

HOPES AND FEARS;

OR,

SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF A SPINSTER.

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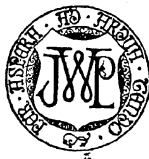
OR,

SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF A SPINSTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE,'
'HEARTSEASE,' ETC.

This is the calm of the autumnal eve.

THE BAPTISTERY.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

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HOPES AND FEARS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

Who ought to go then and who ought to stay?
Where do you draw an obvious border line?—

Cecil and Mary.



MONG the numerous steeples counted from the waters of the Thames, in the heart of the City, and grudged by modern economy as cumberers of the soil of Mammon, may be remarked an abortive little dingy cupola, surmounting two large round eyes which have evidently stared over the adjacent roofs ever since the Fire that began at Pie Corner and ended in Pudding Lane.

Strange that the like should have been esteemed the highest work of architecture, and yet Honora Charlecote well remembered the days when St. Wulstan's was her boast, so large, so clean, so light, so Grecian, so far surpassing damp old Hiltonbury Church. That was at an age when her enthusiasm found indiscriminate food in whatever had a hold upon her affections, the nearer her heart being of course the more admirable in itself, and it would be difficult to say which she loved the most ardently, her city home in Woolstone-lane, or Hiltonbury Holt, the old family seat, where her father was a welcome guest whenever his constitution re-