

coat across the bough. Then taking the brush, he stood for some moments musing and rubbing the hairs against the grain, and finally began to brush the coat, commencing with the skirts.

"How goes it, Rees? Is anything the matter with you?" I asked.

Old Rees brushed on. He was rather deaf. Whenever a person has occasion to repeat a sentence, which he has uttered in a somewhat compassionate tone, it is quite impossible for him to do so in the same words. I stood up, stepped forward, and said more loudly: "What ails you, Rees?"

The old man started, looked at me, and continued to look at me for a few moments with a fixed stare; then he seized a sleeve of my uncle's coat, and recommenced his brushing. A tear rolled down his cheek.

"Come, Rees," I said, "this mustn't be. Are you crying?"

He wiped his eyes with the sleeve of his vest, and said: "There's a sharp wind, Master Hildebrand."

"Nonsense, Rees; there is no wind at all today. But something troubles you. Have you lost a newspaper?"

He shook his head, and went on brushing harder than ever.

"Rees," said I, "you are too old to be in such trouble. Can I do anything for you, my friend?"

The old man looked up, astonished at the sound of that word "friend;" perhaps now, in his sixty-ninth year, he heard it applied to himself for the first time. A convulsive smile passed over his thin features; his gray eyes first lighted up, and then grew dim with tears. His whole countenance said: "I will trust you;" but his lips uttered only these words: "Hearken, sir. Do you know little Rotas?"

"I answered that I had not that honour."

"Did not Mr. Peter ever show him to you?"

The whole town knows little Rotas. He collects plenty of cents, I can tell you."

"But what about this man?" I asked.

"He's not a man at all; he's a dwarf, a regular dwarf, sir; you might shew him at a fair; but he's a wicked little wretch; I know him well."

I heartily wished that Rees would observe more order in his narration.

"He lives in the asylum," resumed the old man, after a short pause; but he runs about the streets like a madman. He makes a great deal of money by his hump. When the children are coming home from school, they subscribe their cents, and little Rotas dances for them. He jumps about a stick like a monkey, and makes his hump look enormous. I have no hump, sir," he added with a sigh. I perceived that Rees was less jealous of the hump in itself than of the cents which it brought.

"I wish," he continued in a melancholy tone, brushing the coat too roughly for cloth which had cost nine guineas a yard—"I wish I had a hump. I should then have nothing to do; I could get plenty of cents by making the people in the streets laugh. But I would not drink," he said, changing his tone, as he took down the coat, and folded it up with much care—"no, I would not drink."

"Rees," said I, "when you came into the garden, and when I spoke to you first, you looked sad; and I would rather see your look so still, than see you shew such ill-temper."

His old eyes filled with tears, and he stretched out his withered hands towards me. I took them in mine at the moment when he, ashamed of his familiarity, was drawing them back. I pressed them kindly before I let them go.

"Ah," said he—"ah, sir, you do not know it, but I am much more sad than angry. Little Rotas has done me a great injury; little Rotas is very spiteful. People," he continued, as he stooped to pick up a shoe-brush—"people think him mad, but he is only wicked."

"Come, Rees," said I, raising up the leaf of a low folding garden-table, "sit down there, and tell me plainly what little Rotas has done to you."

"It will do no good," replied Rees; "but I'll tell you, if you will promise to keep it to yourself. Does your honour know the house?"

"What house?"

"The asylum."

"I have seen it outside in passing by."

"Well, it is an ugly house, is it not? A melancholy-looking place, with red doors and windows, and everything inside painted either red or black. Now, sir, you know that in that house we are all poor people—as poor as those in the churchyard. I and a few others earn a little money, but it does us no good; we are obliged to bring it all to the father, and every week he gives us a trifle for pocket-money. Now, that is all quite right, sir; for when I shall become old, and no longer able to earn a cent, I shall still get my little allowance. Look at these," he continued, drawing out a coloured pocket-handkerchief, and tapping the cover of his snuff-box; "I bought them with my pocket-money."

It was touching to hear a man of sixty-nine say, "When I shall become old."

