

Eggleston George Cary

A Man of Honor



George Eggleston

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PREFACE

I have long been curious to know whether or not I could write a pretty good story, and now that the publishers are about to send the usual press copies of this book to the critics I am in a fair way to have my curiosity on that point satisfied.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Pagebrook gets up and calls an Ancient Lawgiver

Mr. Robert Pagebrook was "blue." There was no denying the fact, and for the first time in his life he admitted it as he lay abed one September morning with his hands locked over the top of his head, while his shapely and muscular body was stretched at lazy length under a scanty covering of sheet. He was snappish too, as his faithful serving man had discovered upon knocking half an hour ago for entrance, and receiving a rather pointed and wholly unreasonable injunction to "go about his business," his sole business lying just then within the precincts of Mr. Robert Pagebrook's room, to which he was thus denied admittance. The old servant had obeyed to the best of his ability, going not about his business but away from it, wondering meanwhile what had come over the young gentleman, whom he had never found moody before.

It was clear that Mr. Robert Pagebrook's reflections were anything but pleasant as he lay there thinking, thinking, thinking – resolving not to think and straightway thinking again harder than ever. His disturbance was due to a combination of causes. His muddy boots were in full view for one thing, and he was painfully conscious that they were not likely to get themselves blacked now that he had driven old Moses away. This reminded him that he had showed temper when Moses's meek knock had disturbed him, and to show temper without proper cause he deemed a weakness. Weaknesses were his pet aversion. Weakness found little toleration with him, particularly when the weakness showed itself in his own person, out of which he had been all his life chastising such infirmities. His petulance with Moses, therefore, contributed to his annoyance, becoming an additional cause of that from which it came as an effect.

Our young gentleman acknowledged, as I have already said, that he was out of spirits, and in the very act of acknowledging it he contemned himself because of it. His sturdy manhood rebelled against its own weakness, and mocked at it, which certainly was not a very good way to cure it. He denied that there was any good excuse for his depression, and scourged himself, mentally, for giving way to it, a process which naturally enough made him give way to it all the more. It depressed him to know that he was weak enough to be depressed. To my thinking he did himself very great injustice. He was, in fact, very unreasonable with himself, and deserved to suffer the consequences. I say this frankly, being the chronicler of this young man's doings and not his apologist by any means. He certainly had good reason to be gloomy, inasmuch as he had two rather troublesome things on his hands, namely, a young man without a situation and a disappointment in love, or fancy, which is often mistaken for love. A circumstance which made the matter worse was that the young man without a situation for whose future Mr. Robert Pagebrook had to provide was Mr. Robert Pagebrook himself. This alone would not have troubled him greatly if it had not been for his other trouble; for the great hulking fellow who lay there with his hands clasped over his head "cogitating," as he would have phrased it, had too much physical force, too much of good health and consequent animal spirits, to distrust either the future or his own ability to cope with whatever difficulties it might bring with it. To men with broad chests and great brawny legs and arms like his the future has a very promising way of presenting itself. Besides, our young man knew himself well furnished for a fight with the world. He knew very well how to take care of himself. He had done farm labor as a boy during the long summer vacations, a task set him by his Virginian father, who had carried a brilliant intellect in a frail body to a western state, where he had married and died, leaving his widow this one son, for whom in his own weakness he desired nothing so much as physical strength and bodily health. The boy had grown into a sturdy youth when the mother died, leaving him with little in the way of earthly possessions except well-knit limbs, a clear, strong, active mind, and an independent, self-reliant spirit. With these he had managed to

work his way through college, turning his hand to anything which would help to provide him with the necessary means – keeping books, "coaching" other students, canvassing for various things, and doing work of other sorts, caring little whether it was dignified or undignified provided it was honest and promised the desired pecuniary return. After graduation he had accepted a tutorship in the college wherein he had studied – a position which he had resigned (about a year before the time at which we find him in a fit of the blues) to take upon himself the duties of "Professor of English Language and Literature, and Adjunct Professor of Mathematics," in a little collegiate institute with big pretensions in one of the suburbs of Philadelphia. In short, he had been knocked about in the world until he had acquired considerable confidence in his ability to earn a living at almost anything he might undertake.

Under the circumstances, therefore, it is not probable that this energetic and self-confident young gentleman would have suffered the loss of his professorship to annoy him very seriously if it had not been accompanied by the other trouble mentioned. Indeed, the two had come so closely together, and were so intimately connected in other ways, that Mr. Robert Pagebrook was inclined to wonder, as he lay there in bed, whether there might not exist between them somewhere the relation of cause and effect. Whether there really was any other than an accidental blending of the two events I am sure I do not know; and the reader is at liberty, after hearing the brief story of their happening, to take either side he prefers of the question raised in Mr. Rob's mind. For myself, I find it impossible to determine the point. But here is the story, as young Pagebrook turned it over and over in his mind in spite of himself.

President Currier, of the collegiate institute, had a daughter, Miss Nellie, who wanted to study Latin more than anything else in the world. President Currier particularly disliked conjugations and parsings and everything else pertaining to the study of language; and so it happened that as Miss Nellie was quite a good-looking and agreeable damsel, our young friend Pagebrook volunteered to give her the coveted instruction in her favorite study in the shape of afternoon lessons. The tutor soon discovered that his pupil's earnest wish to learn Latin had been based – as such desires frequently are in the case of young women – upon an entire misapprehension of the nature and difficulty of the study. In fact, Miss Nellie's clearest idea upon the subject of Latin before beginning it was that "it must be so nice!" Her progress, therefore, after the first week or two, was certainly not remarkable for its rapidity; but the tutor persisted. After awhile the young lady said "Latin wasn't nice at all," a remark which she made haste to qualify by assuring her teacher that "it's nice to take lessons in it, though." Finally Miss Nellie ceased to make any pretense of learning the lessons, but somehow the afternoon *séances* over the grammar were continued, though it must be confessed that the talk was not largely of verbs.

By the time commencement day came the occasional presence of Miss Nellie had become a sort of necessity in the young professor's daily existence, and the desire to be with her led him to spend the summer at Cape May, whither her father annually took her for the season. Now Cape May is an expensive place, as watering places usually are, and so Mr. Robert Pagebrook's stay of a little over two months there made a serious reduction in his reserve fund, which was at best a very limited one. Before going to Cape May he had concluded that he was in love with Miss Nellie, and had informed her of the fact. She had expressed, by manner rather than by spoken word, a reasonable degree of pleasure in the knowledge of this fact; but when pressed for a reply to the young gentleman's impetuous questionings, she had prettily avoided committing herself beyond recall. She told him she might possibly come to love him a little after awhile, in a pretty little maidenly way, which satisfied him that she loved him a good deal already. She said she "didn't know" with a tone and manner which convinced him that she did know; and so the Cape May season passed off very pleasantly, with just enough of uncertainty about the position of affairs to keep up an interest in them.

