

My Lady's New Boots

THE vagaries of Fashion are utterly beyond the comprehension of the dull-witted male—a fact which, since the said male is the very last person to be considered in these matters, in no way perturbs those dressmaking autocrats who attain limousines and a rich old age by compelling Woman to scrap all her clothes once a month and replace them by a new, more costly, and differently shaped outfit. The mere trousered thing cannot understand why a garment which is all the rage on Monday must necessarily be hopelessly out of date on Tuesday; but what matters that? His not to reason why; his but to keep on paying until the bailiffs beg him to desist.

For this reason I can only marvel blankly at the sudden outbreak of pseudo-Russian footwear which has lately ravaged the country like some sinister epidemic. But a few short weeks ago a Russian boot was as rare in London as a laugh in Manchester; to-day she is woefully behind the times who is not clad from the knees down in objects which no self-respecting moujik would be found dead in.

UNLESS my memory is at fault, we were similarly afflicted only

a year or two back. Then, as now, your lady of fashion would have Muscovite legwear, or none at all. Then, as now, untutored Man was stirred to rude mirth by the repeated spectacle of Russian boots upon legs wholly unfitted to wear them. Suddenly they vanished, only to rise again, after a lapse of years, on the

mens of bootery which may be seen about our streets to-day we are risking a violent quarrel with a nation which has shown itself quick to take offence.

TO the masculine eye this new or re-born fashion manifests itself in a bewildering variety of shapes.

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stepping-stones of their dead selves to uglier things.

For it cannot reasonably be denied that, in at least sixty per cent. of cases, they are ugly. Indeed, it seems to me that by describing as "Russian" the extraordinary speci-

There are some who, evidently dreading varicose veins, wear boots so large and roomy that they might serve as funnels to a Channel steamer. Others have the brazen nerve to venture forth in what at first sight appear to be a couple of withered

concertinas. Yet another school of thought affects boots which would not disgrace the legs of a film cowboy, but which look slightly out of place upon those of Mrs. Pilbury-Piubury, of Golders Green.

NOR, so far as I can gather, are there any restrictions as to colour. I who speak have seen boots whose glittering lustre shamed the sun and dazzled the beholder; boots obviously selected to match the gown, the complexion or the temperament of their owner; brown boots, grey boots, boots yellow and mauve and green. It will not be long, I hope, before we have boots striped in red, white and blue, or chequered after the fashion of ar-morial bearings.

I would not have it thought that I am inveighing against this innocent craze, for such is not the case. These are mournful times, and any little contribution to the gaiety of nations will be thankfully received. To be absolutely candid, my observations on the subject are dictated not so much by disapproval as by envy, inasmuch as from my earliest years I have longed to wear cowboy boots myself, though I have abandoned all hope of ever having an opportunity to do so.

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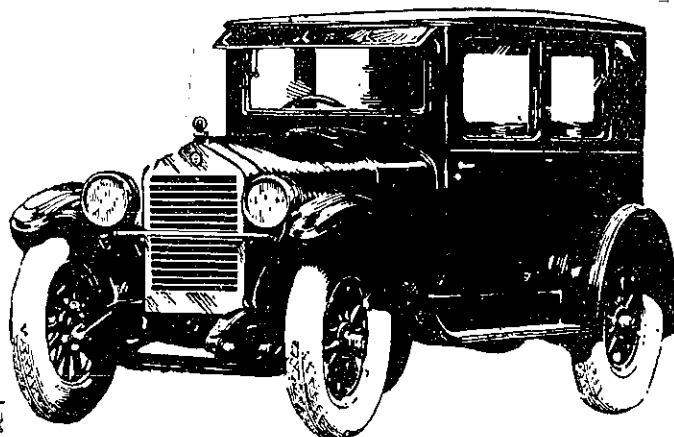
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