

"Mr. Deeds Goes to Town"



Clark Gable with no undershirt and Claudette Colbert

The problems men face fashion-wise this season are about the same as those Gary Cooper faced as Mr. Deeds in 1936.

Like Deeds, men suddenly have a wealth of resources, in his case money, in men's cases fashion choices.

Historically the men of the movies had little choice as to what to wear on and off the set. But none the less their influence on fashion was important.

Clark Gable undid the undershirt industry in 1934 when he took off his dress shirt and wasn't wearing an undershirt in one scene.

There are stories that after the film opened the undershirt industry called Hollywood moviemakers daily asking them what they could do about the wrong that had been dealt them.

It wasn't until Marlon Brando came on the scene in the 50s that the industry was happy. In "Streetcar Named Desire", "On the Waterfront" and "The Wild One" Brando re-established undershirts in America.

Brando also helped to establish, along with actors like James Dean, the wearing of blue jeans by other than cowboys.

There is no dispute about the influences "The Great Gatsby" has already had on men's fashion.

In the movie, all the men dress impeccably and manage to stay cool even in the most unbelievable settings—like Long Island in August.

Pink linen suits and elegant white ones, too appear as stylish as anything seen recently in the flicks.

When those clothes were in fashion for real people like Rudolph Valentino, John Barrymore, Warner Baxter and John Gilbert were keeping them in fashion.

Later Douglas Fairbanks, dashing Errol Flynn, Leslie Howard and Tyrone Power helped fashion trends of their own.

Power was partial to ascots, and so was Howard. Laurel and Hardy wore bowlers and Eddie Cantor almost always wore a bow tie. If they weren't trend-setters themselves, at least they reflected the fashion of the times.

Once considered the arbiter of



Ever elegant Adolphe Menjou



Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur in 'Deeds'

good taste in Hollywood, something of a misnomer, was elegant Adolphe Menjou. He was always impeccable and slightly impertinent.

Clark Gable, John Payne and Gregory Peck all wore wide-lapelled plaid suits for their own flashy look.

But Fred Astaire was hailed as one of the fashion leaders because he, not nearly as handsome a man as Gable or Joel McCrea (another plaid suit devotee), seemed to be able to pull off some of the hand-somest fashion looks because he had "manly grace."



Dapper Fred Astaire and 'Gay Divorcee' Ginger Rogers