As the season drew near its close, however, Miss Nellie suddenly informed her lover one evening that her dear father had "plans" for her, and that of course they had both been amusing themselves merely; and she said this in so innocent and so sincere a way that for the moment her stunned admirer believed it as he retired to his room with an unusual ache in his heart. When the young man sat down alone, however, and began meditating upon the events of the past summer, he was unreasonable enough to accuse the innocent little maiden of very naughty trifling, and even to think her wanting in honesty and sincerity. As he sat there brooding over the matter, and half hoping that Miss Nellie was only trying him for the purpose of testing the depth of his affection, a servant brought him a note, which he opened and read. It was a very formal affair, as the reader will see upon running his eye over the following copy:

Cape May, Sept. 10th, 18 – .

Dear Sir: – It becomes my duty to inform you that the authorities controlling the collegiate institute's affairs, having found it necessary to retrench its expenses somewhat, have determined to dispense altogether with the adjunct professorship of Mathematics, and to distribute the duties appertaining to the chair of English Language and Literature among the other members of the faculty. In consequence of these changes we shall hereafter be deprived of your valuable assistance in the collegiate institute. There is yet due you three hundred dollars (\$300) upon your salary for the late collegiate year, and I greatly regret that the treasurer informs me of a present lack of funds with which to discharge this obligation. I personally promise you, however, that the amount shall be remitted to whatever address you may give me, on or before the fifteenth day of November next. I send this by a messenger just as I am upon the point of leaving Cape May for a brief trip to other parts of the country. I remain, sir, with the utmost respect,
Your obedient servant,
David Currier,
President, etc.

To Professor Robert Pagebrook.

This letter had come to Mr. Robert very unexpectedly, and its immediate consequence had been to send him hastily back to his city lodgings. He had arrived late at night, and finding no matches in his room, which was situated in a business building where his neighbors were unknown to him, he had been compelled to go to bed in the dark, without the possibility of ascertaining whether or not there were any letters awaiting him on his table.

Our young gentleman was not, ordinarily, of an irritable disposition, and trifling things rarely ever disturbed his equanimity, but he was forced to admit, as he lay there in bed, that he had been a very unreasonable young gentleman on several recent occasions, and naturally enough he began to catalogue his sins of this sort. Among other things he remembered that he had worked himself into a temper over the emptiness of the match-safe; and this reminded him that he had not even yet looked to see if there were any letters on the table at his elbow, much as he had the night previously bewailed the impossibility of doing so at once. Somehow this matter of his correspondence did not seem half so imperative in its demands upon his attention now that he could read his letters at once as it had seemed the night before when he could not read them at all. He stretched out his hand rather languidly, therefore, and taking up the half dozen letters which lay on the table, began to turn them over, examining the superscriptions with small show of interest. Breaking one open he muttered, "There's another forty dollars' worth of folly. I did not need that coat, but ordered it expressly for Cape May. The bill must be paid, of course, and here I am, out of work, with no prospects, and about five hundred dollars less money in bank than I ought to have. – !"

I am really afraid he closed that sentence with an ejaculation. I have set down an exclamation point to cover the possibility of such a thing.

He went on with his letters. Presently he opened the last but one, and immediately proceeded to open his eyes rather wider than usual. Jumping out of bed he thrust his head out of the door and called,

"Moses!"

"Moses!!"

"Moses!!!"

"MOSES!!!!"

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Pagebrook is invited to Breakfast

After he had waked up whatever echoes there were in the building by his crescendo calling for Moses, besides spoiling the temper of the night editor who was just then in the midst of his first slumber in the room opposite, Mr. Rob remembered that the old colored janitor, who owned the biblical name, and who for a trifling consideration ministered in the capacity of servant to the personal comfort of the occupants of the rooms under his charge, was never known to answer a call. He was sure to be within hearing, but would maintain a profound silence until he had disposed of whatever matter he might happen to have in hand at the moment, after which he would come to the caller in the sedate and dignified way proper to a person of his importance. Remembering this, and hearing some ominous mutterings from the night editor's room, our young gentleman withdrew his head from the corridor, put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and sat down to await the leisurely coming of the serving man.

Taking up the note again he reread it, although he knew perfectly well everything in it, and began speculating upon what it could possibly mean, knowing all the while that no amount of speculation could throw the slightest ray of light on the subject in the absence of further information. He read it aloud, just as you or I would have done, when there was nobody by to listen. It was as brief as a telegram, and merely said: "Will you please inform me at once whether we may count upon your acceptance of the position offered you?" It was signed with an unfamiliar name, to which was appended the abbreviated word "Pres't."

"I shall certainly be very happy to inform the gentleman," thought the perplexed young man, "whether he may or may not (by the way he very improperly omits the alternative 'or not' after his 'whether'), whether he may or may not 'count upon' (I must look up that expression and see if there is good authority for its use), whether he may or may not count upon my acceptance of the position offered me, just as soon as I can inform myself upon the matter. As I have not at present the slightest idea of what the 'position' is, it is somewhat difficult for me to make up my mind concerning it. However, as I am without employment and uncomfortably short of money, there seems to be every probability that my unknown correspondent's proposition, whatever it is, will be favorably considered. Moses will come after awhile, I suppose, and he probably has the other letter caged as a 'vailable.' Let me see what we have here from William."

With this our young gentleman opened his only remaining letter, which he had already discovered by a glance at the postmark was from a Virginian cousin. It was a mere note, in which his cousin wrote:

"A little matter of business takes me to Philadelphia next week. Shall be at Girard Ho., Thrsd morn'g. Meet me there at breakfast, but don't come too early. Train won't get in till three, so I'll sleep a little late. Sh'd you wake me too early, I'll be as cross as a \$20 bank-note, and make a bad impression on you."

