The Fashions in 1920

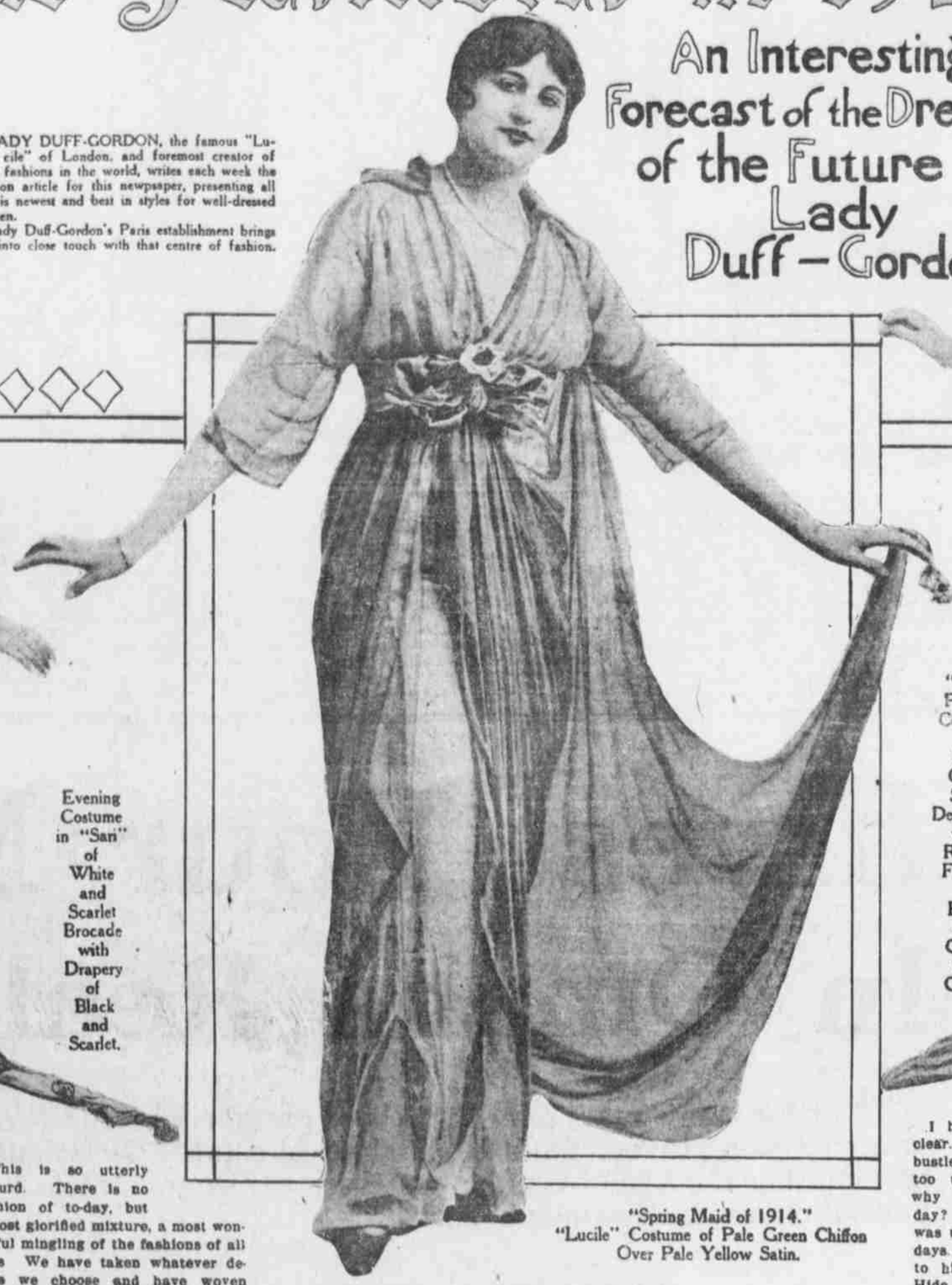
An Interesting Forecast of the Dresses of the Future by Lady Duff-Gordon.

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.

