

This talk took place in the little summer-house in the garden at Rose Cottage on a lovely evening in April, when all nature was awakening to the touch of a hastening summer. Rob took the slip of paper in his hand, and bent his eyes upon it with a tenderness which brought out all that was best in his face. It was a touching picture—the old man leaning somewhat on the shoulder of the younger, an eager, wistful look on his face, on which advancing age had set its mark. His hair was white and thin about the temples, and he could no longer read without his horn glasses, which had belonged to his father before him. Whether Rob had ever written anything himself he did not know, but he had again and again proved his fine critical gift, which seldom erred. Therefore he hung upon his verdict now almost breathlessly.

"Tell me, Rob, what is the maitter wi' it?" he said, quickly, thinking his son long of speaking. "There's something wrang wi' the rhythm; it hasna the lilt it should hae. What could I dae wi' it?"

"Nothing," said Rob, and there was a strange restraint in his voice as he folded the paper in his strong hand tenderly. "Will you give me this, father, to keep as a talisman, something which no eye has seen but yours and mine? I may need it yet."

"What do you mean, lad? It's but a pair thing. I'll try my hand at something better if it's a keepsake ye are wantin'?"

"It's this I want, and I will have it as it is. It is perfect; and it was meant for me. Was I not in your thoughts when you set down this line—

"'The eager spirit, victim of its own unrest'?"

"Maybe, lad, maybe; I winna say."