

"Ay, what does that matter? But he can't be ugly, Gertie. Such a handsome little fellow as he was when I saw him last. And he'll be a rich man, Gertie. He shall have The Mynns and everything, for the injury and wrong I did his father—my poor, poor boy!"

"Uncle, dear, don't reproach yourself," cried the girl, kissing the withered forehead, as the old man's voice broke into a whimper, and his hands trembled. "It was all a mistake."

"No, Gertie, my dear; I was a hard, bitter, passionate man, and made no allowances for him. He would not stick to business, and he would marry one woman when I wanted him to marry another, and I told him he'd be a beggar all his life, and we quarreled. Yes, he defied me, Gertie, when I told him he would come cringing upon his knees for money, and he said he would sooner starve. Only like yesterday," continued the old man after a pause, "and I never saw him but once more. He came to say good-bye, with his wife, before they sailed for what he called the Golden West, and we quarreled again because he disobeyed me and would not stay. I was ready to forgive him, Gertie, if he would have stayed and taken to business, but he wouldn't stop with the arbitrary old tyrant, and they went and took their boy."

The old man lay silent for some minutes, raising the girl's soft little hand to his lips from time to time. Then he startled her by bursting into a long low laugh.

"Uncle, dear!"

"Eh? Only laughing at him, my pet—that boy George. Such a determined little tyrant. Did what he liked with the old man. Wasn't afraid of me a bit. A little curly-headed rascal, and as sturdy as could be. Such eyes, Gertie; looked through you. 'I don't like you, grandpa,' he said. 'You make my mamma cry.' Bless him! that he did. Ha, ha, ha! I saw him when he was washed—a little, chubby, pink cupid of a fellow, splashing in his tub; and there, on his little white breast, was a blue heart with an arrow stuck in it. His father's doing after he came back from the West—he went out first, leaving his wife. And I asked the little chap about it. 'Did it hurt much, my man?' I said. 'Yeees,' he said. 'And did you cry, George?' I said. 'Pa said I was to be a man and not cry,' said the little fellow sturdily, 'but I did a little, and