"Rotas," he went on, "receives his allowance also. But what does he do for it? Rotas does nothing but now and then pull up a few weeds in the street. He pretends to be a half-idiot; and when he gets a few cents from the children for dancing, he goes outside the town.

Does your honour know the "Greasy Dishcloth?"

"No indeed, Rees."

"It is an ale-house in Hare Lane. There Rees drinks his dram, and, mayhap, two, or even three."

"And then when he returns to the asylum?"

"Oh, he has all sorts of tricks. He chews a quid of tobacco; he begs an orange-peel at the druggist's. Sometimes the father observes it, and then he has a log fastened to his leg; for he is too old to be brought to the whipping-block, and besides, they could not beat him on the hump. But what harm does it do him to dance with a log? The children pity him all the more. St. John, but Rotas has become wicked! The other day he took a dram, and the father took away all his cents. You understand, sir, that he only got the more afterwards on that account."

I understood it perfectly.

"But that was his affair," continued Rees, taking up a shoe of my uncle's, which he had to brush, and laying it down immediately; "and why need he have ruined me? You don't know what he did; I'll tell you, sir. I had money, a great deal of money—I had twelve guineas."

"And how did you get them, Rees?"

"Honestly, Master Hildebrand. I saved them up while I was messenger to an apothecary. Sometimes when I carried a bottle of medicine to some country-house in the neighbourhood of the town, the master or the mistress would say: "Give the poor man a ten-cent piece; 'tis bad weather." And so by degrees I scraped together my twelve guineas. It was against the rules of the house; but I hid them next my heart."

"And wherefore? Had you really need of the money, or was it only for the pleasure of keeping it?"

"Ah, sir," said the old man, shaking his head, "if I may make bold to say so, rich idlers can't understand it; the members of the council can't understand it, for they have no ear about such things. Living and dying, everything goes well with them. But listen to me. We are well-off in the house; the council are kind to us. On fast-days, we get buttered rolls; and every three weeks an ox is provided by the will of some great nobleman who died long ago. We always get the meat chopped up into small pieces; and the managers of the asylum have a party, and eat the meat's tongue. We are very well-off; but a man, sir, can't help thinking of his death."

"I trust you will be well-off, also, after your death, Rees," I replied.

"I hope so, sir; in heaven there is nothing but happiness. But that was not what I meant. I want to have my body provided for—do you perceive?"

"How do you mean, Rees?"

"I'll tell you, sir. As soon as we are dead, they lay us on straw, and dress us in the linen of the house, just as when we were alive. Then they carry us to the churchyard, and bury us in the common grave. That is what I do not like. I want, when I am dead, not to have any charity-clothes about me."

He paused for a moment, and his eyes filled with tears. "I long," he resumed, "to lie in my own coffin—I can't well explain it—as I saw my father lie in his with his own clothes. I have never had a shirt which belonged to me—I would fain have a winding-sheet of my own."

I was greatly moved. Speak not of prejudices! The fish of this world have them by hundreds. This poor man could cheerfully endure anything—meagre food, a hard bed, and, for his age, hard labour. He had no home; he was to have no special grave; all he desired was the assurance that his last vesture should belong to him.

"You see, then, sir," he continued in a somewhat hoarse voice, "what the twelve guineas were for. It was a large sum; but I wanted something besides—I wished to be interred decently. I don't well understand these things, but I calculated four guineas for the linen, two guineas for the men who should bury me, and half a guinea each for the twelve men who should bear me to the grave. Was not that all well arranged? The apothecary's apprentice had written down all the directions for me on a piece of paper. I wrapped the twelve guineas up in it, and sewed the whole in a little leathern bag, which for the last thirty years I have worn next my heart. And now it is all gone!"

"Did Rotas steal it?" I inquired.

