

boudoir of a bijou house at St. John's Wood, a beautiful woman, attired in a rich dressing-gown, was lying on a sofa in an attitude of listless weariness. Flowers were about her everywhere, the air was laden with their rich perfume, a little bird in a gilded cage trilled a sweet melodious strain, a pet spaniel with wistful melancholy eyes lay at her feet looking at her with almost human affection. Miriam Cheyne needed none of these things. She was weary, weary, almost sick unto death of her way of life. A pile of unopened letters and a few newspapers lay on the table near her, and though the latter contained glowing eulogiums on her performance of the previous evening, they were of no more value than waste paper in her eyes. Miriam Cheyne was a dissatisfied, miserable woman. Of what was she thinking as she lay there, with her white arms folded above her golden head? what tender thought had softened her proud face, and filled the haughty eyes with such a lovely light? She was thinking of a leafy lane among towering hills, of a still grey winter's afternoon, of two figures walking side by side within sight of Rydal Mere. She saw a man's grave, earnest, thoughtful face; she heard his voice say: