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THE COQUETTE

Hannah Webster Foster

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HANNAH WEBSTER FOSTER



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TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

Health, placid serenity, and every domestic pleasure are the lot of my friend; while I, who once possessed the means of each, and the capacity of tasting them, have been tossed upon the waves of folly, till I am shipwrecked on the shoals of despair.

O my friend, I am undone. I am slighted, rejected, by the man who once sought my hand, by the man who still retains my heart. And what adds an insupportable poignancy to the reflection is self-condemnation. From this inward torture where shall I flee? Where shall I seek that happiness which I have madly trifled away?

The enclosed letters¹ will show you whence this tumult of soul arises. But I blame not Mr. Boyer. He has acted nobly. I approve his conduct, though it operates my ruin.

He is worthy of his intended bride, and she is—what I am not—worthy of him. Peace and joy be their portion both here and hereafter. But what are now my prospects? What are to be the future enjoyments of my life?

O that I had not written to Mr. Boyer! By confessing my faults, and by avowing my partiality to him, I have given him the power of triumphing in my distress; of returning to my tortured heart all the pangs of slighted love. And what have I now to console me? My bloom is decreasing, my health is sensibly impaired. Those talents, with the possession of which I have been flattered, will be of little avail when unsupported by respectability of character. My mamma, who knows too well the distraction of my mind, endeavors to soothe and compose me on Christian principles; but they have not their desired effect. I dare not converse freely with her on the subject of my present uneasiness, lest I should distress her. I am therefore obliged to conceal my disquietude, and appear as cheerful as possible in her company, though my heart is ready to burst with grief. O that you were near me, as formerly, to share and alleviate my cares!. To have some friend in whom I could repose confidence, and with whom I could freely converse and advise on this occasion, would be an unspeakable comfort. Such a one, next to yourself, I think Julia Granby to be. With your leave and consent, I should esteem it a special favor if she would come and spend a few months with me. My mamma joins in this request. I would write to her on the subject, but cannot compose myself at present. Will you prefer my petition for me?

If I have not forfeited your friendship, my dear Mrs. Sumner, write to me, and pour its healing balm into the wounded mind of your

ELIZA WHARTON.

¹ See the two preceding letters.

