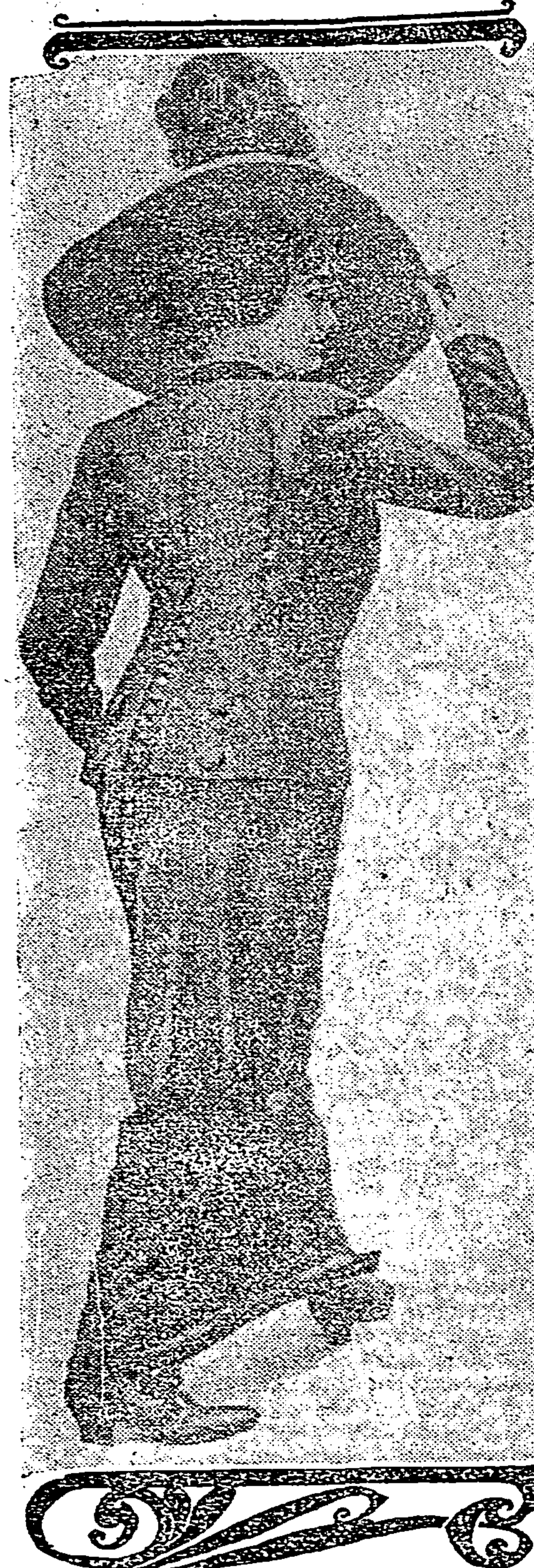


"THE HOBBLE" IS THE LATEST FREAK IN WOMAN'S FASHIONS

Skirts Are So Tight Around the Ankle That Locomotion Is Seriously Impeded and Speed Is Impossible.



This Shows the Longest Stride Possible in the New Skirt.

HAVE you seen her—the woman in the "hobble" skirt? It is the last freak in a cycle of freakish fashions, and one earnestly wishes that it was really the last in a sense of finality.

This skirt, if made according to rule, is a few inches under a yard wide. Some women are so careless of the rule that they stretch the hem to measure thirty-eight inches. It does not take much imagination to see that a woman cannot be sprightly and active in a hem that isn't wide enough to allow her to take an ordinary step, and it is prophesied that those who wear the skirt will have to go back to the days of their childhood and play hop scotch. This will be about the only way one can get around, if one expects to finish the day's work. The two feet must be placed together and then one must hop forward or backward, criss-cross and around.

A clever man or woman who could see into the future should have arranged a school for hopping when they first saw this new skirt on the horizon. For the woman who wears it has just about as much chance of getting any-

where by walking as a horse has when it is hobbled.

The amazing part of it is that the women do not seem to care whether they can walk or not as long as they can have one of the skirts. Of course, there are some women who never walk anyhow; the motor and the carriage have spoiled them for this form of exercise. But even if a woman rides, she has to get in and out of the vehicle, and how is she going to do even this? It is impossible for her to step to the curb in the usual way, so she has to hop like a bird from one spot to another until she has finally arrived at the pavement; and it is easier to get out of a trap than it is to get in, the best illustration of which is to watch a woman wearing a "hobble" skirt attempt to do both.

If you see a crowd in the street, and, like all Americans, you are compelled to join it, you may have vague thoughts

in the morning hours she had gone far. When she added the "birth-mark" veil to the other two atrocities she was really getting hardened. Onlookers thought the final touch had been given when she took up the fashion of wearing velvet bedroom slippers and grass-green stockings below a skirt cut five inches from the ground during shopping tours. But the onlookers were mistaken. They usually are; every one is mistaken when trying to sum up a woman and her eccentricities, so when she appeared with the Chanticleer hat and a sash at her knees the public merely gasped and said, "What next?"

