

"No, I do not know that he has had the offer of a better living on earth, but he is going to the city of the New Jerusalem soon. Its gates, father, are like pearls, and its foundations are of all manner of precious stones. Its streets are like gold, and there is no night there. Its inhabitants are forever young and beautiful—they are clothed in white, and sighing and sorrow have fled away—there, father, is where the young clergyman at Morton is going; and can I be blamed for wanting to go with him?"

The tear which had sprung to the old man's eye, now rolled slowly down his cheek, but his daughter drew from a pocket in her apron a delicate white handkerchief and wiped it away.

"Those are strange, unworldly thoughts of yours, Julia," he said at last, "but this is a bitter world, child, and its paths, thorny and tear washed, have to be travelled before the new Jerusalem can be gained. The young fellow is well enough, I dare say—he is fine looking—a good orator, and a good Christian. But Jule, he'll let you starve, I'm afraid. I have little or nothing to give you. His salary is not large. You can not live on love alone. Peter might make my only child happy, but he is as stingy as though he was not worth a cent."

The young girl's face grew very sad. She became pale and silent. The old man, too, was thoughtful.

"Julia," he said at last, "I have thought this matter of marriage all over. You are my only child. There is nothing I desire so ardently as I do your happiness. On the one hand you may contract a necessary marriage without love—on the other, you may marry for love alone. I leave you to make your own choice."

"Father, said the girl, "I would do nothing contrary to your wishes, but I love this young clergyman at Morton better than I shall ever love another. I am willing to encounter poverty with him. But uncle Peter is childless and wifeless—he has gold in abundance. He surely will give us something. I feel confident of it."

"Mr. Potter," he said, "is a Free Mason. I remember seeing him once clad in his regalia. I think he holds some high office in that body. You know your uncle's prejudices against the Order. That alone will be sufficient to make him regard, with aversion, the clergyman at Morton. If you marry him, I can not promise you any assistance from my miserly brother Peter. He is rich, and as you remark, ought to aid my only child. But he is niggardly in disposition, and inveterate in his prejudices."

What the old man said about his brother was very true. He had coined his soul into gold. The sweet affections which embellish life and make existence desirable, had been sacrificed by him upon the altar of mammon. No wife had ever smiled upon him; no children had ever clambered upon his knee, and stroked, with their soft, white hands, his rough and sunburnt cheeks, and called him by the endearing name of "father." Gold—gold—gold—was his thought by day—his dream by night. Premature wrinkles were upon his forehead. His head had grown gray before its time. He lived to hoard, and well merited the name of miser.

Julia's gold was, next to gold, his greatest favorite. But his temper was, by no means, always the same. Sometimes he frowned on those on whom, an hour before, he had lavished smiles. A word, a look, a deed, a trivial and unimportant, was oftentimes sufficient to estrange him for months.