

so evidently the natural and correct thing, that it caused no ill-natured comment. Mary was sixteen, and when she sat at the head of the table, her mother was not missed. The young girl's manners were a rare combination of sweetness, grace, and dignity. She was affable, she was thoughtful, and she had a fair share of her father's humor. Above all, she was beautiful. Naturally, therefore, while her mother nursed her pride, and counted the money, Mary beamed on the boarders, and her father drew upon his vast fund of anecdote for their instruction and amusement.

Laban Pierson was not a very brilliant young man, but he was fairly good-looking, and he knew how to make himself agreeable. His train arrived at Rockville at half-past two in the afternoon, and left at five o'clock in the morning, so that he had plenty of time to make himself agreeable to Miss Mary Asbury, and he did so with only a vague notion of what the end would be. Mary made herself agreeable to Laban simply because it was her nature to be pleasant to everybody. As for any other reason, — why, the idea of such a thing! If young Pierson had told himself