
Fashionable Life

Eastman Mary Henderson

Title: Fashionable Life

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FASHIONABLE LIFE.

BY

MARY H. EASTMAN.

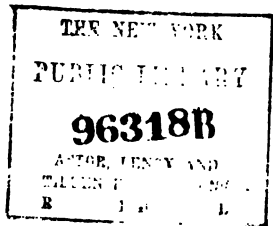


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TO
VIRGINIA,
MY DEAR AND ONLY DAUGHTER,
I DEDICATE
This Volume;
IN WHICH
I HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO DESCRIBE THE OPERA,
THE BALL-ROOM, THE MATINÉE.
THESE, THE HIGHWAYS OF FASHIONABLE LIFE,
ARE OPEN, IN OUR COUNTRY, TO THE MULTITUDE.
I HAVE WANDERED INTO PATHS LESS FREQUENTED,
AND TELL WHAT I HAVE SEEN;
HOPING TO SHOW THE EFFECTS OF A SYSTEM,
IN WHICH PLEASURE IS THE CHIEF AIM,
ON THE HEART AND ON THE DESTINY OF WOMAN.



P R E F A C E .

SILENCE reigns in the streets. How solemn is the repose of the great city. Afar off, by the woods, there is always quiet. The river, the hills, the groves are never noisy; yet they have a voice in the breeze, or, when God calls in the storm. Calmly the city sleeps; tranquilly, after the tumult of the day.

Hushed are the strivings of the people; the carriages of the rich, the footsteps of the poor no longer disturb me. A breeze is passing from south to north; it has raised the curtains, and is fanning the cheeks of my little ones who are at rest.

The moonlight has entered too, and is reposing by my daughter. She has forgotten every care, though, a few hours ago, it was a rare trouble to decide on the color of a sash. Her right hand is on her heart. Unconscious, she reclines—the type of woman. On her left hand rests her cheek, and over the pillow flows her brown hair. Her lips are parted; she murmurs in her sleep, for she is weary. She turns, and sighs, and turns again. Yet, on every feature is

written health. Why, then, anxiety? She will sleep and be refreshed, against the birth of "another blue day."

A child of my neighbor's has fallen into a sleep from which the arousing is far distant. The resonance of this morning's funeral bells is still in the air; trembling, I bend over the couches of my darlings. My babe! how gentle is his breathing! how exquisite the native grace of his attitude! How lovely his white and rounded limbs!

Alas! for the mother who is weeping, now, at this midnight hour. She looks not for the morning; the grave encloses her lost one. Yet the morning will come.

I have loosed my bracelet from my arm; it lays on the table, its clasp of gold flashing in the gas-light. The hair of the little maiden who is sleeping there, forms its band, and, as I touch a spring, there is, bound with a lock of my own, a golden tress, brighter, it would seem, that the head it once adorned is dust. Yet, "it is well with the child!" So, may the morning come to this desolate mother, who has bent her o'er the dead. Time will teach her to say, It is well.

Standing on the hill of life, for a moment, I turn and look back. I see moving among the shadows of the past, a fair infant. She is playfully commencing the ascent. She sighs, tired with her first

efforts; an angel approaches with wings stretched upward, and bears her to that home, "whither the spirit was to go."

But she who has come a little way—who is still ascending—how will it be with her? Oh! as I look upon her now—the hand on the heart—is it the solemn midnight hour that affrights me with forebodings? Would I that an angel's touch arrested *her* way? No! no! Merciful God! let her pass on! her path is not yet toilsome. She treads lightly in her morning hours. The dew of heaven is on her brow, as she gathers the lilies of the field. Thou hast, as yet, permitted no thorn to pierce her tender feet, and for the history of that heart, still throbbing with the faith of childhood—Thou wilt write it! Her future is with Thee! Oh! sustain her, in the battle of life, from childhood to youth—and onwards!