During all this time the woman herself had not a blush of self-consciousness on her face. She rode the storm of ridicule and scorn with a good deal of ease. She was really pleased at the cartoonist's idea of her. She became so used to sharing the attention of the public with the comet and the aeroplane

that she felt rather snubbed if allowed to pass without comment. So in the "hobble" skirt she is merely her eccentric self in another guise.

Possibly of all her sartorial whims this skirt is the most conspicuous, the most senseless, and the most unlovely.

Even Paris is shocked over it; Paris, of all cities in the world, which loves an eccentricity better than sanity, as it does an epigram better than the whole truth. The French papers and magazines are showing up the "hobbled women" to ridicule and imploring them not to be grotesque. They point to the fact that just while the civilized nations are complimenting Japan on its enlightened progress, the women are taking up the skirts of mediaeval Japan and restricting their walk to the mincing step of the Japanese doll women.

And all this in the name of Fashion. It is no small wonder that the onlookers are pessimistic about the future.

There are some so unkind as to suggest that trousers would have been better—far better, and much more comfortable. It would be more logical in view of the suffrage question. In truth, it is rather a ridiculous conjunction—this going back to the women of old Japan for skirts while flaunting banners that proclaim votes for women. The two things are not in the same atmosphere.

If women want to run for Governor they ought to be able to run for a car. If they want to step into a President's chair they ought to be able to step into a motor. If they want to be legally free they shouldn't be sartorially shackled. But with the lack of logic that the sex can be counted on to display they have chosen a trammelled figure and shackled ankles when they need most to have them free in the strenuous race for equality with the trousered sex.

All fashions have their history, and the "hobble" skirt is really more than a Summer's caprice. It was first christened the aeroplane skirt, and suggests the passion that Paris has for christening fashions in honor of current events. It was said that Mme. Blériot first came out in a skirt that was not only tight but around which was a snug garter of broad elastic to hold it in against the ankles when she went up into the sky. Women aviators and balloonists, of whom there are many in Paris, took up the idea of the gartered skirt, and the great designers instantly brought out a narrow garment that was tied around the ankles with a broad sash, which was first called the aeroplane garter, and later the whole garment was called the aviation skirt.

The next step was to omit the sash and finish off the skirt with a wide hem which was so narrow that it was only comfortable in a flying machine, and certainly was not intended for use in the daily walks of life. This began to be the true aviation skirt, and as such it was accepted until April. Then the garter, the sash, the narrow hem, and every other means of tightening the skirt below the knees were combined.

Out of all these conditions the hobble skirt, sometimes known as the shackle, and always called an abomi-

nation, has come into our midst. One can see it in the restaurants, at the races, in the shops, on the trains; whereas it should only be seen in a flying machine.

Possibly the most absurd place in which this skirt is seen is on a woman who is trying to cross Fifth Avenue between the two streams of traffic. No matter how composed she is at other times, she gets panic-stricken then. She can't hop fast enough to get out of the way of vehicles; her skirt won't let her walk; she hasn't a parachute, so she can't fly; therefore the only way to save her neck is the undignified but nice old-fashioned ordinary method of pulling up her skirt until she is untrammelled, after which she runs to safety.

When the hobble skirt is short it is bad enough, but when it is long it goes beyond all reason. It forms a tiny little hoop on the floor or the ground, which is tossed hither and yon by the feet encased in it. It is not possible to hold it up because of its shape, and it is not possible to walk in it because of its lack of width.

The odd part of this skirt, next to its narrowness, is its balloonlike shape above the ankles. If you haven't seen this atrocity, you may imagine that it is narrow from waist to hem; that it is one of those pillowcase, tubelike, hatpin skirts. It is not. It begins to balloon at the waistline and continues its way in pleats and gathers until it reaches the aeroplane garter that holds it in around the ankle, which gives the present fashionable silhouette the roundness of a barrel in the middle.

The student who works out the relation between clothes and a woman's habits and character has a pretty problem before him in this Summer of 1910. All the women who wear aviation skirts don't own flying machines. Therefore, what will be the result if they persist in adopting aeroplane garments? Will they cease to walk or learn to fly? Will they become bird women or piazza drones? Will they give up outdoor exercise and take to knitting?

Or is it too much to ask that they will be sensible and drop the fashion?



Getting Into a Taxicab is a Gymnastic Feat.

of a fire, a death, or a fight; but when you arrive at the scene of trouble you will find none of these calamities. The gaping group will have gathered to see a woman in the new skirt get out of her motor, and this crowd will wait for half an hour after the first performance to see her come out of a shop and attempt to hop back into the motor.

You might imagine that a gentle lady would be most embarrassed at wearing a garment that produced as much commotion in the street as a fire of a fight, but the modern American woman does not seem to work embarrassment overtime. She has been hardened in the new school of fashion.

When she learned how to parade in a peach basket hat without looking self-conscious she took her first lesson in sartorial publicity. When she adopted the deeply décolleté frock for the street



Two of the Hobble Skirts.



These Are Not Exaggerated at All. The Skirts Really Look Like This.



A Horrible Example.