"No," replied Rees, rousing himself from the painful reverie in which his own last words had plunged him; "but he discovered I had it. His bed is next mine; so perhaps he saw it when I was dressing or undressing; or perhaps, during an illness that I had, I may have talked of it in my sleep, for it was always in my thoughts. Last Tuesday, you may remember, sir, it rained all day, and Rotas did not get a single cent. The weather was so bad that the children could not stop in the street to look at him. All his pocket-money was spent; but he had a raging desire to go to the 'Greasy Dishcloth.'" "Rees," said he to me after dinner, "lend me six cents." "Rotas," I replied, "I won't lend you money to spend in drinking." "Rees," said he, "I must have them." "Not from me," said I. "Rees," said he, "if you don't give me the money, I'll

tell the father what you have hidden under your clothes." I felt that I grew as pale as a sheet, and I handed him the six cents. But I could not help saying, "Rotas, you're a rascal!" Whether that vexed him or not, I can't tell; but yesterday he got drunk; and while they were fastening the log to his leg, he shouted like a madman: "Rees has money—Rees has money! inside his shirt he hides it!" My comrades told me this when I came in. It was bedtime, and we all undressed in the men's dormitory. Rotas was already in bed, snoring like a pig. As soon as the others were asleep, I slipped the little bag from off my neck, and was going to hide it in the straw of my bolster; but before I had time to do so, the door opened, and in came the father, with a lantern in his hand. I fell back on my pillow, with the little bag in my hand, and stared at the light, like an idiot. I felt every one of the father's footsteps fall on my heart. "Rees," said he, bending over me, "you have money, and you know very well it is quite against the rules of the house to keep it concealed." And he took the little bag out of my hand. "It is only for a shroud!" I cried, and I fell on my knees in the bed; but it was no use. "We will take care of it for you," said the father; and he opened the bag, and counted over the money carefully. My own dear burial-money! I had not laid my own eyes on it since the day, thirty years before, when I sewed it up. "I swear to you," cried I again, "that I will spend it on nothing but a decent burial."

"We will take care of that for you," said the father, and went away with the money and the lantern. "Rotas," I called out after him, "told you that!" But what good would it have done if I had told that Rotas was a drunkard, that he went every day to the 'Greasy Dishcloth?' It would not have got my money back for me again. I scarcely closed my eyes all night. That's all, sir, I have to tell."

"Why do you not address a petition to the council?" I asked.

"No, no!" sobbed he, fumbling with his hand inside his vest, as though still searching for his money; "they will never return me my guineas; that law is as old as the house, and the house is as old—as old as the world."

"That's going a little too far, Rees; and if—"

He interrupted me.

"Going too far! no indeed. Have there not always been poor creatures like me, lodged and fed by charity, and who, when they die, are buried by charity? But I wanted to be respectfully buried at my own expense; and it was my greatest comfort to think that I should be so. Ah! if Rotas only knew that he will be the cause of my death!"

"Come, Rees," said I, "you must, and shall recover your money. I will speak to my uncle about it; he knows the gentlemen of the council; and we will see whether the rule cannot for once be evaded in favour of an honest, respectable old man like you. Cheer up, Rees! you shall get your guineas again."

"Shall I?" said the poor man, encouraged by my confident tone—"shall I really?" And drying his eyes, with a happy smile he offered me his hand. Then, in his desire to say something agreeable to me, he added: "Do I polish your boots to your satisfaction, sir?"

"Quite so," I answered.

"And is your coat always well brushed? Because, if not, I hope your honour will tell me."

I promised to do so, and went into the house. It was not difficult to persuade my kind uncle to make the requisite application. The president sent for the father, and despatched him to convoke a meeting of the council. It was a most formal and solemn affair. First of all, Rees was summoned into the board-room, and then desired to withdraw; then the father was called in, and in like manner dismissed. Immediately ensued a grave deliberation, which lasted for an hour, and of which the result was that the president referred the decision to the wisdom of the council; and the councillors, not to be outdone in politeness, professed themselves ready to be guided entirely by the opinion of the president.

However, as the matter could not rest there, the president at length delivered the decision in these words:

"That, in one point of view, it is right to restore the sum of money in question to Rees on account of his exemplary conduct, and with the understanding that he will keep this money till his death, as safely as our excellent and indefatigable honorary treasurer—here the honorary treasurer bowed—"but, on the other hand, it would not be well to encourage Rees in the idea that his money could possibly be safer in his own custody than in that of the before-named excellent treasurer."

