
Commonplace Sinners, by the Author of 'my Heart and I'.

Huddart Ellinor

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COMMONPLACE SINNERS



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A NOVEL

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MY HEART AND I'

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

London

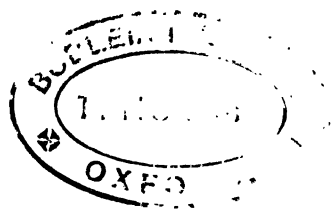
REMINGTON & CO., PUBLISHERS

HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1885

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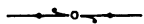
' Shepheard, what's Love, I pray thee tell ?

FAUSTUS

' It is that fountain and that well
Where pleasure and repentance dwell :
It is perhaps that sauncing bell
That toules all into heaven or hell—
And this is Love, as I heard tell.'

SYDNEY.

COMMONPLACE SINNERS



CHAPTER I

AN October day towards its close—the sun has set and left a streak of lurid crimson in the west. This streak is growing thinner and dimmer, fading into mere light, dwindling to a line. The rest of the sky is dark. As the sunset colours vanish, so the firelight in the drawing-room of Down End grows ever fainter and fainter. The woman-figure

seated on the fender-stool before it becomes more indistinct—the room darkens.

It is a slight, small figure that poses in this meditative attitude. Upon the floor, near at hand, a book lies on its back wide open. Its reader has exhausted her interest therein. She finds the ending of the tale in the dying fire, perhaps. How dark it grows! And with the darkness her reverie deepens, or she would hear the door open, would hear a step cross the room—pause by her.

‘My darling!’

Ah, it is so the tale ends—the sweet, sweet tale!—and a merry ending forsooth! And the hand steals round her neck undauntedly, and the face she saw but now in the burnt-out fire bends down to hers.

‘Pardon — a thousand pardons, Mrs Standish!’

A thousand agonies, a thousand hopes all dying—dying with the dying firelight—dying each in agony unshriven.

‘I—I—made a mistake!’

She has risen, and is laughing at him—oh, so merrily! It is like a marriage chime of gayest peal when the church bells are in tune. As she laughs the servant enters with the lamp, and following the bearer of the light, a young girl dressed in white, with flushed cheeks and blue eyes emotionally bright.

‘Mamma, I have been looking for you,’ she says shyly.

‘And you are both dressed!’ exclaims Mrs Standish. ‘I must make haste. I