An amused smile played over Mr. Robert's face as he read this note over and over. What he was thinking I do not know. Aloud he said:

"What a passion my cousin has for abbreviations! One would think he had a grudge against words from the way in which he cuts them up. And what a figure of speech that is! 'As cross as a twenty-dollar bank-note!' Let me see. I may safely assume that the letters 'Thrs' with an elevated 'd' mean Thursday, and as this is Thursday, and as the letter was written last week, and as my watch tells me it is now ten o'clock, and as my boots are still unblacked, and as Moses has not yet made his appearance, it seems altogether probable that my cousin's breakfast will be postponed until the

middle of the day if he waits for me to help him eat it. I am afraid he will be as cross as half a dozen bank notes of the largest denomination issued when we meet."

"Did you call, sah?" asked Moses, coming very deliberately into the room.

"I am under the impression that I did, though it requires an extraordinary exercise of the memory to recall an event which happened so long ago. Have you any 'vallables' for me?"

Moses *thought* he had. This was as near an approach to anything like a positive statement as Moses ever made. He would go to his room and ascertain. Among many other evidences of unusual wisdom on the part of the old negro was this, that he believed himself fully capable of recognizing a valuable letter whenever he saw it; and it was one of his self-imposed duties, whenever the post brought letters for any absent member of his constituency, to look them over and sequester all the "vallables" until the return of the owner, so that they might be delivered with his own hand. Returning now he brought two "vallables" for Mr. Pagebrook. One of them was a printed circular, but the other proved to be the desired letter, which was a formal tender of a professorship in a New England college, with an entirely satisfactory salary attached. Accompanying the official notice of election was a note informing him that his duties, in the event of acceptance, would not begin until the first of January, the engagement of the retiring professor terminating at that time.

Under the influence of this news our young friend's face brightened quite as perceptibly as his boots did in the hands of the old servitor. He wrote his letter of acceptance at once, and then proceeded to dress for breakfast at the Girard House, whither he walked with as light a step and as cheerful a bearing as if he had not been a sadly disappointed lover at all.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Pagebrook Eats his Breakfast

Robert Pagebrook had never seen his cousin, and yet they were not altogether strangers to each other. Robert's father and William Barksdale's mother were brother and sister, and Shirley, the old Virginian homestead, which had been in the family for nearly two centuries, had passed to young Barksdale's mother by the voluntary act of Robert's father when, upon coming of age, he had gone west to try his fortune in a busier world than that of the Old Dominion. The two boys, William and Robert, had corresponded quite regularly in boyhood and quite irregularly after they grew up, and so they knew each other pretty well, though, as I have said, they had never met.

"I am glad, very glad to see you, William," said Robert as he grasped his cousin's hand.

"Now don't, I beg of you. Call me Billy, or Will, or anything else you choose, old fellow, but don't call me William, whatever you do. Nobody ever did but father, and he never did except of mornings when I wouldn't get up. Then he'd sing out 'Will-yum' with a sort of a horsewhip snap at the end of it. 'William' always reminds me of disturbed slumbers. Call me Billy, and I'll call you Bob. I'll do that anyhow, so you might as well fall into familiar ways. But come, tell me how you are and all about yourself. You haven't written to me since the flood; forgot to receive my last letter I suppose."

"Probably I did. I have been forgetting a good many things. But I hope I have not kept you too long from your breakfast, and especially that I have not made you 'as cross as a twenty dollar bank-note.' Pray tell me what you meant by that figure of speech, will you not? I am curious to know where you got it and why."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Billy. "You'll have a lively time of it if you mean to unravel all my metaphors. Let me see. I must have referred to the big X's they print on the bank bills, or something of that sort. But let's go to breakfast at once. I'm as hungry as a village editor. We can talk over a beefsteak, or you can at least. I mean to be as still as a mill-pond of a cloudy night while you tell me all about yourself."

And over their breakfast they talked. But in telling his story, while he remembered to mention all the details of his situation losing and his situation getting, Mr. Robert somehow forgot to say anything about his other disappointment. He soon learned to know and to like his cousin, and, which was more to the purpose, he began to enjoy him right heartily, in his own way, bantering him on his queer uses of English, half in sport, half in earnest, until the Virginian declared that they had grown as familiar with each other "as a pair of Irishmen at a wake."

"I suppose you're off at once for your new place, a'n't you? This is September," said Billy after his cousin had finished so much of his story as he cared to reveal.

"No," said Robert. "My duties will not begin until January, and meantime I must go off on a tramp somewhere to get my muscles, physical and financial, up again. To tell the truth I have been dawdling at Cape May this summer instead of going off to the mountains or the prairies, as I usually do, for a healthful and economical foot journey, and the result is that my legs and arms are sadly run down. I have been spending too much money too, and so cannot afford to stay around Philadelphia until January. I think I must go off to some of the mountain counties, where the people think five dollars a fortune and call anything less than a precipice rising ground."

"Well, I reckon you won't," said the Virginian; "I've been inviting you to the 'home of your fathers' ever since I was born, and this is the very first time I ever got you to own up to a scrap of leisure as big as your thumb nail. I've got you now with nothing to do and nowhere to go, and I mean to take you with me this very evening to Virginia. We'll leave on the eleven o'clock train to-night, get to Richmond to-morrow at two, and go up home next morning in time for snack."

"But, my dear Billy – "

"But, my dear Bob, I won't hear a word, and I won't take no for an answer. That's *poz roz* and the king's English. I'm managing this little job. You can give up your rooms to-day, sell out your plunder, and stop expenses. Then you needn't open your pocket-book again for so long that you'll forget how it looks inside. Put a few ninepences into your breeches pocket to throw at darkeys when they hold your horse, and the thing's done. And won't we wake up old Shirley? I tell you it's the delightfulest two hundred year old establishment you ever saw or didn't see. As the Irish attorney said of his ancestral home: 'there isn't a table in the house that hasn't had jigs danced upon it, and there's not a chair that you can't throw at a friend's head without the slightest fear of breaking it.' When we get there we'll have as much fun as a pack of hounds on a fresh trail."

"Upon my word, Billy," said the professor cousin, "your metaphors have the merits of freshness and originality, at the least, though now and then, as in the present instance, they are certainly not very complimentary. However, it just occurs to me that I have been wanting to go to Shirley 'ever since I was born,' if you will allow me to borrow one of your forcible phrases, and this really does seem to be a peculiarly good opportunity to do so. I am a good deal interested in dialects and provincialisms, so it would be worth my while to visit you, if for no other reason, because my stay at Shirley will give me an excellent opportunity to study some of your own expressions. 'Poz roz,' now, is entirely new to me, and I might make something out of it in a philological way."

