

### THE CASE OF MARY ELLEN

"What did the neighbors say about it?" the lady of the house asked, in her practical way.

"Dat what pestered me all de time, ma'am," Aunt Minervy Ann replied. "I ax Marse Bolivar, 'What de folks gwine ter say when dey hear 'bout dis come off?' He stuck his thum's in de arm-holes er his wescut, an' 'low, 'Dat what I wanter know, an' I wanter know so bad, Minervy Ann, dat ef you hear anybody talkin' loose talk 'bout it, des come runnin' ter me while it's hot. Now don't you fail.'

"But Marse Bolivar ain't wait fer me ter hear what folks say. He went polin' up town de nex' day, an' tol' 'bout it in eve'y sto' on de street, an' de las' man in town vow'd 'twuz de ve'y thing ter do. An' dat ain't all, ma'am! De folks dar raise a lot er money fer Mary Ellen, an' de way dat chile went on when Marse Bolivar put it in 'er han' an' tol' er whar it come fum wuz pitiful ter see.

"Dat's de way 'tis, ma'am; ketch um in de humor an' eve'ybody's good; ketch um out'n de humor an' dey er all mean—I know dat by my own feelin's. Ef a fly had lit on Marse Bolivar's face dat day, Mary Ellen would 'a' had ter face 'er trouble by 'er own 'lone self. Ef some sour-minded man had gone up town an' told how Marse Bolivar