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THE

MOTHERS OF ENGLAND

THEIR

INFLUENCE & RESPONSIBILITY.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF THE "WOMEN OF ENGLAND."

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Kopernik

prof. Antti Paasilta

P R E F A C E.

IN offering to the public the last of a series of works on the subject of female duty, I feel that to confess their deficiencies would not be to supply them; and therefore I would prefer soliciting the attention of the reader to this fact—that they have not been written under the idea of presenting an entire summary of the life and character of Woman, in the situation of Daughter, Wife, and Mother; nor, consequently, under that of offering a substitute for any of those standard and excellent works on the same subject which adorn our libraries; but rather with the hope of throwing out a few hints and observations relative to the

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present state of English society—the tendency of modern education—and the peculiar social and domestic requirements of the country and the times in which we live.

Thus I have purposely avoided entering upon many important points of duty, and particularly those of a strictly religious nature, because I knew that the reader could find them more clearly and more ably treated elsewhere; and because I felt it to be more within the compass of my own qualifications, to endeavour to assist and encourage the inexperienced but well-meaning, than to instruct the ignorant, or to convert the irreligious.

Looking seriously at those faults which are generally allowed, and at those follies which are sanctioned by society, I have been compelled occasionally to speak in strong language of certain peculiarities in the present aspect of social and domestic life; and especially of some of the habits and prejudices of my own sex. Had such peculiarities been less popular, or less generally indulged; had they, in short, been regarded as objectionable,

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rather than otherwise, there would have been no need for me to have made any of them the subject of a book ; but the very fact of the opinion of society, and of many excellent persons, being in favour of that which is really opposed to the true interests of mankind, renders it the more necessary for those who think differently to speak what they believe to be the truth, and to speak it without palliation or reserve.

If, in the performance of this somewhat stern duty, I may at times have appeared unjust, or unsisterly to the class of readers whose attention I have been anxious to engage, they will surely have been able to perceive that it was from no want of sympathy with the weakness, the trials, and the temptations to which woman is peculiarly liable ; but rather, since we can least bear a fault in that which we most admire, from an extreme solicitude that woman should fill, with advantage to others and enjoyment to herself, that high place in the creation for which I believe her character to have been designed.

