

necessary to let the feeble breath whisper out its story as it could. Mr. Thornly continued: "I have been in trouble of late, my farm was mortgaged—I saw no way of meeting the payment whose term had expired. I saw my family—soon to be—reduced to starvation—my little children suffering—beggars." He paused, and could not go on until they had given him some cordial drops. "I say I saw all this. It was with me night and day. It was my haunting thought. I feared I was getting mad. When I heard my boys saying their prayers at night—" He stopped again as if he would have cried out, but did not. It was pain to listen to the pants that broke up his words as he resumed. "When I heard them, it rose before me like a ghost up out of a grave, what was to become of them—every terrible chance of life seemed possible for them—I felt their poor little feet treading bare over snowy roads—I saw them blue and pinched—and aching—with hunger. Oh! when I lay down at night, when I rose at morning, the sight of my wife's eyes cut me to the heart and made me wild, as I thought of—every thing lost—the farm—perhaps even me—and she outcast—cold charity—temptation and trial. More than once I looked at them all—and thought—how kind the hand that should release them from life and evil—want—woe. Fritz Heintzelman knew my state of mind; he suggested to me to borrow money. I did so. He walked out to meet me that night—in the wood. Perhaps I had—drank—a little, I don't know. He found me half-erazed with that, or with the reaction from my long torment. I had a dim idea that I was wrong—I gave him the money to keep. He led me home. I think he must have staid round the place then still. I went in. They were all asleep. I went and looked at them—feeling so glad. At my wife with the baby on her arm. At Jack and Steve. I was so glad that they were safe once more, and had a home. Then I felt for the money; it was gone; that made me furious a moment—but directly I remembered that—I had given it to Fritz to keep for me. And then I looked at them again—and the old fear and terror rushed over me. I could not get away from it. And I thought if things should ever come to such a pass again—and having been once—why not again? And it seemed as if I could not let them live to meet it—as if I could not live myself. Only a moment—no pain—and then eternal rest. I suppose I was insane—I suppose I was insane—only I remember it all. A drawer was open. I saw something glitter there. It was my razor. I took—took it up—and drew the edge—finer than a hair—it could not hurt them in the least—and no more trouble. I remember lifting my arm, I remember the shudder she gave, opening her blue eyes; but I had done that; the rest must follow. Then it seems to me I was just touching myself, something warm was spurting over me, when I heard Fritz's voice, and saw him breaking through a window. I made haste—but he seized my arm—he snatched the razor

—he turned to the children—and I leaped from him, and ran out of the house along the field and up the river-bank. A widow woman who lives on the farm of Low Acres, an untraveled spot, found me—she knows little of what goes on in the outside world—it was only last night—waking from a stupor—that I heard her talking of this trial, concerning which she knew but little—and with his name it rushed over me—and here I am. You can hang me if you choose. I hope, I hope you will. For, unless you do, I shall have lost them here and hereafter too! Only make haste—for, as you see, I am dying."

He was indeed. When he ceased speaking, and abandoned the unnatural exertion he had made, his eyes wandered idly round him as if he could no longer direct them, his head fell a little upon one side, and he was dead.

Nobody could have held Fritz Heintzelman then if any body had tried. He had broken all bounds, and was kneeling at his master's chair imploring him to look up, to speak. But in a moment he rose calmly as of old. They had called it brutality before; now they called it phlegm. "No," said he. "It is the best. It is the best."

The ceremony of the law had long since been abandoned there—it could be no otherwise in listening to that man's recital breaking through all rules of testimony. Now there was only such brief return to it as was required to pronounce the prisoner Not Guilty.