"Upon my word" said Mr. Billy, "that's a polite speech. If you'll only say you'll go, though, I don't care the value of a herring's left fore foot what use you make of me. I'm yours to command and ready for any sport that suits you, unless you take a notion to throw rocks at me."

"Pray tell me, Billy, do Virginians ever throw rocks? I am interested in muscle, and should greatly like to see some one able to throw rocks. I have paid half a dollar many a time to see a man lift extraordinary weights, but the best of the showmen never dream of handling anything heavier than cannon-balls. It would be decidedly entertaining to see a man throwing rocks and things of that sort about, even if he were to use both hands in doing it."

"Nonsense," said Billy; "I'm not one of your students getting a dictionary lesson. Waiter!"

"What will you have, sir?" asked the waiter.

"Some hot biscuit, please."

"They a'n't no hot biscuits, sir."

"Well some hot rolls then, or hot bread of some sort. Cold bread for breakfast is an abomination."

"They a'n't no hot bread in the house, sir. We never keep none. Hot bread a'n't healthy, sir."

"You impertinent – "

"My dear Billy," said Mr. Bob, "pray keep your temper. 'Impertinent' is not the word you wish to use. The *man* can not well be impertinent. He is a trifle impudent, I admit, but we can afford to overlook the impudence of his remark for the sake of the philological interest it has. Waiter, you ought to know, inasmuch as you have been brought up in a land of free schools, that two negatives, in English, destroy each other, and are equivalent to an affirmative; but the matter in which I am most interested just now is your remark that hot bread is not *healthy*. Your statement is perfectly true, and it would have been equally true if you had omitted the qualifying adjective 'hot.' No bread can be 'healthy,' because health and disease are not attributes or conditions of inanimate things. You probably meant, however, that hot bread is not wholesome, a point on which my friend here, who eats hot bread every day of his life, would naturally take issue with you. Please bring us some buttered toast."

The waiter went away bewildered – questioning the sanity of Mr. Bob in all probability; a questioning in which Billy was half inclined to join him.

"What on earth do you mean, Bob, by talking in that way to a waiter who don't know the meaning of one word in five that you use?"

"Well, I meant for one thing to keep you from losing your temper and so spoiling your digestion. Human motives are complicated affairs, and hence I am by no means sure that I can further unravel my purpose in this case."

"Return we to our muttons, then," said Billy; "I'll finish the business that brought me here, which is only to be present at the taking of a short deposition, by two or three o'clock. While I'm at it you can get your traps together, send your trunk to the depot, and get back here to dinner by four. Then we must get through the rest of the time the best way we can, and at eleven we'll be off. I'm crazy to see you with Phil once."

"Phil, who is he?"

"Oh! Phil is a character – a colored one. I want to see how his 'dialect' will affect you. I'm half afraid you'll go crazy, though, under it."

"Tell me – "

"No, I won't describe Phil, because I can't, and no more can anybody else. Phil must be seen to be appreciated. But come, I'm off for the notary's, and you must get you gone too, for you mustn't be late at dinner – that's poz."

With this the two young men separated, the Virginian lawyer to attend to the taking of some depositions, and his cousin to surrender his lodgings, pack his trunk, and make such other arrangements as were necessary for his journey.

This opportunity to visit the old homestead where his father had passed his boyhood was peculiarly welcome to Mr. Robert just now. There had always been to him a sort of glamour about the names Virginia and Shirley. His father's stories about his own childhood had made a deep impression on the mind of the boy, and to him Shirley was a palace and Virginia a fairy land. Whenever, in childhood, he was allowed to call a calf or a pig his own, he straightway bestowed upon it one or the other of the charmed names, and fancied that the animal grew stronger and more beautiful as a consequence. He had always intended to go to Shirley, but had never done so; just as you and I, reader, have always meant to do several scores of things that we have never done, though we can hardly say why. Just now, however, Mr. Billy's plan for his cousin was more than ever agreeable to Mr. Robert for various present and unusual reasons. He knew next to nobody in or about Philadelphia outside the precincts of the collegiate institute, and to hunt up acquaintances inside that institution was naturally enough not exactly to his taste. He had several months of time to dispose of in some way, and until Billy suggested the visit to Virginia, the best he had been able to do in the way of devising a time-killer was to plan a solitary wandering among the mountainous districts of Pennsylvania. Ordinarily he would have enjoyed such a journey very much, but just now he knew that Mr. Robert Pagebrook could hardly find a less agreeable companion than Mr. Robert Pagebrook himself. That little affair with Miss Nellie Currier kept coming up in his memory, and if the reader be a man it is altogether probable that he knows precisely how the memory of that story affected our young gentleman. He wanted company, and he wanted change, and he wanted outdoor exercise, and where could he find all these quite so abundant as at an old Virginian country house? His love for Miss Nellie, he was sure, was a very genuine one; but he was equally sure that it was hopeless. Indeed, now that he knew the selfish insincerity of the damsel he did not even wish that his suit had prospered. This, at any rate, is what he thought, as you did, my dear sir, when you first learned what the word "Another" means when printed with a big A; and, thinking this, he felt that the first thing to be done in the matter was to forget Miss Nellie and his love for her as speedily as possible. How far he succeeded in doing this we shall probably see in the sequel. At present we have to do with the attempt only. New scenes and new people, Mr. Pagebrook thought, would greatly aid him in his purpose, and so the trip to Virginia seemed peculiarly fitting. It thus comes about that the scene of this young man's story suddenly shifts from Philadelphia to a Virginian country house, in spite of all I can do to preserve the dramatic unity of place. Ah! if I were *making* this story now, I could confine it to a single room, compress its action into a single day, and do other

dramatic and highly proper things; but as Mr. Robert Pagebrook and his friends were not stage people, and, moreover, as they were not aware that their goings and comings would ever weave themselves into the woof of a story at all, they utterly failed to regulate their actions in accordance with critical rules, and went roving about over the country quite in a natural way and without the slightest regard for my convenience.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Pagebrook learns something about the Customs of the Country

When our two young men reached the station at which they were to leave the cars, they found awaiting them there the lumbering old carriage which had been a part of the Shirley establishment ever since Mr. Billy could remember. This vehicle was known to everybody in the neighborhood as the Shirley carriage, not because it was older or clumsier or uglier than its fellows, for indeed it was not, but merely because every carriage in a Virginian neighborhood is known to everybody quite as well as its owner is. To Mr. Robert Pagebrook, however, the vehicle presented itself as an antique and a curiosity. Its body was suspended by leathern straps which came out of some high semicircular springs at the back, and it was thus raised so far above the axles that one could enter it only by mounting quite a stairway of steps, which unfolded themselves from its interior. Swinging thus by its leathern straps, the great heavy carriage body really seemed to have no support at all, and Mr. Robert found it necessary to exercise all the faith there was in him in order to believe that to get inside of the vehicle was not a sure and speedy way of securing two or three broken bones. He got in, however, at his cousin's invitation, and soon discovered that although the motion of the suspended carriage body closely resembled that of a fore and aft schooner in a gale, it was by no means unpleasant, as the worst that the roughest road could do was to make the vibratory motion a trifle more decided than usual in its nature. A jolt was simply impossible.

