

not in private life, or he would have been rather an object of compassion. Amy frequently accompanied her to these scenes of pleasure, as it was her father's wish, and it is needless to say, that even though her large fortune and gentle graceful manners procured her much attention, her lovely young stepmother, conscious of her own irresistible attractions, felt no jealousy of her.

One morning the latter was seated in the saloon; Lady Travers, her dear friend, had just taken leave after a short call, and though she had been both as amusing, as satirical on her neighbours as usual, Mrs. Morton seemed in no very good temper. The cause of her displeasure was simply this. She had purchased not long previously a beautiful plume, which she fondly flattered herself was not only unsurpassed, but unequalled. It happened Lady Travers wore one that day almost similar, but of a more delicate tint and glossier texture. This trial was beyond her patience, and she resolved to bestow hers on Hortense, and never rest till she had procured another, no matter what it might cost. Amy sat at a table reading, whilst she amused herself by caressing a hideous little spaniel, curled up on a velvet cushion near her, whose only recommendation was its excessive rarity. Something connected with her stepdaughter had also apparently tended to disturb her equanimity, for she frequently glanced indignantly upon her, and then fondled her ugly pet with renewed ardour. The door opened and her husband entered. She raised her eyes and then dropped them again, without a word of greeting.

"I have a letter for you, Louisa," he exclaimed.

"What do I deserve for my good news?"

"Nothing," she pettishly rejoined, glancing at the superscription and carelessly tossing it aside.

"Tis from that tedious Lady Hamilton, who will persist in constantly writing to me. Her letters contain nothing but sermons, as if I were not capable of directing myself, interspersed with minute details of Helen's cough and Robert's measles."

"I have heard you formerly speak of her as having been a very kind friend to you." Here he inadvertently rested his hand on *Bijou*, who immediately resenting such unprovoked intrusion, sprang up and inflicted a somewhat severe bite upon his arm. Already a little irritated by his wife's disagreeable demeanour, he gave her pet a push that sent him tottering from his throne.

"I am really much obliged to you, Mr. Morton," she angrily said. "I wonder why you cannot allow my poor dog a little quiet. I am sure he does not annoy you much. But you are not the

first to have attacked him to-day," she continued, darting a resentful look at Amy. "Miss Morton has just very politely informed me that he is the most mischievous animal she ever saw."

Her stepdaughter had good cause to say so, for *Bijou* had that morning after elaborate labor, succeeded in tearing into the smallest possible fragments, a beautiful crayon drawing she had just concluded, and to whose completion she had devoted many long hours. She, however, made no remark, and her father, after murmuring something about not doing it intentionally, changed the conversation. After a few minutes he turned to leave the room, but *Bijou*, who had not forgiven or forgotten his former treatment, was in the act of making a treacherous but deadly attack upon his heel. In moving Mr. Morton trod upon him, and he immediately filled the apartment with a succession of yelps and howls actually deafening. His wife's forbearance was not proof against this, and bursting into tears, she passionately exclaimed:

"I see your motive, Mr. Morton! poor *Bijou* is the only creature that loves me, and he has therefore incurred your hatred. Yes, contemned and ill-treated, he resembles his mistress."

"In more respects than one," thought Amy.

The whole scene was unspeakably ludicrous; the childish grief of his wife, the menacing attitude of her pet, who had his small fiery eyes fixed on his adversary, evidently burning yet fearing to make another attack, and who still continued his dismal cries, at intervals interspersed with savage growls. 'Twas too much for Mr. Morton's gravity, and after two or three ineffectual struggles to repress his mirth, he burst into one long hearty peal of laughter. With a look of blank astonishment, his wife raised her head and looked steadily at him. She who had expected he was compassionating her tears and framing some humble apology, which she intended receiving with cold dignity. But recovering from her surprise, she burst forth into a torrent of reproaches against his cruelty, his hard-heartedness. Happily for her husband the servant entered at the moment with Miss Aylmer's card. This stayed the course of her indignation, and after reinstating *Bijou* on his cushion, and bathing her eyes, which certainly bore no great traces of weeping, with rose water from a flask on the stand near her, she prepared to receive her visitor.

Miss Aylmer gracefully glided into the apartment, and saluting them with her usual affection, and honouring Amy with her usual patronizing bow, threw herself on a *fauteuil*. After the first few minutes, Mrs. Morton being in no talkative mood, the conversation soon languished, but this