

'ere kind: you can coax him and tole him with a yer of corn, but jist try to drive him and he wont. 'Git up,' says you, 'I won't,' says he; 'Git up *there*,' says you, 'I'll be dogged ef I do,' says he, and lets his heels fly and you keel over backward. I tried drivin' and tolin' last summer and he kicked up every time I tried the spurs onto him. But he's goin' to Texas shore enough, they say. That'll wear out soon and he'll be back here, like the prodigal son, eatin' swine's flesh with the rest of us."

Here he gave a knowing look at each of his auditors and received a significant blink in return.

Just at this point Mark Bonamy himself came in to attend to some business with the sheriff's deputy.

"Good-morning, Major," he said, half-conscious at once that he had interrupted some conversation about himself.

"Howdy, Mark? Goin' to Texas, shore as shootin', so they say?"

"Yes." This with some hesitation, as of a man who would fain make an avowal with reserve lest he should want to creep out of it.

"Well, Mark," here Lathers paused, placed his feet on the mantle-piece again and again performed the preliminary rite of expectoration, "I do say that they aint many folks that gives up more'n you do in goin' away on a fool mission to convert the heathen. Now, Mark, it mayn't be a bad move *after* all. Texas is a small republic, and you may come to be president there, like Joseph did in the land of Canaan. Hey? And Texas may be hitched on behind Uncle Sam's steamboat some day as a sort of yawl. In which case look out for Mark Bonamy, United States Senator. It's better to be capt'in of a yawl than deck-hand on board the 'General Pike.' I don't know whether you're *such* a fool after all. Joseph didn't go down into Egypt for nothing. He had his eye on the corn."

Here Lathers winked at the deputy's luminous nose, and then looked seriously at Bonamy. Somehow Mark, at this moment, felt ashamed of his mission, and was quite willing to have Lathers impute to him interested designs rather than to appear to the eyes of that elevated moral philosopher a man who was somewhat disinterested and therefore a fool. The real chameleon is a sensitive vanity, prone to change color with every change of surrounding.

Mark Bonamy was not yet a licensed preacher, nor even an exhorter, for his probation of six months had not expired. He exhorted in meeting by general consent, but as a layman. A glowing account of his abilities and of his missionary enthusiasm had been sent to Bishop Hedding, who immediately booked him in his mind as suited to some dangerous and difficult rôle; for Hedding looked on men as a chess-player does upon his pieces, he weighed well the difference between a knight and a rook, and especially between a piece with great powers and a mere pawn. The death of Dr. Martin Ruter had weakened the Texan mission. In Mark, as described to him, he saw a man of force who might in time prove of the utmost value to the church in that new republic. So he wrote to Mark, asking if he would proceed in the autumn to Texas and take a place as second man on a circuit of some five hundred miles around, with forty-seven preaching-places. The letter came at the right moment, for Bonamy had just returned from the great camp-meeting in Moore's Woods, with all his religious enthusiasm and