

And it was a goodly company that sat around the blazing fire, — men of affairs, planters with very large interests depending on their energy and foresight, lawyers who had won more than a local fame, and yet all as gay and as good-humored as a parcel of schoolboys. The conversation was seasoned with apt anecdotes inimitably told, and full of the peculiar humor that has not its counterpart anywhere in the world outside of middle Georgia.

And the dinner was magnificent. Miss Lou was really proud of it, as she had a right to be. There are very few things that a Georgia plantation will not produce when it is coaxed, and the colonel had a knack of coaxing that was the envy of his neighbors. Miss Lou could not doubt the sincerity of the praise bestowed on her dinner. All the guests were high-livers, and they declared solemnly that they had never before sat down to such a royal feast.

The servants moved about as silently as ghosts. There were four negro girls to wait on the table, and they attended to their duties with a promptness and precision that were constant tributes to the pains that Miss