They carried Fritz out of the court-house in their arms. The crowd cheered him till the ringing heavens were hoarse. They would have spread his way with flowers, have feasted him, have lauded him, have endowed him, have given him any ovation. But as he had repelled them before so he repelled them now. For months and years it seemed as if his heart were broken within him; but youth is elastic, and time, in making him an American citizen, and bringing him other loves and ambitions, bridged over this black gap and chasm in his life. And then he could no longer hinder the generous atonements that were loaded upon him, and rising degree by degree, to-day there is no more respected an individual in that region—an overseer of the poor and director of the Barkburn Bank, to which a poor farmer or struggling mechanic never applies in vain for discount on his paper—than this same Fritz Heintzelman.

JONES'S IMPUDENCE.

I PROPOSE to consider the case of—yes, my friend Jones. Jones troubles my mind much. I like him, and yet I am of those who judge "a man should know his place and keep it." By all his intimate acquaintance, indeed, Jones is highly esteemed. The man's sole fault appears to be his extraordinary impudence. I can think of no one who has a finer sense of honor than he. Meanness is altogether foreign to his nature. His integrity is beyond question, his simplicity truly admirable. His generosity of

temperament is highly praised by many upon whom he has conferred unasked favors. He would be famed amidst his circle for his entire want of selfishness did he not wear his virtue in his sleeve. It has yet been brought to light that he has deprived himself of what most would call necessities in order that luxuries might be provided a feeble mother. With such rectitude as this is rarely found united such charity for the failings of others.

In the more manly virtues, fortitude, courage, energy, he— But I weary the reader with my enthusiastic praise, and I omit further extension of the catalogue of his noble qualities. I have said enough to show he is worthy of any man's friendship. He has, moreover, wit and intelligence. His conversation often charms me.

Jones is an artist by profession. My purchase of one of his pictures made us acquainted. It was a small and unpretentious work hung below the line at the Academy exhibition. I described in it, nevertheless, a sincerity of feeling and conscientious painstaking that commended it to me. In the painter I found a middle-sized man, of a homely cast of features, in which a keen gray eye was alone attractive. He was extremely ill-clad. Every thing about him denoted that his struggle with life was a hard one. His age was seemingly twenty-four or five.

I respect much encouragers of youthful talent, and like to consider myself one of them. I have patronized not a few young artists. I smiled benignly upon Jones, and declared that I saw signs of great promise in his production. To my astonishment he did not treat me with that degree of deference I was accustomed to receive from such as he. He looked me frankly and fully in the eyes, as he replied he himself considered it his best work. There was not a particle of awe in his manner, no timid shrinking as if he had a doubt of pleasing me. He seemed to regard me purely as a man and a brother. That a mere poverty-stricken aspirant for fame should so act toward a capitalist did not, I must confess, impress me favorably toward him. I am always, however, inclined to pardon much to artists. They are a class of men who are obliged by the nature of their profession to do their own thinking, and eccentricity is to be expected among them. I was only led, therefore, to resolve to exalt myself more greatly in his eyes, and forthwith spoke of my desire to give him a commission or two. I was answered simply that he would be happy to see me at his studio, and straightway invited me to visit him in the sixth story of the building 999½ Broadway.

Thus was Jones's extraordinary impudence first manifested to me.

I was rightly indignant. I, a man of fifty, a merchant of high standing in the community, whose real estate alone was worth some hundred thousands, the father of four of the finest girls in the city, I to be treated as a mere equal by the lean, threadbare youngster before me!

As to years alone he might have been my son. I, whose wife was a leader of fashion on the Avenue! I, the favored guest of the proudest circles, invited by an unknown dauber to visit him in his garret! The fellow was of a verity ignorant of his place. I could, of course, afford to be magnanimous. I smiled internally at his presumption, and, being really interested in such an abnormal specimen of humanity, contented myself with no other rebuke than a sarcastic bow, and the intimation that I would do myself the honor of calling upon him at his earliest convenience. Jones never winced, but making a respectful bow departed from my side. I saw him a moment after conversing with a long-haired brother professional, as seemingly unconscious of any condescension I had paid him as if I had never existed.