As soon as he got his sea legs on sufficiently to keep himself tolerably steady on his seat, Mr. Rob began to look at the country or, more properly, to study the road-side, there being little else visible, so thickly grew the trees and underbrush on each side.

"How far must we drive before reaching Shirley?" he asked after awhile, as the carriage stopped for the opening of a gate.

"About four miles now," said his cousin. "It's five miles, or nearly that, from the Court House."

"The court house? Where is that?"

"O the village where we left the train! That's the Court House."

"Ah! you Virginians call a village a court house, do you?"

"Certainly, when it's the county-seat and a'n't much else. Now and then court houses put on airs and call themselves names, but they don't often make much of it. There's Powhatan Court House now, I believe it tried to get itself called 'Scottsville,' or something of that sort, but nobody knows it as anything but Powhatan Court House. Our county-seat has always been modest, and if it has any name I never heard of it."

"That's one interesting custom of the country, at any rate. Pray tell me, is it another of your customs to dispense wholly with public roads? I ask for information merely, and the question is suggested by the fact that we seem to have driven away from the Court House by the private road which we are still following."

"Why, this isn't a private road. It's one of the principal public roads of the county."

"How about these gates then?" asked Robert as the negro boy who rode behind the carriage jumped down to open another.

"Well, what about them?"

"Why, I never saw a gate across a public thoroughfare before. Do you really permit such things in Virginia?"

"O yes! certainly. It saves a great deal of fencing, and the Court never refuses permission to put up a gate in any reasonable place, only the owner is bound to make it easy to open on horseback

— or, as you would put it, 'by a person riding on horseback.' You see I'm growing circumspect in my choice of words since I've been with you. May be you'll reform us all, and make us talk tolerably good English before you go back. If you do, I'll give you some 'testimonials' to your worth as a professor."

"But about those gates, Billy. I am all the more interested in them now that I know them as another 'custom of the country.' How do their owners keep them shut? Don't people leave them open pretty often?"

"Never; a Virginian is always 'on honor' so far as his neighbors are concerned, and the man who would leave a neighbor's gate open might as well take to stealing at once for all the difference it would make in his social standing."

It was not only the gates, but the general appearance of the road as well, that astonished young Pagebrook: a public road, consisting of a single carriage track, with a grass plat on each side, fringed with thick undergrowth and overhung by the branches of great trees, was to him a novelty, and a very pleasant novelty too, in which he was greatly interested.

"Who lives there?" asked Robert, as a large house came into view.

"That's The Oaks, Cousin Edwin's place."

"And who is your Cousin Edwin?"

"My Cousin Edwin? He's yours too, I reckon. Cousin Edwin Pagebrook. He is our second cousin or, as the old ladies put it, first cousin once removed."

"Pray tell me what a first cousin once removed is, will you not, Billy? I am wholly ignorant on the subject of cousinhood in its higher branches, and as I understand that a good deal of stress is laid upon relationships of this sort in Virginia, I should like to inform myself in advance if possible."

"I really don't know whether I can or not. Any of the old ladies will lay it all out to you, illustrating it with their keys arranged like a genealogical tree. I don't know much about it, but I reckon I can make you understand this much, as I have Cousin Edwin's case to go by. It's a 'case in point' as we lawyers say. Let's see. Cousin Edwin's grandfather was our great grandfather; then his father was our grandfather's brother, and that makes him first cousin to my mother and your father. Now I would call mother's first cousin my second cousin, but the old ladies, who pay a good deal of attention to these matters, say not. They say that my mother's or my father's first cousin is my first cousin once removed, and his children are my second cousins, and they prove it all, too, with their keys."

"Well then," asked Robert, "if that is so, what is the exact relationship between Cousin Edwin's children and my father or your mother?"

"O don't! You bewilder me. I told you I didn't know anything about it. You must get some old lady to explain it with her keys, and when she gets through you won't know who you are, to save you."

"That is encouraging, certainly," said Mr. Robert.

"O it's no matter! You're safe enough in calling everybody around here 'cousin' if you're sure they a'n't any closer kin. The fact is, all the best families here have intermarried so often that the relationships are all mixed up, and we always claim kin when there is any ghost of a chance for it. Besides, the Pagebrooks are the biggest tadpoles in the puddle; and so, if they don't 'cousin' all their kin-folks people think they're stuck-up."

"Thank you, Billy; but tell me, am I, being a Pagebrook, under any consequent obligation to consider myself a tadpole during my stay in Virginia?"

Billy's only answer was a laugh.

"Now, Billy," Robert resumed, "tell me about the people of Shirley. I am sadly ignorant, you understand, and I do not wish to make mistakes. Begin at top, and tell me how I shall call them all."

"Well, there's father; you will call him Uncle Carter, of course. He is Col. Carter Barksdale, you know."

"I knew his name was Carter, of course, but I did not know he had ever been a military man."

"A military man! No, he never was. What made you think that?"

"Why you called him 'Colonel.'"

"O that's nothing! You'll find every gentleman past middle age wearing some sort of title or other. They call father 'Colonel Barksdale,' and Cousin Edwin 'Major Pagebrook,' though neither of them ever saw a tent that I know of."

"Ah! another interesting custom of the country. But pray go on."

"Well, mother is 'Aunt Mary,' you know, and then there's Aunt Catherine."

"Indeed! who is she? Is she my aunt?"

