
Fashion and Its Votaries

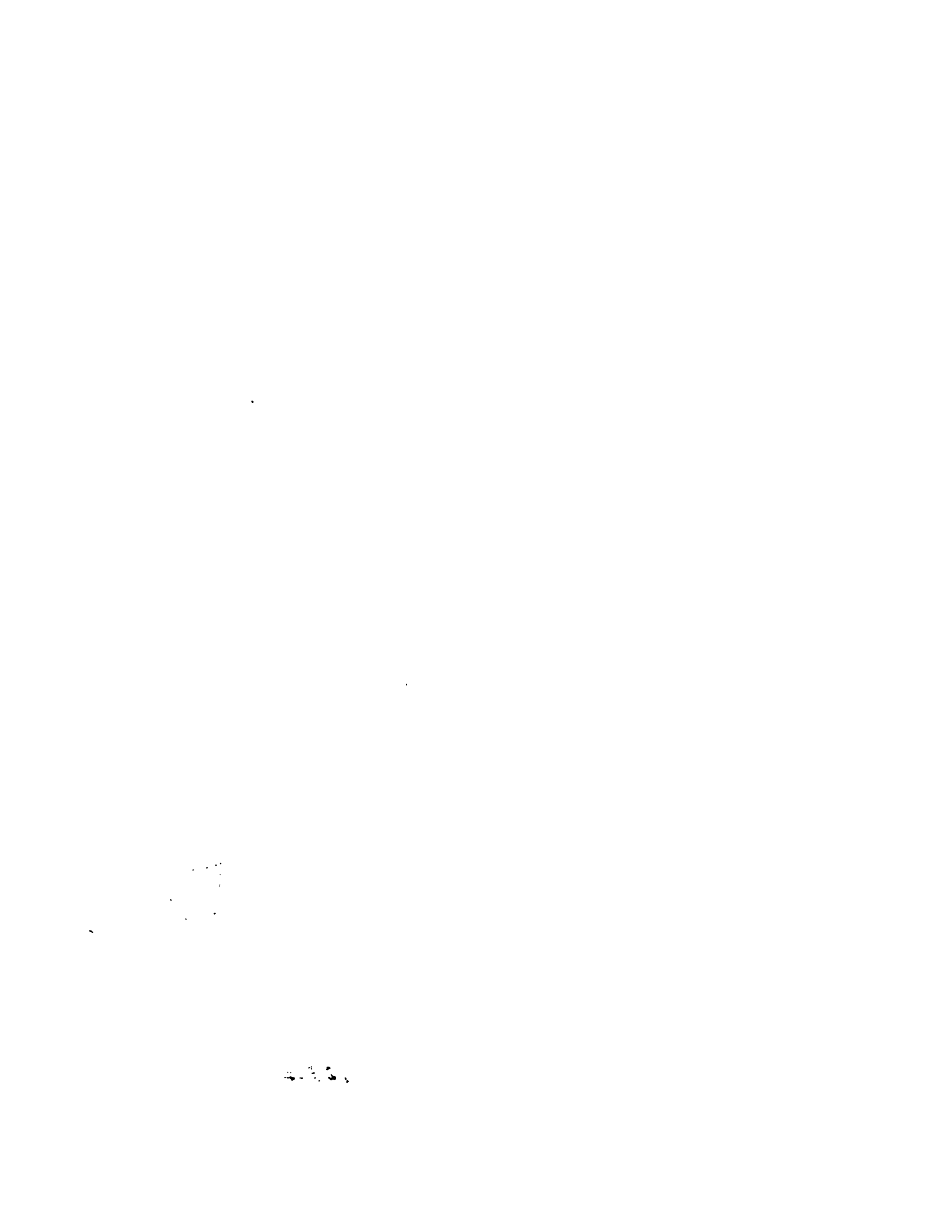
Maberly Catherine Charlotte

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FASHION

AND ITS VOTARIES.

BY

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OF THE MEDICI," ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1848.

1214.

F A S H I O N.

CHAPTER I.

