

the home over which his mother had reigned. The colonel himself had been born there, and his mother had lived there for more than forty years. His father had died in 1830, but his mother lived until the day after the fiftieth anniversary of her wedding.

For near a quarter of a century this excellent lady had been the manager of her own estate, and she had succeeded, by dint of hard and pinching economy and untiring energy, in retrieving the fortune which her husband had left in a precarious condition. It was said of the colonel's father, William Rivers, that he was a man perverse in his ways and with a head full of queer notions, and it seems to be certain that he frittered away large opportunities in pursuit of small ones.

When William Rivers died he left his widow as a legacy four small boys — the colonel, the oldest, was in his teens — a past-due mortgage on the plantation, and a whole raft (as you may say) of small debts. She had one consolation that she breathed often to her little boys, — their father had lived temperately and died a Christian. Besides that consolation, she had an abundance