

The Real Influence of the Stage On Fashions

LADY DUFF-GORDON, the famous "Lucile" of London, and foremost creator of fashions in the world, writes each week the fashion article for this newspaper, presenting all that is newest and best in styles for well-dressed women.

Lady Duff-Gordon's Paris establishment brings her into close touch with that centre of fashion.

By Lady Duff-Gordon.

THE real influence of the stage on fashions ought to be well understood if a woman is not to make the mistake of copying too slavishly for house and street the charming creations that often appear there.

The stage is a splendid place to study modes. Actresses, as a rule, know how to dress. But what must be considered is that gowns for the stage ought to be built to fit the peculiar situations developed in the play. Discerning actresses know this, because it is one of the important points of producing plays that may determine success or failure. A dress which does not harmonize with the spirit of the play may wreck the whole play.

There is a good reason for this. The stage's business is to present the illusion of life. That is what scene painters, lighting experts, stage directors, playwright, manager and actors are continually striving for. In proportion, usually, as they succeed does the play succeed.

All stage folk know that many a time a note of insincerity, either in lines or in gesture, in speaking or in atmosphere, has killed an immensely promising play on the instant.

Having all this in mind, we begin to see how important it is to dress up to the play. And we begin to see why the stage dress so created cannot be thoughtlessly transplanted into any environment.

Take, for instance, that curiously interesting production "My Lady's Dress," in which a series of tableaux centre about the making of one gown. If that gown did not completely and subtly harmonize with every one of the situations what dangers the play would run! The audience has to feel that all they see would naturally cluster around just that dress and no other. If the gown did not harmonize, if it constantly struck a jarring note, what would become of that important factor—the illusion of reality?

So also of that ambitious moving picture film which depends for conviction upon a woman wearing naturally a million dollars' worth of jewels. Such a situation demands a specially constructed dress for it.

Would Fritzi Scheff be as convincing in her scenes, clever as she is, if she did not pick out the gowns she wears to harmonize with those scenes?

And this being so, we see why there should not be too close imitation of them off the footlights. A gown which harmonizes perfectly with the lighting, the surroundings, the concentration of life in a play may, and probably will, be too intense for wear outside its own atmosphere. Or, again, it may be too subdued. And it is as important to any woman to harmonize with her own sur-

roundings and mental and physical atmosphere, as it is for the actress to harmonize with hers. We all seek success and happiness, and—"all the world's a stage."

From this little sermon let me turn to a description of some of the newest winter dresses.

Very costly warm and light of weight are the newest tweeds and velour cloth and duvetyn, and it frequently happens, moreover, that a fur coat collar and a deep skirt bordering of the same skunk or fox will still further increase the decorative and protective effect of the costume.

So you see how well such a costume would bear transportation to the land of snow and sunshine.

A rather bold black and white check, with a suggestion—nothing more—of orange brightening some of the inner lines of black, is an ideal fabric, with just the collar and skirt trimming of skunk, and no other trimming at all save the big, shaded bone buttons on coat and skirt and the still bigger ones which figure on and fasten the belt. Or then, again, another new and smartly simple tailor suit, well adapted to leading "a double life," is in orange duvetyn, the coat fastening at the neck with

a close fitting band of seal musquash, and being belted in, Russian fashion, at the waist, while the long basque, which wraps over and curves upward in front, is in its turn broadly bordered with the soft, dark fur. The skirt dispenses with trimming altogether, but it is cut to perfection; slit up the side and underlined for some six or seven inches with seal brown satin. The same model, copied in emerald green broche duvetyn, trimmed and lined with brown fur and satin, is also exceedingly smart and serviceable.

Miss Mary Boland in the "Lucile" Gown That Has the Title Role in "My Lady's Dress," and Which Was Designed Especially to Fit the Situations of That Curious Play.



Fritzi Scheff in a Dress Suit for a Play Situation. "Lucile" Model.



Lady Duff-Gordon Describes to Just What Extent Good Taste Permits the Transplanting of Footlight Dresses to the House and Street



A New "Lucile" Winter Model, in Which Stage Effects Have Been Toned Down for Street Wear.

Why We Think of Cats, the Moon and Women Together.

