

for his conscience reproached him with the wrong he had done that gentle girl, he asked her to sing some favorite ballad, to wile away the time. With a heart bounding with joy, she prepared to comply; her father helped her to adjust the instrument. Another moment, and that painful estrangement, so distressing between two beings formed to love each other, would have been removed forever, when the door slowly opened, and Mrs. Morton entered. A single glance told her how matters stood. There was no mistaking the bright, happy expression of Amy's face, the awakened tenderness of her father's, and she saw that she must make a vigorous effort to preserve her sceptre, and prevent its passing back to its original owner. This discovery, however, did not interfere with the plans she had previously formed. It but confirmed her in them. Kindly accosting Amy and her husband, who stood the personification of mute surprise, she threw herself on a sofa. Never had she looked more interesting. There was something more touching in the pallor of her cheek than when it had worn its brightest bloom; and it would have required as great an adept in dissimulation as herself, to have divined the consummate art with which that apparently careless toilet was made. Balls where she had been the queen of the night, had not cost her more elaborate care than that simple attire. A plain white morning gown, and rich dark shawl, so different from her usual elegant dishabille, was all she wore. Her glossy hair, instead of being adjusted in clustering ringlets, was brought down in dark waves upon her cheek, serving, by contrast, to enhance the paleness of her complexion, which, of course, was what she wanted. With a gentle smile she asked them if they had missed her, and declared that as they had not sought her society, she felt so lonely, that notwithstanding the lateness of the hour she could not resist the temptation of seeking theirs. The evening passed delightfully. Of course, any allusion to the scene of the preceding night was carefully avoided, and Mr. Morton could scarcely credit his senses, that the fascinating, delicate looking girl at his side was the angry, unconquerable woman who had so lately defied his power and outraged his best feelings. Though enlivening the conversation by many little anecdotes, related in her own winning style, she took good care to let an appearance of languor pervade her whole manner, and even the tones of her voice, as if she yet suffered from the effects of the violent agitation she had undergone during her dispute with her husband. Ere the night was far advanced, she retired, pleading fatigue, and Mr. Morton was again

alone with his daughter; but the spell was now broken, and he thought only of the idolized being who had so soon forgiven and forgotten what he inwardly termed his harshness. So absorbed was he in his reflections, that he forgot even the presence of Amy, and left the room without interchanging a word, whilst she sought her sleepless pillow to mourn over her desolate, unloved lot, and the blighting of the hopes of sympathy, of old affection renewed, that had sprung up in her bosom during that evening. Far different were Mr. Morton's thoughts. Joy and surprise alternately agitated him. He was prepared for violence, for sullenness, for open rebellion, for anything but this. In any of the former circumstances he would have remained firm as a rock, but her unexpected gentleness had entirely disarmed him, and her empire was but more firmly established than ever.

The next morning, on awaking, she found a small packet on her dressing table. Quickly tearing off the cover, she saw, as she expected, the diamond tiara. It was not the rich setting, the sparkling brilliancy of the costly gems, that caused her dark eyes to flash with such proud exultation. No! but in them she read a tale far dearer to her haughty heart. They told her she had—*conquered*.

#### CHAPTER IX.

From that period her will was law, and her quiet husband shrank from farther contention, in which he plainly saw he would come off a loser. Mrs. Morton's jewels were the costliest, her fêtes the most brilliant, her equipage the most perfect, and he had the satisfaction, if indeed 'twas such, of hearing his young wife cited everywhere, as the standard of elegance and fashion. Launched into one unceasing round of dissipation, her nights were passed at the opera, or in the heated atmosphere of the ball-room, whilst the greater part of the day was passed in her own apartment, recovering from the fatigues of the preceding evening. Her success indeed had been unequalled, and no entertainment was thought complete unless she was present. As may be supposed, her husband soon wearied of accompanying her to these gay scenes; though, when he went, he had no cause to be dissatisfied with her. Never was her smile more joyous, her countenance more animated, than when conversing with him. In addition to her other imaginary good qualities, she was held up to admiration by all, as a pattern wife. Every one envied Mr. Morton. She was so beautiful, so winning, so devoted. Well for her they saw her