"I really don't know. Let me see. No, I reckon not; nor mine either, for that matter. I think she's father's fourth or fifth cousin, with a remove or two added, possibly, but you must call her 'Aunt' anyhow; we all do, and she'd never forgive you if you didn't. You see she knew your father, and I reckon he called her 'Aunt.' It's a way we have here. She is a maiden lady, you understand, and Shirley is her home. You'll find somebody of that sort in nearly every house, and they're a delightful sort of somebody, too, to have round. She'll post you up on relationships. She can use up a whole key-basket full of keys, and run 'em over by name backwards or forwards, just as you please. You needn't follow her though if you object to a headache. All you've got to do is to let her tell you about it, and you say 'yes' now and then. She puts me through every week or so. Then there's Cousin Sudie, my father's niece and ward. She's been an orphan almost all her life, and so she's always lived with us. Father is her guardian, and he always calls her 'daughter.' You'll call her 'Cousin Sue,' of course."

"Then she is akin to me too, is she?"

"Of course. She's father's own brother's child."

"But, Billy, your father is only my uncle by marriage, and I do not understand how –"

"O bother! If you're going to count it up, I reckon there a'n't any real relationship; but she's your cousin, anyhow, and you'll offend her if you refuse to own it. Call her 'Cousin,' and be done with it."

"Being one of the large Pagebrook tadpoles, I suppose I must. However, in the case of a young lady, I shall not find it difficult, I dare say."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Pagebrook makes Some Acquaintances

Mr. Robert had often heard of "an Old Virginian welcome," but precisely what constituted it he never knew until the carriage in which he rode drove around the "circle" and stopped in front of the Shirley mansion. The first thing which struck him as peculiar about the preparations made for his reception was the large number of small negroes who thought their presence necessary to the occasion. Little black faces grinned at him from behind every tree, and about a dozen of them peered out from a safe position behind "ole mas'r and ole missus." Mr. Billy had telegraphed from Richmond announcing the coming of his guest, and so every darkey on the plantation knew that "Mas' Joe's son" was "a comin' wid Mas' Billy from de Norf," and every one that could find a safe hiding place in the yard was there to see him come.

Col. Barksdale met him at the carriage while the ladies were in waiting on the porch, as anybody but a Virginian would put it—in the porch, as they themselves would have phrased it. The welcome was of the right hearty order which nobody ever saw outside of Virginia—a welcome which made the guest feel himself at once a very part of the establishment.

Inside the house our young friend found himself sorely puzzled. The furniture was old in style but very elegant, a thing for which he was fully prepared, but it stood upon absolutely bare white floors. There were both damask and lace curtains at the windows, but not a vestige of carpet was anywhere to be seen. Mr. Robert said nothing, but wondered silently whether it was possible that he had arrived in the midst of house-cleaning. Conversation, luncheon, and finally dinner at four, occupied his attention, however, and after dinner the whole family gathered in the porch—for really I believe the Virginians are right about that preposition. I will ask Mr. Robert himself some day.

He soon found himself thoroughly at home in the old family mansion, among relatives who had never been strangers to him in any proper sense of the term. Not only was Mrs. Barksdale his father's sister, but Col. Barksdale himself had been that father's nearest friend. The two had gone west together to seek their fortunes there; but the Colonel had returned after a few years to practice his profession in his native state and ultimately to marry his friend's sister. Mr. Robert soon felt himself literally at home, therefore, and the feeling was intensely enjoyable, too, to a young man who for ten years had not known any home other than that of a bachelor's quarters in a college community. His reception at Shirley had not been the greeting of a guest but rather the welcoming of a long wandering son of the house. To his relatives there he seemed precisely that, and their feeling in the case soon became his own. This "clannishness," as it is called, may not be peculiar to Virginia of all the states, but I have never seen it half so strongly manifested anywhere else as there.

Toward evening Maj. Pagebrook and his son Ewing rode over to call upon their cousin Robert, and after the introductions were over, "Cousin Edwin" went on to talk of Robert's father, for whom he had felt an unusual degree of affection, as all the relatives had, for that matter, Robert's father having been an especial favorite in the family. Then the conversation became more general.

"When are you going to cut that field of tobacco by the prize barn, Cousin Edwin?" asked Billy. "I see it's ripening pretty rapidly."

"Yes, it is getting pretty ripe in spots, and I wanted to put the hands into it yesterday," replied Maj. Pagebrook; "but Sarah Ann thought we'd better keep them plowing for wheat a day or two longer, and now I'm afraid it's going to rain before I can get a first cutting done."

"How much did you get for the tobacco you sent to Richmond the other day, Edwin?" asked the colonel.

"Only five dollars and three cents a hundred, average."

"You'd have done a good deal better if you'd sold in the spring, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, a good deal. I wanted to sell then, but Sarah Ann insisted on holding it till fall. By the way, I'm going to put all my lots, except the one by the creek, in corn next year, and raise hardly any tobacco."

"All but the creek lot? Why that's the only good corn land you have, Edwin, and it isn't safe to put tobacco in it either, for it overflows a little."

"Yes, I know it. But Sarah Ann is discouraged by the price we got for tobacco this year, and doesn't want me to plant the lots next season at all."

"Why didn't you bring Cousin Sarah Ann over and come to dinner to-day, Cousin Edwin?" asked Miss Barksdale, coming out of the dining-room, key-basket in hand, to speak to the guests.

"Oh! we've only one carriage horse now, you know. I sold the black last week, and haven't been able to find another yet."

"Sold the black! Why, what was that for, Cousin Ed! I thought you specially liked him?" said Billy.

"So I did; but Sarah Ann didn't like a black and a gray together, and she wouldn't let me sell the gray on any terms, though I could have matched the black at once. Winger has a colt well broken that's a perfect match for him. Come, Ewing, we must be going. Sarah Ann said we must be home to tea without fail. You'll come to The Oaks, Robert, of course. Sarah Ann will expect you very soon, and you mustn't stand on ceremony, you know, but come as often as you can while you stay at Shirley."

"What do you think of Cousin Edwin, Bob?" asked Billy when the guests had gone.

"That he is a very excellent person, and –"

"And what? Speak out. Let's hear what you think."

"Well, that he is a very dutiful husband."

"Bob, I'd give a pretty for your knack at saying things. Your tongue's as soft as a feather bed. But wait till you know the madam. You'll say –"

"My son, you shouldn't prejudice Robert against people he doesn't know. Sarah Ann has many good qualities – I suppose."

"Well, then, I don't suppose anything of the sort, else she would have found out how good a man Cousin Edwin is long ago, and would have behaved herself better every way."

"William, you are uncharitable!"

"Not a bit of it, mother. Your charity is like a microscope when it is hunting for something good to say of people. Did you ever hear of the dead Dutchman?"

"Do pray, Billy, don't tell me any of your anecdotes now."

