

WALTER HARLEY'S CONQUEST.

CHAPTER I.

WALTER AND LINA.

IT was a cold, cheerless afternoon in the latter part of December, and the cosy fireside seemed far more inviting than any out-door pleasures. So at least Walter Harley seemed to think, as drawing up a large arm chair to the library fire he threw himself in it, and was soon deeply absorbed in a new story book—a Christmas gift. The silvery-toned bell of the little timepiece on the mantel chimed out the hour of three. Quickly its hands slipped round, and four rang out through the room. Still Walter read on. Then dusky shadows began to gather in the corners of the room, and the firelight, flashing fitfully, threw a ruddy glow over the crimson carpet, lit up the tall, dark bookcases, with their rows of well-bound books, gleamed on bust and statuette, and played hide-and-seek about the curious carving of the arm chairs. But Walter