Now how would my head book-keeper have behaved under similar circumstances?—a man, too, whose salary is three thousand dollars per annum, while Jones, I know, realizes scarcely seven hundred. Binks—an estimable man he is—would have been agitated in every feature with pleasure, and, meeting a fellow-official, would have assumed an arrogant air befitting the occasion. I had it; Jones was concited—all artists are—he imagined himself a great painter. Again I looked at him. I like to study human nature, and am also a literary amateur. Letters are my pastime. To my fondness for them is due this account. I looked at Jones again, I repeat, and his manner unsettled my conviction. Jones was unquestionably a puzzler! I determined to act upon the sarcasm with which I had concluded our conversation. I would visit him.

A small room, with discolored walls, hung all over with studies of foliage, of rocks and mountains, of skies and river-scenery, presented itself to my gaze. Here and there was a canvas which bore as yet no mark of the brush, while others showed skill in composition, and exhibited all the appearance of a finished painting. Three common wooden chairs, a tattered lounge, and a cheap easel comprised the remainder of the furniture, with the exception of a dingy green screen, which, like the walls, was profusely ornamented with sketches in oil and lead-pencil. Jones, clad in a ragged dressing-gown, outstretched his hand as I entered.

His confounded impudence again! Such was his manner, however, that in a dazed state, forgetting the rebuke due his insolence, I extended my own digits. It was astonishing that the ill-clad fellow before me could so impress a man of the world, used to all varieties of the human family. As with awkwardness, arising from a consciousness of defeat, I seated myself in a proffered chair my countenance underwent a series of expressions before the calm gaze of Jones. I was at first impelled to a stern look of dignity. The frown had, however, scarcely begun to contract my eyebrows before I felt myself acting ridiculously—Jones seemed so unconscious of any offense rendered. My bewil-

derment now made me avert my eyes in a hesitant look about the room, and I suppose my agitation must have manifested itself more absurdly, for I saw an irrepressible smile hovering over Jones's lips. My emotions were perhaps similar to that of a lover before his mistress when upon the eve of proposal. That such a conceited youngster should so affect me was too much! That hardly-concealed smile!—why, I actually amused him! I determined at once to establish myself on my proper footing.

"You have often wealthy visitors, I suppose, Sir?" was my harsh remark—it seems now to me a contemptible one.

"No, Sir. I believe you are the first gentleman answering to that description my poor studio has seen. A frame-maker occasionally calls; and, like all Bohemians, I see sometimes a dun. I do my best, however, not to be ultra-Bohemian as to that." Thus responded Jones, mildly and courteously.

Courteously? Was it so? Would not his proper courtesy have been rightly shown by signs of humility? I so judged.

"Well, Sir, I must say that, for a man—" I was desirous of giving him a savage declaration of his inferiority to me, but I could not finish my sentence. Jones looked up at me with such a peculiar expression in his eyes that I was compelled to stop. In what consisted the power of that expression? Was it rage?—was it surprise? I could not declare. I tried afterward to analyze my own feelings. It really appeared to me that I was oppressed by a sense of my own inferiority—the conviction that I stood on infirm ground, and that I would assuredly meet with a conqueror should I offer battle.

It was all to no purpose my determination to put Jones down. Jones was triumphant; I must so consider him for the moment at all events. The fellow was a fool; did not know any better; was placed in an unusual position, and did the best his ignorance allowed. Answer a fool according to his folly. No one was looking on whose ill opinion could injure me. Instead of leaving (my only other resource) I would humor Jones.

Of course it was easy for me, in view of the object of my visit, to ask to see the artist's portfolio of sketches, and it as well as his productions on the walls were examined amidst an animated conversation. The man's mind was wonderfully full for one so young. He had read much and thought deeply. I could not consider him a fool. In fact, I was continually contradicting myself in all opinions concerning him. I had never met before such a man as he. He did not seem conceited—and I tried him severely then, giving my sentiments on his work in a caustic style, which I rarely indulge in. Often, when my denunciations were loudest (I still remembered his impudence!), he, without attempting the faintest excuse, would chime in with my remarks, and acknowledge he was ashamed of the subject criticised. When by extravagant praise I tried to draw him into

vain expressions, I was always foiled by his simplicity and knowledge of his profession. He was just to himself, and merely wanted justice from others as to his artistic ability.

