

just as little in making plain to her daughter the folly and futility of interesting herself in such a person as the young conductor. Cousin Rebecca T. gave Mary a brief but picturesque biography of Laban Pierson. His family belonged to the poor white trash before the war, and he was no better. Muddy well, muddy water. He had been a train-hand, a brakeman, baggage-master, and what not. The colonel was called in to verify these biographical details.

Mary's reply to it all was characteristic. She listened and smiled, and tossed her head.

"What do *I* care about Laban Pierson? What have *I* to do with his affairs? Ought I to have jumped for joy when mammy told me the train had dropped through the trestle?"

The colonel accepted this logic without question, but Cousin Rebecca T. saw through it. She was a woman, and had a natural contempt for logic, especially a woman's logic. She simply realized that she had made a mistake. She had gone about the matter in the wrong way. As for Mary, she had found out her own secret. She hardened her heart against Aunt Mimy, and when