

**Ethics and Identity:  
Dressing for the Simple Life in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century**



Residents at the Purleigh Colony in Essex in the 1890s



Leo Tolstoy in Russian peasant dress



Ernest Howard Crosby's 'Grasmere' bookplate

"Vegetarians are much exercised just now over the leather question" - *Daily Paper*

"My boy", - dad looked up from his last -  
"What makes you seem so sad,  
When everybody round you is  
So smiling and so glad?  
You look as though your inner soul  
Was fainting at its roots  
"Father, you've hit the nail", I said,  
"It's *Vegetarian boots!*"

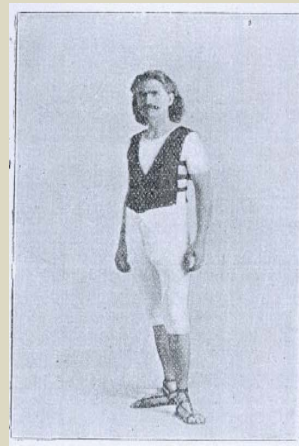
"I never, never, eat a chop,  
Or pick a mutton bone;  
I will not cause a pig to squeak,  
Or the great ox to groan.  
My cult, which lives on fruit and bread,  
Now rapidly recruits;  
But what's the use, unless we walk  
In *Vegetarian boots?*"

"Leather is made from hide, we're told  
And hide but covers meat;  
So if we still wear leather shoes  
What matters what we eat?  
The rubber soles are apt to draw,  
And cause untimely shoots;  
O, dad, wherever can I get  
Some *Vegetarian boots?*"

"Ahem, my lad", my father said,  
"Although the food I take  
Is not like yours, and for my views  
I'll boldly face the *steak*;  
Take comfort in your simple soul  
Content with nuts and fruits;  
For I a secret will impart  
Re "*Vegetarian boots*".

"Time was when all went leather shod,  
But now, with 'patent' shoes,  
We *eat* the leather - call it 'beef' -  
Or anything we choose.  
Brown paper now is what I use  
*That isn't made from brutes*,  
So *everyone who buys my goods*  
*Wears Vegetarian boots*".

'Vegetarian Boots: the Confession of a Professional Snob' *The Vegetarian* 8:5 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1895 p. 58.



William MacDonald in his country outfit and 'Hygienic Cycling and Pedestrian Costume'