It is usual with me to find among painters the greatest ignorance on matters not directly connected with their profession. Theirs is an absorbing pursuit; to achieve success in it is to be a one-ideal man: Jones was an exception to this rule also. I commented upon it to him, and he observed that he doubtless would have been a better artist had his mind run more in one channel; but that he had felt that higher than mere professional matters claimed every man's attention. A man himself among others, the consideration of various relations was of greater value to himself than worldly success, and he was by nature compelled to regard his practice of art as secondary to his own manhood. I thought him somewhat transcendental in his views, but was exceedingly interested in them, and not a little astonished by certain of his observations. He propounded many puzzling questions to me, and I was so puzzled in every way that I now remember little of our conversation but its effects.

Well, my visit ended in my giving him three commissions—a noontide effect, a moonlight effect, and a marine view. As I bid him good-day he had the impudence to say he would be most happy to see me again soon; that he enjoyed my society much. Before I knew what I was doing I had expressed my satisfaction at the amount of pleasure I had received, and ended by inviting him to my house—a picture-gallery, etc.

As I descended the sixth flight of stairs the thought of what I had done burst upon me. What would my wife say? I shuddered, and yet I laughed. Jones's impudence was magnificent. I had been fairly enslaved by it. I brought to mind Caesar and Napoleon, and wondered if impudence were not genius.

Three days after, at half past eight in the evening, Kalves, my footman, threw open the door of my drawing-room and announced "Mr. Richard Jones!" Was it possible? Had I really set no time for the visit of that indomitable painter? Had I actually extended to him a cordial and general invitation to call upon me, the same as I would to Chancellor Allgreek or Professor Oddman? My wife was totally unprepared for his appearance. I had entirely forgotten my friend of the sixth story by the time I had reached home. Circumstances had shut out all memory of his eccentricity ever since. My four accomplished and fashionable daughters would be shocked by his vulgar impudence; and present with us, too, was the celebrated Oleander, whose last volume of poems were the world's talk. How would his refined nature endure such odious contact?

In the hurry of the moment I ejaculated to my companions, "A young artist who will make his way yet!" when the figure of Jones was presented, arrayed in the usual threadbare coat,

and furthermore adorned by a pair of cheap gloves.

Jones advanced smilingly and easily up to me, and my intention of requesting him to sit in the back parlor for a few moments until I could attend to him was at once abandoned. With him came his influence. I succumbed. It was his first visit, I was convinced, into "good society," and curious to see how great his "genius" was, I introduced him to the assembled party.

Any other man in his position, gifted with the ordinary sentiments of humanity, would, I know, have exhibited some hesitancy as he saluted the brilliant, and in part scornful, circle. He surely could not but feel that he had made a mistake, that he was not entirely welcome. Not a trace of embarrassment was visible in his manner, and he seated himself on a chair near my eldest daughter. When unobserved she threw a look at me which made me pity Jones. His mistake, however, was in some degree mine, and as a gentleman I could not forbear rendering him all the assistance I could to make him feel comfortable. Yet I supposed, of course, that he would act as though he knew himself more fit to be an observer than the observed. His conduct for the first few moments justified my opinion. He was quite silent, and after a few pleasant remarks passed him by my wife he was left to himself.

