

lay the disagreeable part of Anna Chichester's character, she could not be contented with carrying out her own ideas of right. She wanted to force everybody else to think and do exactly the same as she did. The rapidly approaching shades of evening, which threatened to obscure the outer landscape, had made the inside of the house look still more gloomy. The servants had lighted the lamps in the hall and passages, but Lady Chichester had refused to let them illuminate the drawing-room in which she sat, and the vast apartment was full of fitful shadows. The huge log of wood that lay smouldering on the hearth, and threw up a flickering flame every now and then, made the subjects of the paintings that hung on the walls, and the statuary that stood in the corners look almost ghostly. But Lady Chichester had no fear of ghosts, unless they were the ghosts of the past, and was thinking only of herself and her ailments, as she cowered on a sofa close to the fire, and wondered what could be the matter with her that she felt so ill. She was a slight, frail-looking woman of about forty, round whose attenuated figure a white woolen shawl was wrapt so closely that hardly anything was to be seen of her but her face. She had been very pretty in her girlish days—one of those fairy-like, ethereal creatures that strong, vigorous men delight in, for their very contrast to themselves—but all the beauty was gone now, and only the fragility remained. Her hair had become scanty and was thickly streaked with grey; her large blue eyes gazed at you with a shrinking, scared expression that betrayed she had no confidence in herself or in her