OLD DRESS

ELLEN KAUFMAN

The look: Elizabethan, with a dropped hourglass waist, cotton lawn instead of satin, a tight pleated bodice topped with tiers of ruffles, and a full skirt wed to stiffened tulle to give it extra girth. Budded in blue, the ribbon trim is Keats: a flowery band to bind us to the earth at waist and neck and where the ankle meets the atmosphere above “the perfect shoe.”

Fantastic grow the evening gowns: they grew as empires fell. But now the polar caps undress themselves, dropping their white lace slips from virgin spoils of land while our despair is fashioned into one hot thing to wear.