Oleander is a gentleman of fortune as well as a poet. He is a decided aristocrat. He is one of many Americans on whom the traditions of the Old World have greater influence than the noble spirit of progress which characterizes our own institutions. In an imaginative being, however, such as he, I consider this less reprehensible. The past must ever have a halo which the present has not. He was mounted on his hobby as Jones entered the room, and, I could perceive, was intensely disgusted at his appearance and the air of equality with which he shook hands with him. Jones must have seen it too, but it was altogether insufficient to disturb his serenity; and yet Oleander is a "great" man. He has been addressing many of his late poems to my eldest daughter, whom he regards with the most refined affection. To this, somewhat, I attributed his manifestations of impatience as Jones seated himself beside her, and, apparently unconscious of the poor figure he cut, made some pleasant observation.

As soon as sufficient civilities had been paid "the painter," Oleander, ignoring his presence, saw fit to take up his discourse at the point where it had been broken off, and launched into a glorification of the feudal ages:

"In that bright star of olden time the people held their proper place. They were the rightful slaves of their noble masters. That deference was paid station which its merits accorded. Nobility was transmitted from father to son, and no aspiring demagogue could seat himself beside it. Churls were churls then—by themselves and all others so regarded."

Jones here interrupted the flow of eloquence by saying, "You forget, Sir, that in that 'golden era' all the more noble professions were degraded beside that of arms; the physician was but an apothecary; the learned man of science despised or dreaded as a wizard; poets themselves, instead of divinely-inspired teachers, were looked upon as mere servants."

This was outrageously impudent of Jones. Confound the fellow! who was he? A miserable dauter, who could hardly support himself! My wife gave me a supplicating look. My eldest daughter frowned and bit her lips; my youngest laughed softly to herself. There was an awful pause, and then Oleander, without reply, in calm disdain proceeded. I could yet see he was enraged, and knowing his sarcastic power, felt sure the presumptuous Jones would at length be brought to his proper level.

The system of caste was further lauded. Oleander went more remotely into history and extolled the ancient Egyptians. "Among them," he observed, "was carefully studied the natural fitness of things. The carpenter's son must be a carpenter, the plowman's a plowman. Among them were not seen parents toiling hard and depriving themselves of comforts in order that their children might reach another and a higher position. No children despised their parents in that their education, their accustomed circumstances, unfitted them for the circle in which their offspring moved."

He talked splendidly, and we all thought Jones completely annihilated. Every word uttered was a stab at the youngster's insolence. How elegantly it was done too! Oleander had never impressed us more favorably. My wife and daughters interchanged looks of ill-concealed satisfaction. No one of us glanced in Jones's direction out of pity for his extreme discomfiture. Imagine, then, our astonishment when, in a firm and dignified tone, that individual again interrupted our esteemed friend's oratory:

"As a philosopher, Sir, you are, I must suppose, inclined to honor those who love the truth. You will oblige me by throwing more light upon what you have just uttered. It appears to me that the laws of God are higher than those of man; that where He gave talent He meant it should be used. No one, I believe, can deny that the common people have produced the greatest geniuses. What would not mankind have lost had they been compelled by law to devote themselves exclusively to the parental profession!"

Jones spoke well—there was no question of that. But then what impudence! I never saw the gentlemanly exterior of Oleander so discomposed. He turned pale with indignation and bit his lips before he responded, in a frigid tone:

"I know of no better illustration, Sir, of the truth of my remarks than yourself. I bid you good-evening." He glanced at the clock upon the mantle, and added, gayly: "Yes, ladies, your pleasant converse has delayed me many

minutes beyond the time set for an appointment elsewhere." And bowing himself out of the room he was gone.

Jones, the indomitable, had, however, opportunity to declare to him that a gentleman did not know what a verbal insult was; he cared merely for the truth concerning himself. My youngest daughter now asked him for his opinion on a book of engravings just published, and he seated himself beside her to examine them.

I was lost in a reverie for some moments, and then invited Mr. Jones to visit my collection of paintings. My daughter Emma accompanied us. I had intended to give the young man some fatherly advice, but her presence prevented it. Would I have been able to do so had she not been with us? I really doubt it, so self-possessed was he with all his impudence. Had Oleander maintained his supremacy? or had Jones?—I looked at his ill-clad figure. I thought of his position in society. I wondered—and well I might. My enthusiasm for art, however, soon absorbed my mind. In an animated and learned conversation with my protégé (?) I again forgot myself, and, bidding him good-by, cordially invited him again to visit me.