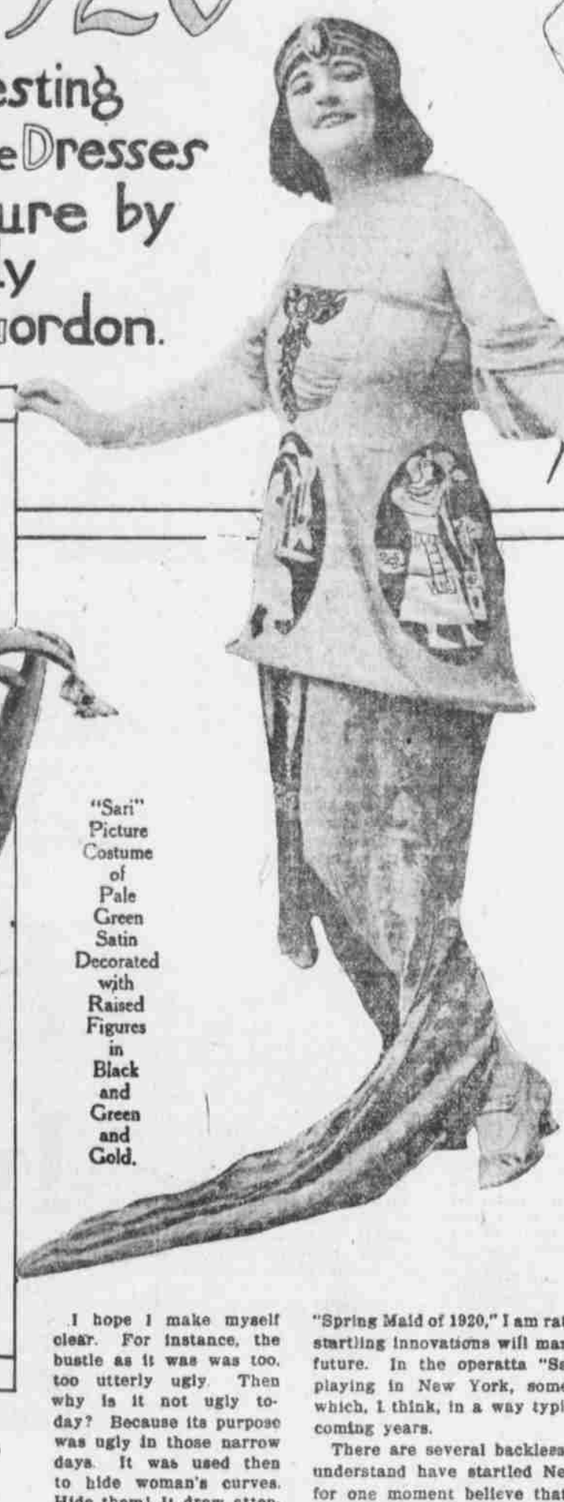
Lady Duff-Gordon's Paris establishment brings her into close touch with that centre of fashion.

The Corner Figure Is a Color Sketch of the New Mannish Skirt Combined with the Extremely Feminine Waist and Headdress.

Evening Costume in "Sari" of White and Scarlet Brocade with Drapery of Black and Scarlet.



"Spring Maid of 1914."
"Lucile" Costume of Pale Green Chiffon Over Pale Yellow Satin.



"Sari" Picture Costume of Pale Green Satin Decorated with Raised Figures in Black and Green and Gold.

This Corner Figure Shows the Mannish Treatment Above the Waist Combined with the Feminine Treatment of the Skirt—the Two Sketches Show the Future Trend of Fashions, Thinks Lady Duff-Gordon.

LOOKING forward is ever more interesting to the young than looking backward. When a human being begins to reminisce it is acknowledged as a sign of age. The human who is ever looking forward, whose eyes are always fixed on something in the future, is not only young, but will remain young just as long as life lasts.

But what has this to do with fashions of the past, present or future? Perhaps not very much, but as I was casting my mind's eye about to see just which interesting subject I should choose to write on this week, these thoughts came to me. I seemed suddenly to realize that we in Paris are at the moment a small body of women, entirely surrounded by "period" fashions, and that among them every period of time is represented. The early Greek, the Etruscan, the Egyptian, the Roman, rub elbows with the Elizabethan, the Medici, the Empire, the Directoire and the early and mid-Victorian. Every age of history, every whimsey of fashion is represented in what we call, for lack of a better term, the "fashion of to-day."

This is so utterly absurd. There is no fashion of to-day, but a most glorified mixture, a most wonderful mingling of the fashions of all ages. We have taken whatever details we choose and have woven them together to please each our own fancy. The results are startling in many instances, but full of a delightful charm in others.

Never, I think, have the little tailored costumes been more quaint, never have they been more wearable. And equally never have what I term "garden party dresses" been so charmingly chic and so universally bewitching. The most attractive of these are those that show the Watteau influence. Watteau certainly understood how to compose his lords and ladies fair, all in a garden.

Had anyone asked me five years ago whether or not the Victorian ages, early, mid and late, held anything of beauty in fashion, I should have raised horrified hands and cried, "No, no!" But I have changed my mind, and why should I not? Am I not of the feminine persuasion? I find that I am able to discern some rare and beautifying suggestions in these ages, many of which I am able to incorporate in designs of my own. The whole trouble with those so-called ugly ages was that men's minds were ugly, and women's lives were narrow. Therefore their clothes expressed the life and thought about them.

In this age of freedom our clothes express the broadness of our life and thought, as well as its beauty and grace. Narrowness, in everything but skirts, is ugly! It is this great change in our mental outlook that makes it possible for us to see that there was some beauty, after all, in what we have been brought up to consider the ugliest of all ages.

I hope I make myself clear. For instance, the bustle as it was was too, too utterly ugly. Then why is it not ugly to-day? Because its purpose was ugly in those narrow days. It was used then to hide woman's curves. Hide them! It drew attention to them!

To-day we use the bustle as an addition to the costume, we use a slight extension in order to make the drapery fall more gracefully. In some designs this extension is in the back, in others in the front, and still others have it on their side. Thus, you see, we are able to take supposedly ugly things and make of them things of beauty.

