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## Letter to Louise Guiney, 1877 January 11

Patrick Guiney

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January 11. 1877.

My dear Lucia:

As the lawyers say, "me jointly and severally" received your letter descriptive of your star-gazing episode in the cupola at Elmhurst. I speak of it thus, not because star-gazing was its only item of importance, but, to be frank with you, that is the only circumstance in it which I distinctly remember as distinguishing it from every other. The date of it did not impress itself on my mind, except in the very general way that it was written a day or two before you were born! — I mean the day on which you were born, indeed it is hard telling just what I do mean, but the substance of it is that you are sixteen years old, and a few days advanced on the old maid's side of that milestone on the road of life. Let me take your hand in mine right here, pet, and kiss your forehead while I bid you God-speed in the broader and more rugged way of Christian womanhood.

The polite and pleasant note of Madam Marie Ange informed us that you are regular in the discharge of all your duties, especially in taking

your pills. This is good news, for, in the varied idiosyncrasias exhibited by you from time to time, I have never been able to see any particular passion for medicine. Hence I call it "news." Doubtless you are wiser now, being over sixty, and begin to realize that pills are not to be worked at as sub-celestial agents in the promotion of human happiness. Madame thinks that taking them is a wonderful achievement for you, but, although I think well of it, it does not seem so great an affair - I could do it myself. The real source of our pleasure though, to be serious in this little matter, is the evidence it furnishes that you are able to conquer yourself.

I am writing this note under great disadvantages. It is quite dark in the office; I am too lazy to light the gas; it is time to go home, and when I got to the end of the last paragraph I found that I was using a soiled half-sheet of paper. This last circumstance is a sad one; it prevents me from placing upon her what would otherwise close my note: the expression of my thanks to Madame May Arge, and my love for you.

Papa