"Why, George, how could you?" asked my wife, indignantly.

"The impudent little wretch!" exclaimed my eldest daughter.

"He's shockingly vulgar!" declared both Elizabeth and Matilda.

"Oh, pa, I think he's so funny!" laughed Emma, my youngest.

How could so much impudence be joined with such good sense as that which puzzled me.

I saw Jones two or three times after this before I felt in myself the ability to speak to him as I desired, and as my natural kindly feeling prompted me. At last the occasion came. At the private view of the National Academy I was so inspired. A friend was about to present Jones to the great Splatterdash—an historical painter of renown. That worthy bowed stiffly and contemptuously as Jones advanced, whereupon he incontinently turned upon his heel and walked away, leaving the famed artist in a state of rage too gigantic for description. I saw the whole scene, and meeting Jones instantly after addressed him:

"My young friend, you will surely not refuse advice from a man like me, old enough to be your father."

"Certainly not, Sir. I have every reason to respect you. Your opinions will be listened to gladly. If I prove them correct I shall be happy to adopt them."

"Well, I have observed what has just passed. It appears to me you do not sufficiently study

what is customary. No one knows better the worth of your heart and mind than myself, but from a man in your position—you have no name, you are poor—the world expects greater deference. It adjudges impudence the absence of that deference."

"I know the world, Sir, only when it is right. I have long ago convinced myself I should not know how to act should I yield myself to the opinions of others. It would be making of myself a shuttle-cock to innumerable battle-doors. Study, reflection, the exercise of reason, are guides that alone have helped me in my onward course through life. Should I give them up I would be compelled to consider myself a fool. I would be a fool. I honor distinction and I honor wealth, but only as they should be honored. Possession of those advantages often proves ability, but possession of them does not necessarily exact servility from others. A great man, Sir, does not wish the marks of respect so much as respect itself. A great man respects others. It is the duty of a gentleman to prove himself one. That Splatterdash did not regard me in my proper light. I took the only course I knew to make him acquainted with his error. I could not have respected myself had I acted differently. He may be a great artist, but he is not a noble man. I no sooner saw his manner toward me than I perceived I understood the gentlemanly character better than he did. I, exalted to his station, could not so act toward a poorer brother. Such pride as his is meanness of soul. The nobility of a man is much greater than the nobility of a painter. He is above me in small things. I am above him in great."

What could I say to such a tirade as this? His impassioned manner, his flashing eye elevated his stature and gave dignity to his ill-clad form. The man before me was not the man whom five minutes before I had accosted. I had no advice to offer him. Luckily for me a mutual friend came up at this juncture, and my reply was not necessitated.

All this happened two years ago. Yesterday I had another instance of Jones's impudence. With a bland smile, a firm yet respectful manner, he solicited of me the hand of my favorite, my youngest daughter Emma. She it is to whom the only heir of the great Cræsus has been paying the most impassioned addresses—my most beautiful, my most loving!

"Well, Jones, really I—"

"Sir, I have a certainty now of three thousand a year, and I—"

"Oh, pa, I love him so much!"

That magnetic eye was upon me. How could I refuse?

"Well, well; bless you, my children, bless you!"

THE VIRGINIANS IN TEXAS.

CHAPTER I.

MOVING TO TEXAS.

THIS gentleman whom we see riding toward us along this forest road is Mr. Morton McRobert, late of Virginia. He wears, you see, a broad-brimmed woolen hat, that is to protect him from the sun, and because no amount of crushing in traveling will injure it. As he rides nearer to us you can see under the rim of his hat enough of his face to read therein cheerfulness, sincerity, and quiet determination. You can know that it is not to preaching that he is going, by the copperas-colored clothes he wears—worn for hard service and not for show. Yes, the horse he rides is a good one, as you notice—strong, spirited, with small, sharp-pointed ears in incessant motion. Black Bob is his name.

