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SHARING HER CRIME.

CHAPTER I.

THE PLOTTERS.

" 'Tis a woman hard of feature,
 Old, and void of all good nature.
 'Tis an ugly, envious shrew,
 Railing forever at me and you."—POPE.



T was Christmas Eve. All day long crowds of gayly dressed people had walked the streets, basking in the bright wintry sunshine. Sleigh after sleigh went dashing past, with merrily jingling bells, freighted with rosy cheeks, and bright eyes, and youthful faces, all aglow with happiness.

But the sun must set on Christmas Eve, as on all other days; and redly, threateningly, angrily, he sank down in the far west. Dark, sullen clouds came rolling ominously over the heavens; the wind blew piercingly cold, accompanied with a thin, drizzling rain that froze ere it fell.

Gradually the streets were deserted as the storm in-