

affectionate. He came occasionally to the parsonage, and still oftener to Mr. Potter's church. He fondled Julia's children and took them upon his knees, but he never intimated, by word, or deed, or sign even, that he intended to bestow upon his niece any portion of his hoarded gold.

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It was a bleak, blustering winter afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. Potter had been out all day, on parochial visits. As they stopped in the hall on their return, a large, round box met their eyes. It had evidently been deposited there during their absence. Julia, although her fingers were numbed with the cold, stopped towards it, wondering what kind heart had bestowed upon them thus modestly, its donation.

"Somebody has sent us a cheese, dear," she said, as she stooped and surveyed the dimensions of the box. "I reckon its a cheese! But nere is something penciled upon the lid," and, stooping down, she read, "*A gift from Uncle Peter.*"

"What is that?" said her husband, pausing beside her.

"Uncle Peter has sent us a cheese, as I believe," she continued, glancing archly into her husband's face, and removing, at the same time, the lid. "What is going to happen? Such unheard of liberality is astonishing. Is the world coming to an end, I wonder? See, dear, what a large, golden looking cheese! Who would have thought it?"

The clergyman smiled.

"We must have some of it for supper, to-night, Julia," he said. "I think I shall relish a piece right well."

Julia returned the cover to its place, and passed out to relieve herself of her bonnet and cloak.

When the snowy cloth was spread for tea, she sent the servant girl after the box.

"Bring it into the pantry," she said. "I will cut it myself. I wish Uncle Peter was here to take tea with us."

The girl soon returned.

"Please, ma'am," she said, stopping in the door, "I can't lift that 'ar box. It's as heavy as lead."

"Can't lift it, Susan!" said Julia, "Why I could almost lift it myself, and you are twice as strong as I am. What ails you?"

"Why, ma'am it's the heaviest cheese I ever seed or heard tell on in my life. I really believe it would weigh a thousand pounds. May I ax John to help me?"

"Yes—tell John to bring it," said Julia, carelessly. "I think you both together will muster up strength sufficient to fetch it here."

The box was brought and deposited upon the pantry table, but not without difficulty. The next operation was removing it from the box. This, too, was at length accomplished. Julia took the knife and penetrated the golden rind. But what could the cheese be made of? She could not cut it. The edge of the knife came in contact with something as impenetrable as rock. She drew it out, dulled and blunted.

Her curiosity was excited. She hastily sliced off a piece of the rind. To her surprise some gold coin rolled out and fell at her feet. A few more incisions told the tale, and revealed the mystery. The cheese was nothing but a rind. The inside had been carefully scraped out, and the aperture filled with gold. Uncle Peter's gift was one of no mean value. It was a *golden cheese* indeed. It contained a very handsome fortune.