

praised you for having done so well though brought up in an out-of-the-way farm, with nothing to inspire you but your own ambition ; and said how it proved that blood will always tell (but she meant the blood of the Marneys and not of the de Coursets all the time). She hoped you were very particular what company you kept, she said, and it was bad company which led thoughtless young men astray, and oh, I am afraid she was thinking of poor papa ; but you would never never be led astray, would you, Louis, or fall into the evil ways she spoke of ? I told her again and again that you had never done anything in your life that you ought not to do—and that, at the worst, you were only a little, a very little, extravagant in giving presents and things you could not afford. I think I comforted her, and she said extravagance didn't matter ; but oh, Louis, that is only because she is so rich, she doesn't know what poverty means ; so don't let it lead you away—to hear she thinks so little of it.

“About me, she said she was glad to see I was so very exclusive ; which is, I think, her polite way of noticing that I have no friends at all. And she liked to think of me in the morning-room, because Dunham told her how very careful I was of the furniture (I should hope so, you have no idea how beautiful it is). Again and again she begged me to take care of her things (as though I were going to live here all my life), as it was a mistake to trust the best of servants ; and that she liked to know I had a brother so devoted to me as hers had always been to her, and that history repeated itself.

“Well, then, Dunham came in and said Mr. Valentine had called, and Aunt Caroline said he was to come up at once to her room. I thought she seemed a little depressed, so I foolishly said how glad I was she had a visitor, and I hoped it would cheer her a little ; she quite drew her head up on the pillow, and said solicitors were not visitors, and that he had come on business. ‘Professional callers, even though they be gentlemen, my dear Jane, do not count. But of course you could not know that, my love.’