But let horse and rider pass on, for we hear the sound of coming wheels behind him, and we want to see who it is. And while the sound draws nearer along the winding of the sandy road among the trees, just a word or two about Mr. McRobert. It would have been in strict accordance with Texas usage if we had stopped him when we had first met him and proceeded thus:

"Good-morning, Sir."

"Good-morning," he would have replied.

"Moving, I reckon?"

"Yes, Sir, I believe so."

"What State are you from?"

"Virginia."

Then if you happened to be from Virginia too you would instantly ask, "Ah, indeed! What county?" And if you happened to be from the same or bordering counties there would be no telling where the conversation would end—not until you ascertained the degree of your relationship to him, if it took three hours. If you were not from Virginia you would only ask, taking less interest in him, "I say, stranger, what did you leave for?"

Nor in the early days of Texas would a mover to the State have been astonished, scarce displeased, at the question. Many came then to Texas on account of frauds or murders committed by them. Of these some continued their evil courses in their new home, and soon perished by intemperance or the bowie-knife. But very many turned over a new leaf altogether, refunded ultimately all they owed, and lived many a long year afterward prosperous in cattle and lands, respected and happy. Criminals rarely fly to Texas now. They are more certainly caught and carried back than if they had concealed themselves in the cellars of their own city. Emigration to Texas now is larger than ever before, but of a character, in general, entirely different.

Now if Mr. McRobert had been one of the refugees from justice, in answer to any such

question he would have said, "Oh, well, yes, I had some difficulties in the neighborhood where I lived." The word "difficulties" embraced every thing—theft, forgery, assassination.

However, I hardly think any one would have questioned Mr. McRobert as closely as was usual in the case of strangers. It is astonishing how much of his character, good or bad, a man carries in his face; and there was an aspect of dignity and self-respect in the very countenance and bearing of this gentleman that would have repressed all impertinence. If he had answered, however, he would have told that he had been once a wealthy planter in Virginia. I do not think he would have detailed to any one the manner in which he had been swindled out of his property by the base treachery of one whom he had greatly esteemed and loved. This was a part of his past experience which he never alluded to, hardly even in his own family; which he thought of even as little as possible. It is not necessary to enter into any detail just here. The result was, that Mr. McRobert had been rapidly reduced from wealth to almost poverty.

His coming to Texas happened in this way: Years before, his brother Frank, warm-hearted but wayward, had gone to Texas, had fought in all its early wars with Indians and Mexicans, had settled there, and had become extravagantly attached to the country. Remaining, so far as was known, unmarried, all he seemed to care for was Texas and his brother Morton's family. "A letter from Uncle Frank!" by any one returning from the post-office, was an announcement always hailed with special pleasure.

Now, it so happened that very soon after his heavy loss such a letter was announced one morning in the family. Uncle Frank had often urged his brother to move to Texas. In this letter, though he had heard nothing of his brother's loss, he urged the same thing with more force than ever before. He even made a special offer. He had "located"—that is, had picked out and legally secured—a league of fine land on the Colorado River, which he offered to his brother as a free gift in case he would move to Texas. To show how much he was in earnest, whole-souled Uncle Frank had actually inclosed the patent to the land, with its broad red seal and the transfer indorsed on the back of the broad parchment.

The morning the letter came Mr. McRobert had risen from a night of sleepless anxiety as to the future. At family worship he had besought Divine direction as to his plans, and it was when the family were at breakfast that Hark, the black man, brought in the large letter in its huge brown envelope, and laid it on the table. It really seemed a providence, a direct reply to prayer, a flash of light upon a dark spot.

Venable, the eldest boy, read the letter aloud. It was full of descriptions of the health, fertility, beauty, prosperity of Texas, and urgent were