"Just this one, mother. There was a dead Dutchman who had been the worst Dutchman in the business. When the people came to sit up with his corpse – don't run, mother, I'm nearly through – they couldn't find anything good to say about him, and as they didn't want to say anything bad there was a profound silence in the room. Finally one old Dutchman, heaving a sigh, remarked: 'Vell, Hans vas vone goot schmoker, anyhow.' Let me see. Cousin Sarah Ann gives good dinners, anyhow, only she piles too much on the table. See how charitable I am, mother. I have actually found and designated the madam's one good point."

"Come, come, my son," said the colonel, "you shouldn't talk so."

Shortly after tea the two young men pleaded the weariness of travelers in excuse for an early bed going. Mr. Bob was offered his choice between occupying alone the Blue Room, which is the state guest chamber in most Virginian houses, and taking a bed in Billy's room. He promptly chose the latter, and when they were alone, he turned to his cousin and asked:

"Billy, have you such a thing as a dictionary about?"

"Nothing but a law dictionary, I believe. Will that do?"

"Really I do not know. Perhaps it might."

"What do you want to find?" asked Billy.

"I only wish to ascertain whether or not we arrived here in time for 'snack.' You said we would, I believe."

"Well, we did, didn't we?"

"That is precisely what I wish to find out. Having never heard of 'snack' until you mentioned it as one of the things we should find at Shirley, I have been curious to know what it is like, and so I have been watching for it ever since we got here. Pray tell me what it is?"

"Well, that's a good one. I must tell Sudie that, and get her to introduce you formally tomorrow."

"It is another interesting custom of the country, I suppose."

"Indeed it is; and it isn't one of those customs that are 'more honored in the breach than the observance,' either."

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Pagebrook makes a Good Impression

Young Pagebrook was an early riser. Not that he was afflicted with one of those unfortunate consciences which make of early rising a penance, by any means. He was not prejudiced against lying abed, nor bigoted about getting up. He quoted no adages on the subject, and was not illogical enough to believe that getting up early and yawning for an hour or two every morning would bring health, wisdom, or wealth to anybody. In short, he was an early riser not on principle but of necessity. Somehow his eyelids had a way of popping themselves open about sunrise or earlier, and his great brawny limbs could not be kept in bed long after this happened. He got up for precisely the same reason that most people lie abed, namely, because there was nothing else to do. On the morning after his arrival at Shirley he awoke early and heard two things which attracted his attention. The first was a sound which puzzled him more than a little. It was a steady, monotonous scraping of a most unaccountable kind – somewhat like the sound of a carpenter's plane and somewhat like that of a saw. Had it been out of doors he would have thought nothing of it; but clearly it was in the house, and not only so, but in every part of the house except the bedrooms. Scrape, scrape, scrape, scrape, scrape. What it meant he could not guess. As he lay there wondering about it he heard another sound, greatly more musical, at which he jumped out of bed and began dressing, wondering at this sound, too, quite as much as at the other, though he knew perfectly well that this was nothing more than a human voice – Miss Sudie's, to wit. He wondered if there ever was such a voice before or ever would be again. Not that the young woman was singing, for she was doing nothing of the sort. She was merely giving some directions to the servants about household matters, but her voice was music nevertheless, and Mr. Bob made up his mind to hear it to better advantage by going down-stairs at once. Now I happen to know that this young woman's voice was in no way peculiar to herself. Every well-bred girl in Virginia has the same rich, full, soft tone, and they all say, as she did, "grauss," "glauss" "bausket," "cyarpet," "cyart," "gyarden," and "gyirl." But it so happened that Mr. Bob had never heard a Virginian girl talk before he met Miss Barksdale, and to him her rich German a's and the musical tones of her voice were peculiarly her own. Perhaps all these things would have impressed him differently if "Cousin Sudie" had been an ugly girl. I have no means of determining the point, inasmuch as "Cousin Sudie" was certainly anything else than ugly.

Mr. Robert made a hasty toilet and descended to the great hall, or passage, as they call it in Virginia. As he did so he discovered the origin of the scraping sound which had puzzled him, as it puzzles everybody else who hears it for the first time. Dry "pine tags" (which is Virginian for the needles of the pine) were scattered all over the floors, and several negro women were busy polishing the hard white planks by rubbing them with an indescribable implement made of a section of log, a dozen corn husks ("shucks," the Virginians call them – a "corn husk" in Virginia signifying a *cob* always), and a pole for handle.

"Good morning, Cousin Robert. You're up soon," said the little woman, coming out of the dining-room and putting a soft, warm little hand in his great palm.

Now to young Pagebrook this was a totally new use of the word "soon," and I dare say he would have been greatly interested in it but for the fact that the trim little woman who stood there, key-basket in hand, interested him more.

"You've caught me in the midst of my housekeeping, but never mind; only be careful, or you'll slip on the pine tags; they're as slippery as glass."

"And is that the reason they are scattered on the floor?"

"Yes, we polish with them. Up North you wax your floors instead, don't you?"

"Yes, for balls and the like, I believe, but commonly we have carpets."

"What! in summer time, too?"

"O yes! certainly, Why not?"

"Why, they're so warm. We take ours up soon in the spring, and never put them down again until fall."

This time Mr. Robert observed the queer use of the word "soon," but said nothing about it. He said instead:

"What a lovely morning it is! How I should like to ride horseback in this air!"

"Would you let me ride with you?" asked the little maiden.

"Such a question, Cousin Sudie!"

Now I am free to confess that this last remark was unworthy Mr. Pagebrook. If not ungrammatical, it is at least of questionable construction, and so not at all like Mr. Pagebrook's usage. But the demoralizing effect of Miss Sudie Barksdale's society did not stop here by any means, as we shall see in due time.

"If you'd really like to ride, I'll have the horses brought," said the little lady.

"And you with me?"

"Yes, if I may."

"I shall be more than happy."

"Dick, run up to the barn and tell Uncle Polidore to saddle Patty for me and Graybeard for your Mas' Robert. Do you hear? Excuse me, Cousin Robert, and I'll put on my habit."

