

Atlanta was merely experimenting with the social instinct. The "smart set" had no kind of organization. Society was engaged in disentangling itself from the furious business energy that has made Atlanta the best-known city in the South. It was at this juncture that Cousin Rebecca T., with her money, her taste, and her ambition to lead, appeared on the scene. She had all the requisites of a leader. Pride is a quickening quality, and it had made of Cousin Rebecca T. a most accomplished woman. There was something attractive and refreshing about her strong individuality. There was a simplicity about her methods that commended her to the social experimenters, who stood in great awe of forms and conventions.

Naturally, therefore, the Asbury mansion was the social centre. The younger set gathered there to be gay, and the married people went there to meet their friends. But many and many a night after the lights were out in the parlors, and the gas was turned low in the hall, Cousin Rebecca T. and the colonel sat and thought about their daughter Mary, each refraining from mentioning her name to the other, — the colonel