"Ah!" ejaculated the old man, with a sigh of content followed by a low chuckle. "A fox, that's what he is Gertie. Thinks I shall leave you all my money, and that he'll marry you and get it to spend—a mean, despicable, cunning fox. But I haven't left you a penny, my pet."

"No, uncle."

"But don't tell him so. I want him to be punished. He deserves it. I helped him a dozen times, but he always turned out badly. Not left you a penny, Gertie. Ain't you bitter against me?"

"Bitter against you who have always been like a dear father!"

"Eh? Well, tried to be, little one," said the old man as he toyed with the girl's long, wavy dark hair. "Poor little fatherless, motherless thing! why, of course I did. But now look here, Gertie. I'm wasting time, and there's so little left."

"Don't say that, dear."

"But I must, my pet. And don't cry ; nothing to cry for. An old man of eighty-six going to sleep and rest, Gertie—that's all. I'm not sorry, only to leave you, my dear. I want to live till George comes home and marries you. You—you will marry him, Gertie?"

"If he is the good, true man you say, uncle, and he will love me, and wish me to be his wife, I will pray God to make me a true, dutiful companion to him for life."

"But—but you don't speak out, my child," said the old man suspiciously.

"It is because I can't, uncle, dear. The words seem to choke me. It is such a promise to make."

"But you never cared for any one else?

"Oh no, uncle dear. I never hardly thought of such a thing."

"No; always shut up here in the dingy old Mynns with me."

"Where I have been very happy, uncle."

"And Heaven knows I tried to make you so, my child And you will be happy when I'm gone—with George. For he is all I say—a true, noble fellow. But—but," he cried, peering into the girl's eyes from under his shaggy brows, " suppose he is ugly?"

"Well, uncle dear," said the girl with a little laugh, " what does that matter?"