Ten minutes later the pair reined in their horses on the top of a little hill, to look at the sunrise. The morning was just cool enough to be thoroughly pleasant, and the exhilaration which comes of nothing else so surely as of rapid riding began to tell upon the spirits of both. Cousin Sudie was a good rider and a graceful one, and she knew it. Robert's riding hitherto had been done, for the most part, in cities, and on smooth roads; but he held his horse with a firm hand, and controlled him perforce of a strong will, which, with great personal fearlessness and a habit of doing well whatever he undertook to do at all, and undertaking whatever was expected of him, abundantly supplied the lack he had of experience in the rougher riding of Virginia on the less perfectly trained horses in use there. He was a stalwart fellow, with shapely limbs and perfect ease of movement, so that on horseback he was a very agreeable young gentleman to look at, a fact of which Miss Sudie speedily became conscious. Her rides were chiefly without a cavalier, as they were usually taken early in the morning before her cousin Billy thought of getting up; and naturally enough she enjoyed the presence of so agreeable a young gentleman as Mr. Rob certainly was, and her enjoyment of his company – she being a woman – was not diminished in the least by the discovery that to his intellectual and social accomplishments, which were very genuine, there were added a handsome face, a comely person, and a manly enthusiasm for out-door exercise. When he pulled some wild flowers which grew by the road-side without dismounting – a trick he had picked up somewhere – she wondered at the ease and grace with which it was done; when he added to the flowers a little cluster of purple berries from a wild vine, of which I do not know the name, and a sprig of sumac, still wet with dew, she admired his taste; and when he gallantly asked leave to twine the whole into her hair, for her hat had come off, as good-looking young women's hats always do on such occasions, she thought him "just nice."

It is really astonishing how rapidly acquaintanceships form under favorable circumstances. These two young people were shy, both of them, and on the preceding day had hardly spoken to each other at all. When they mounted their horses that morning they were almost strangers, and they might have remained only half acquaintances for a week or a fortnight but for that morning's ride. They were gone an hour, perhaps, in all, and when they sat down to breakfast they were on terms of easy familiarity and genuine friendship.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Pagebrook Learns Several Things

After breakfast Robert walked out with Billy to see the negroes at work cutting tobacco, an interesting operation always, and especially so when one sees it for the first time.

"Gilbert," said Billy to his "head man," "did you find any ripe enough to cut in the lot there by the prize barn?"

"No sah; dat's de greenest lot of tobawkah on de plantation, for all 'twas plaunted fust. I dunno what to make uv it."

"Why, Billy, I thought Cousin Edwin owned the 'prize' barn!" said Robert.

"So he does – his."

"Are there two of them then?"

"Two of them? What do you mean? Every plantation has its prize barn, of course."

"Indeed! Who gives the prizes?"

"Ha! ha! Bob, that's good; only you'd better ask *me* always when you want to know about things here, else you'll get yourself laughed at. A prize barn is simply the barn in which we prize tobacco."

"And what is 'prizing' tobacco?"

"Possibly 'prize' a'n't good English, Bob, but it's the standard Ethiopian for pressing, and everybody here uses it. We press the tobacco in hogsheads, you know, and we call it prizing. It never struck me as a peculiarly Southern use of the word, but perhaps it is for all that. You're as sharp set as a circular saw after dialect, a'n't you?"

"I really do not know precisely how sharp set a circular saw is, but I am greatly interested in your peculiar uses of English, certainly."

Upon returning to the house Billy said:

"Bob I must let you take care of yourself for two or three hours now, as I have some papers to draw up and they won't wait. Next week is court week, and I've got a great deal to do between now and then. But you're at home you know, old fellow."

So saying Mr. Billy went to his office, which was situated in the yard, while Robert strolled into the house. Looking into the dining-room he saw there Cousin Sudie. Possibly the young gentleman was looking for her. I am sure I do not know. But whether he had expected to find her there or not, he certainly felt some little surprise as he looked at her.

"Why, Cousin Sudie, is it possible that you are washing the dishes?"

"O certainly! and the plates and cups too. In fact, I wash up all the things once a day."

"Pray tell me, cousin, precisely what you understand by 'dishes,' if I'm not intruding," said Robert.

"O not at all! come in and sit down. You'll find it pleasanter there by the window. 'Dishes?' Why, that is a dish, and that and that," pointing to them.

"I see. The word 'dishes' is not a generic term in Virginia, but applies only to platters and vegetable dishes. What do you call them in the aggregate, Cousin Sudie? I mean plates, platters, cups, saucers, and everything."

"Why 'things,' I suppose. We speak of 'breakfast things,' 'tea things,' 'dinner things.' But why were you astonished to see me washing them, Cousin Robert?"

"Perhaps I ought to have known better, but the fact is I had an impression that Southern ladies were wholly exempt from all work except, perhaps, a little embroidery or some such thing."

"O my! I wish you could see me during circuit court week, when Uncle Carter and Cousin Billy bring the judge and the lawyers home with them at all sorts of odd hours; and they always

bring the hungriest ones there are too. I fall at once into a chronic state of washing up things, and don't recover until court is over."

"But really, cousin – pardon me if I am inquisitive, for I am greatly interested in this life here in Virginia, it is so new to me – how is it that *you* must wash up things at all?"

"Why, I carry the keys, you know. I'm housekeeper."

"Well, but you have servants enough, certainly, and to spare."

"O yes! but every lady washes up the things at least once a day. It would never do to trust it altogether to the servants, you know."

"None of them are sufficiently careful and trustworthy, do you mean?"

"Well, not exactly that; but it's our way here, and if a lady were to neglect it people would think her a poor housekeeper."

"Are there any other duties devolving upon Virginian housekeepers besides 'washing up things?' You see I am trying to learn all I can of a life which is as charmingly strange to me as that of Turkey or China would be if I were to go to either country."

"Any other duties? Indeed there are, and you shall learn what they are, if you won't find it stupid to go my rounds with me. I'm going now."

"I should find dullness itself interesting with you as my fellow observer of it."

"Right gallantly said, kind sir," said Miss Sudie, with an exaggerated curtsy. "But if you're going to make pretty speeches I'll get impudent directly. I'm dreadfully given to it anyhow, and I've a notion to say one impudent thing right now."

"Pray do. I pardon you in advance."

"Well, then, what makes you say 'Virginian housekeepers?'"

"What else should I say?"

"Why, Virginia housekeepers, of course, like anybody else."

"But 'Virginia' is not an adjective, cousin. You would not say 'England housekeepers' or 'France housekeepers,' would you?" asked Robert.

"No, but I would say 'New York housekeepers,' 'Massachusetts housekeepers,' or 'New Jersey housekeepers,' and so I say 'Virginia housekeepers,' too. I reckon you would find it a little troublesome to carry out your rule, wouldn't you, Cousin Robert?"

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