GLYNDON COTTAGE was situated in one of the prettiest and most romantic parts of a southern county of England. It was close to the village of the same name, but shut out from its view by the little well-wooded enclosure in the midst of which it stood. It had in everything appertaining to it a peculiarly English air; it was large enough for comfort—small enough for economy, and was sufficiently ornamented to show that independence, if not affluence,

reigned within its walls. The house was low, but extended over a considerable surface of ground; the upper windows were shaded by a broad projecting roof; the lower ones opened to the ground beneath a spacious verandah, round the pillars of which were twined many rare and beautiful creepers, with their large flowers and graceful tendrils meeting overhead, and forming a succession of bowers. The cottage stood upon a slight elevation, in the middle of a beautiful pleasure ground, not large enough to aspire to the dignity of belonging to a park, but sufficiently extensive to escape the appearance of the narrow strip of ground generally allotted to a cottage. This lawn or pleasure ground was, near the house, broken by flower-beds and evergreens, mingled here and there with a picturesque thorn or oak, round which the ivy clung; and at a distance the smooth greensward lost itself softly and naturally beneath the

shade of the large and spreading trees which concealed the boundary of the grounds. It was a beautiful garden, perfectly beautiful in its own peculiar style, neither Italian, nor French, nor Dutch, but simply and purely English, rural, fragrant, fresh, and arranged with the most scrupulous neatness and good taste. There were no grottoes, no Chinese bridges, no imitation rocks nor cascades; the little stream that crossed the lower part of the lawn ran in its natural course, and rippled and bounded over its own stones and pebbles without being caught in its joyous way, and forced to pause until it had formed a stagnant pool, choked up by water lilies. No, there it ran merrily along, drinking in, as it were, the fragrance wafted from around, and kissing the sunbeam that rested so lovingly on its breast, until the eye, as it followed its wandering course, could trace it no longer, where it reached the heavy shadow of the

dark protecting trees. A happy, life-like look did that little stream impart, and everything around the cottage seemed happy and well-cared for, even to the rolled and polished carriage road, looking like a band of smooth satinwood as it wound through the finest of the scattered trees, and ended in a broad sweep before the cottage door. As you approached that door, the scene opened a little to the left, some large meadows, evidently belonging to the cottage, gleamed through the branches of the old oak trees; and the farm buildings, intended not to be seen, just discovered themselves enough to add the surpassing delight of home-feeling to the spot. Beyond the trees which skirted the ground at the back of the house rose the spire of the old village church; and the striking of the clock which glistened upon its side in all the modern splendour of large golden figures, might be distinctly heard by the inmates of Glyndon Cottage, reminding

them, if they had need of the awakening summons, that even in the earthly paradise in which they dwelt, they must watch and pray, and remember that their days, however happy, were numbered.

The proprietors of Glyndon Cottage were Mr. and Mrs. Conway. Mr. Conway was the last descendant of an ancient family, the members of which had always deemed it necessary to vie with the extravagance they saw practised by others, in order to maintain their pre-eminence in the world of fashion. Little by little, their large fortune had dwindled down to a comparatively small one; and as in the estimation of the giddy world poverty is a sin, the family had gradually sunk from its former high estate. Unfortunately for Mr. Conway, the tastes and habits of his ancestors had never altered with their circumstances, and any chance there might have been of saving some part of the property from the general wreck was

totally lost; and Mr. Conway, upon the death of his father, found himself penniless, with the exception of two hundred a year, which had been so secured that it could not be swept away with the rest. Fortunately for Mr. Conway, nature had not been niggardly to him of her gifts; and just as his situation appeared desperate, his very handsome person attracted the attention of a young lady possessed of a considerable fortune, and who afterwards became his wife. The accident which led to a meeting productive of such happy results was one of every-day occurrence. Mr. Conway having tried every rational and irrational device for rendering his two hundred a year the nucleus of a grand fortune, had just reconciled himself to the idea of leaving England for ever, and establishing himself in a mercantile situation in India, when one day, during his conference with a confidential friend, his banker in the city, a bevy of fair

damsels entered the room. They were the daughters and niece of the banker, the Misses White and Miss Jones. An introduction naturally took place; and when, after some little time, the acquaintance of Mr. Conway with these ladies had ripened into an intimacy, he so repeatedly heard the vivid expressions of regret, that "such an aristocratic looking being should go to die in India," that he began to perceive it was a sacrifice he was no longer called upon to make. In process of time, Miss Jones became Mrs. Conway, bestowing with her hand a fortune of three thousand a year, which to her husband appeared riches beyond his most golden dreams. Mrs. Conway, whose greatest ambition was to escape from her city connexions, and make what she called a "genteel marriage," insisted upon the whole of her fortune being settled upon her husband, and nothing could exceed the promised harmony of their