

they must think of him," she said to Dunham, with melancholy exultation.

"It does indeed, ma'am; but if I was him, I must say I should have stood firm and refused to go. With all this business waiting to be settled, and Mr. Valentine able to do next to nothing till he comes home."

"He did not know all that when he wrote. Besides, it would be dishonour to refuse to go on active service," said Jeanne, with reddening cheeks. "How can you think it possible, Mrs. Dunham?"

"Well, ma'am, a gentleman with *his* fortune has something better to do than to go prancing over the desert looking for naked savages, in my opinion," said Dunham, firmly. "Let others go as has their bread to earn and don't care how they does it. But for a gentleman who will have thousands a year to spend as he likes, I calls it tempting Providence."

"I am afraid it is," said simple Jeanne. "But you don't understand. Louis is a soldier; it is in his blood. He *must* go, while there is any fighting left to be done. It would break his heart to stay behind; though I am sure it breaks mine that he should run more risks. But he is always lucky. Somehow it gives me confidence to remember how he went through all those dreadful battles in South Africa and never was touched. And he says this will be only a short expedition."

"People used to say that about South Africa, ma'am. Well I remember Hewitt telling us it would all be over in three months," said Dunham gloomily. "But he was wrong, as he nearly always is, though never owning it."

"Still perhaps—as my brother says he will probably not be long—I might get his room ready all the same?"

"It is his right to have the best room in the house. He's the master now," said Dunham, but her voice trembled.

"Oh, Mrs. Dunham, you do not think I would take Aunt Caroline's room," said Jeanne, sincerely shocked.

"Why not, 'm? She won't never want it no more. 'Tis