

her mother's prudence and sound discretion. It was a happy combination in all respects, and it had its climax in a piquant individuality that impressed old and young with its charm.

There were two young men, among the many that were smitten, who made it a point to pay particular attention to the young lady. One was Jack Preston, and the other was Andy Colston. Both were handsome and ambitious, and both had good prospects. Colston already had the advantage of a fortune, but Preston was as hopeful and as cheerful as if he possessed a dozen plantations and a thousand negroes. Mentally they were about evenly matched, but Preston had been compelled by circumstances to cultivate an energy in the matter of steady application that Colston never knew the necessity of.

These young men were intimate friends, and they did not attempt to conceal from each other their attitude toward Mary Rivers. It was perhaps well that this was so. Both were high-strung and high-tempered, and if they had been anything but intimate with each other, the slightest cause or provocation would have precipitated trouble between