

a bundle of letters from his pocket began to open and look them through.

"That fellow, November Joe, is an infernal fool," he said presently. "He is a dolt without an ounce of ambition."

"In his own sphere . . .," I began.

"He is all very well in his own sphere, but he should try to rise above it."

"You think so?"

"Are you mad, James?"

"He has done uncommonly well for himself so far," I said. "He has made good use of his brains and his experience. In his own way he is very, very capable."

"That is true enough, but he has got about as far as he can go without help. As you say he has done all this for himself. Now I am ready to do a good deal more for him. I'll back him in any line of business he chooses to follow. I owe him that and more. Heaven knows what might have happened to Linda but for him. Those ruffians, Puttick and the Tomlisons, were wild to lay hands on money. If Joe had not been there, they would probably have been successful . . . Perhaps they might have kidnapped her or hurt her in the hope of putting the screw on me!"