By Prof. J. C. Barbier
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IN the very ancient and widespread feeling that women, cats and the moon are linked together by certain subtle likenesses we have one of the most curious phenomena of the human mind. The moon is invariably apostrophized as "she." Invariably we associate cats with a mistress and not with a master, and woman throughout the ages has been called either "a full moon in loveliness" by one side or a "cat" by the other.

We never associate the sun with the feminine, nor do we think of dogs as a type as feminine, and when a man is compared with either the moon or cats it gives us a distinct shock.

We never picture a witch flying into the sun with a dog on her shoulder, but the symbol of the old lady on the broomstick with a black cat on her shoulder and flying across the moon is one that exists in all countries.

In Subasta, in ancient Egypt, where religion was the most highly specialized in the world, cats were directly represented as being a part of a trinity composed of the moon, women and themselves. Even Isis, the wife of the great god Osiris, was sometimes thus represented. Indeed, as far back as we can go

in Egypt the cat symbolized the moon, and in that significance its body always bore the head of a woman.

Perhaps there were some natural reasons for this association—undoubtedly there must have been—which were more plain to our ancient forefathers than to us. The curious influence of the moon upon the majority of people, which tends to stimulate suggestibility, hysteria and other subconscious phenomena, more in women than in men, is probably one reason. The effect of the moon upon cats, which love to prowl under its rays in the night, and the similarity of its waxing and waning with the dilation and contracting of a cat's eyes is, no doubt, also one of the reasons at the bottom of this association. The feline love of comfort and luxury and its general attitude of tolerating more than welcoming demonstrations of affection is in itself an attitude which women during the long ages of their repression by man intensified for their own protection. There is little doubt that the trait was noticed by the observers throughout the world who make superstitions.

Superstition is usually, by the way, only true psychology with the wrong dress. There is a basis of truth at the bottom of all of it. The mind of man cannot create anything out of nothing. He must have

the basis of the actual to work upon. If he twists and disguises his basis it is simply the task of keen minds to strip the husking from the kernel of truth and find out just what it is that gave rise to the superstition.

There is, too, the changeableness of the moon, in which poets have always found an analogy for the shifting of women's moods.

At the beginning there is no doubt that the curious association of the three was complimentary. Diana, the moon goddess, in one of the old Roman poems turns herself into a cat to help the gods in their fight against the Titans. And in all the earliest myths woman, cat and moon are invariably bound together in complimentary fashion.

Later, when through causes of which we know little, the superstitions of all the races degenerated, this complimentary quality was lost, and even with the moon, stress was laid upon the unpleasant similarities. Compliment was turned to insult. Nevertheless, the superstitions, inverted as they were, ran on with full, if not fuller, force.

In the Middle Ages, and after, women were burned at the stake when convicted of the charge that they had conversed with a devil in the shape of a black cat. Cats were connected with all the bale-

ful influences of the moon. In Yucatan the descendants of the Mayas pinched their tails to drive away an eclipse. An emblem of the devil they were flung into the fires in Paris on St. John's night. The mystic seven return again in the Hungarian legend that every black cat turns into a witch at the age of seven. Grimm gives it as a common saying that a cat at twenty turns witch and a witch of a hundred turns cat again.

The exit and entrance of a strange cat were ominous. Shylock speaks of some that go mad if they behold one. Tradition says that the great Napoleon had a marked fear of them, and that Henry III. of France swooned at sight of one.

Four ministers attested the truth of the tale which Captain Burt brought from Scotland in 1730, that the leg of a cat cut off by a man it attacked turned into the leg of an old woman. The apparent woman Lilith, who tempted Adam, was pictured in the sixteenth century with the body of a cat.

In agricultural communities both the moon and cats are consulted about rain and frost.

If the cat scratches its ear it is a true sign of rain, and if it sits with its back to the fire, as the North Carolina mountaineers say, a cold snap is inevitable.

However, the new era of equal suffrage may extricate women from these time-defying superstitions which have so zealously preserved her honorable ancient associations with the moon and cats.

Alice Joyce in a Gown by "Lucile" Designed Especially to Go with \$1,000,000 Worth of Real Jewels.

