then added the Pacifi Ocean to her achievements.
Maryse Hilsz, in 1930, took a Gipsy (Moth alone from Paris to Saigon and three years later flew a Farman 291 from Paris to Tokyo and back and then broke her own record over the same route in a Breguet 27. Again in 1930 our own Amy Johnson chalked up a score for women by flying alone in her Gipsy Moth from England to Australia—a performance which she followed by other flights, either alone or in company with others—and ulti-mately took the London - Cape Town record from Tommy Rose. In 1934 Helene Boucher won speed record after speed recor until she was champion of the world.
The South Adantic was flown solo in 1935 by Jean Batten, who in the following year flew from London to Auckland and men, in 1937, beat the Australia - England record. Lady Heath and Lady Bailey chose the Africa route for their exploits, the former making the first of any solo flights from Cape Town to London and the latter making the first solo flight by a woman from London to Cape Town and back.
These, of course, were only some of the stars in the sky; bu there were many others who flew great distances alone or wh tagged along with husbands and friends who were themselve sometimes flying for fun or surveying routes for the airlines. The war years gave women a chance to edge their way into aviation in a less spectacular but perhaps even more worthy manner. Those who knew how to fly joined die Air Transpon

Auxiliary and became ferry pilots, sometimes causing consternation in the Air Force by turning up as drivers of four-engined

bombers or delivering fast fighters to their stations. Some becam mechanics and radio technicians and proved themselves well ab

(Left to right) Miss Amy Johnson, later Mrs. Mollison, who, in 1930, made the first woman's solo flight from England to Australia in her Gipsy Moth "Jason." Amelia Earhart, who, as a passenger in 1928, was the first woman to fly the North Atlantic. Later she crossed solo in a Lockheed Vega. Jean Batten with the trophy presented to her by the Brazilian Air Force in recognition of her solo flight across the South Atlantic. Jacqueline Cochrane, the first woman to fly supersonically.