And this brings me back to the beginning of my story, to my slight dissertation on looking backward and gazing forward. Even now, when we are using the past to help the present, we are already casting long looks forward. What will the gowns of the future be? With the present to build on, what will the gowns, for instance, of 1920 be?

While I am inclined to think that my "Spring Maid of 1914" will harmonize delightfully with the "Spring Maid of 1920," I am rather sure that many startling innovations will mark the gowns of the future. In the operatta "Sari," which is now playing in New York, some gowns are worn which, I think, in a way typify the spirit of the coming years.

There are several backless costumes, which I understand have startled New York. I do not for one moment believe that the mondaines of New York and Paris will unqualifiedly adopt gowns of this nature, but I do believe that logically the fronts of evening gowns will be higher and the backs lower. I am sending you a photograph of one of these gowns, because I want you to see (if you have not already seen the opera) what I consider a type of the 1920 costume. The skirt is particularly good. The lines are long and the combinations of color very effective. The backless effect startles, of course, but it is not quite so sensational as it looks. Again, it all depends on the spirit in which it is worn. From present tokens a gown of this order will express the spirit of 1920, just as the buff and blue expressed the spirit of 1776.

It is in the "Spring Maid of 1920" that I think "Sari" most successfully points to the future. This costume is in Spring colors, green and yellow. The touches of black in the designs are necessary and not unspringlike, after all, for Spring flowers come from the black earth.

Science Fixes the Actual Date of Death of Our Shrinking Sun

By Rev. Abbe T. Moreux,
Director of the Observatory of Bourges.

THE sun is a mass of blazing heat gases 1,300,000 times larger than the earth. Its temperature varies between 8,000 and 12,000 degrees. However vast its heat may be, it can be no exception to the common law of matter. Every day it loses some of its heat and is gradually growing colder. A moment will come inevitably when its radiation will grow weaker and after that will cease altogether. That will mean death for us in cold and darkness.

There is nothing surprising in this deduction. Millions of extinct suns which were once like our luminary are known to exist in the heavens. Every star is born and lives to die. The problem is to fix the date of its extinction.

In my opinion, the American astronomer who has threatened us with death in five million years has added nothing new to this subject, which scientists have discussed with good arguments for some fifty years.

The first question we must ask is, where did the sun obtain the heat with which it maintains our life in a manner so constant? Without doubt we can observe in the sun certain variations of heat. Our Winters and our Summers are not exactly alike, but these variations are comparatively small. They are subject to a periodic flux, which brings back nearly the same condition after a certain lapse of time. The climate of the earth has not changed within historic times. Before long we shall experience exceptionally severe Winters and torrid Summers. What colossal source of power keeps up the sun in this manner? With what mysterious substances in this enormous furnace is fed?

The physicists Mayer and Helmholtz have given the best answer to this question. The sun was originally much larger than it is at present. In obedience to the laws of attraction gaseous masses contract and become smaller. The laws of physics teach us that under these conditions a gas may recover the heat which radiation causes it to lose and which is distributed in surrounding space. Calculations show that a contraction of 25 inches a year in the diameter of the sun would cause its heat to remain constant for thousands of years. The sun has a diameter of 926,964 miles. Even supposing the diminution mentioned occurred, no instrument could reveal the change in its diameter in a period of ten centuries.

Thus, according to the mechanical theory of heat, astronomers who may live in the year 12000 of our era will be able to know that the sun's diameter has diminished about five miles since the beginning of telescopic observation.

In seven million years the sun will still radiate the same quantity of heat, but its disk will appear to man one-fourth of its present size. From that moment nothing will be able to check the loss of heat which it will undergo through radiation. The average temperature of the earth will show the effect. In our northern countries vegetation will lose a large part of its vitality. The crops will no longer ripen, and the people will press toward the equatorial region. A few million years after that all earthly life will become impossible. The sun will be covered with dark spots, which will gradually grow larger and larger.

When the Sun Is Dead. An Interesting Picture of a Scene on Frozen Earth by a French Artist.

In a few tens of millions of years after that, the sun will have lost its place among the light-giving bodies of the heavens. It will become a black and invisible body, a dangerous derelict to the millions of stars moving through space, but it will still continue its course through space.

From these facts and arguments we may conclude that humanity will still exist for ten million years, or perhaps fifteen million at the utmost. We must, however, remember that accidents may occur to shorten this life. A healthy man may reasonably expect to live to eighty, but an automobile may end his career in an hour or a day. So it is with our earth.

If the earth dies in the fullness of time it will die from cold in, say, ten or fifteen million years from now, but there is a host of other dangers that menace humanity. In the ceaseless journey which the earth makes around the sun at the rate of 90 1-3 miles a second, may it not some day come into collision with the heart of a colossal comet? In such a case humanity may witness a frightful spectacle, a dreadful prelude to universal death. What astronomer can assure us that such a collision will not occur within a few years? Barring such an accident, however, the end of the earth from cold must be regarded as fixed.