Such was the categorical sentence of the president. The secretary, with some show of justice, ventured to observe that the decision was hardly sufficiently decisive, and demanded that the question to restore or not to restore, should be put to the vote. Whereupon the treasurer had the magnanimity voluntarily to cede his right to the administration of the sum in question, and it was unanimously resolved that Rees should receive back his twelve guineas, wrapped up, as before, in their little leathern bag.

Two years longer Old Rees wore his money

next his heart. Last year, I visited the churchyard of D—, and it was sweet to me to know that there, in the common grave, slept a man who, through my means, had been decently borne to his last home by twelve comrades of his choice, and who had breathed his last in the cherished certainty of wearing his 'own shroud.'

Perhaps Old Rees, in his dying hour, had a kindly thought of me.

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INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY.

The Commissioners appointed to construct the Intercolonial Railway give Public Notice that having annulled the Contracts for Sections Nos. 5, 6 and 7, they are prepared to receive Tenders for re-letting the same.

Section No. 5 is in the Province of Quebec, and extends from the Easterly end of Section No. 2, forty miles east of Riviere du Loup, to the Sixty-sixth mile post, near Rimouski, a distance of about twenty-six miles.

Section No. 6 is in the Province of New Brunswick, and extends from the Easterly end of Section No. 3, opposite Dalhousie, to the West side of the main Post Road, near the forty-eighth mile post Easterly from Jucquet River, a distance of about twenty-one miles.

Section No. 7 is in the Province of Nova Scotia, and extends from the Southerly end of Section 4, near River Philip, to Station O, formerly Station Fifty, at Folly Lake, a distance of about twenty-four miles.

The Contracts for the above Sections to be completely finished and ready for laying the track by the 1st of July, 1871.

The Commissioners also give Public Notice that they are prepared to receive Tenders for four further sections of the line.

Section No. 17 will be in the Province of Quebec, and will extend from the Easterly end of Section No. 14, down the Matapedia Valley, to Station No. 685, about one mile above the boundary line between the Counties of Rimouski and Bonaventure, a distance of about twenty miles.

Section No. 18 will be in the Province of Quebec, and will extend from the Easterly end of Section No. 17, down the Matapedia Valley, to Station No. 689, near Clark's Brook, a distance of about twenty miles.

Section No. 19 will extend from the Easterly end of Section No. 8 in the Province of Quebec, down the Matapedia Valley to its mouth, and thence across the River Restigouche to Station No. 379, at the Easterly end of Section No. 3, in the Province of New Brunswick, a distance of about 91 miles, including the bridge over the River Restigouche.

Section No. 20 will be in the Province of New Brunswick, and will extend from the Easterly end of Section No. 19, in the Town of Newcastle, on the Chaplin Island road, thence crossing the North-West and South-West branches of the River Miramichi, and terminating at Station No. 329, about one mile and three-quarters South of the South-West branch, a distance of about six miles, including the bridges over the branches of the River Miramichi.

The Contracts for Sections Nos. 17, 18, 19, and 20, to be completely finished and ready for laying the track by the first day of July, 1872.

Plans and Profiles, with Specifications and Terms of Contract for Section No. 7, will be exhibited at the Office of the Chief Engineer in Ottawa, and at the Offices of the Commissioners in Toronto, Quebec, Rimouski, Dalhousie, Newcastle, St. John and Halifax, on and after Monday, the 11th day of April next; for Sections Nos. 5 and 6 at the same Offices, on and after Wednesday, the 29th of April next and for Sections Nos. 17, 18, 19, and 20, at the same Offices, on and after Tuesday, the 10th day of May next.

Sealed tenders for Sections 5, 6, and 7 addressed to the Commissioners of the Intercolonial Railway, and marked "Tenders," will be received at their Office in Ottawa, up to 7 o'clock p. m., on Saturday, the 7th day of May next; and for Sections Nos. 17, 18, 19, and 20 up to 7 o'clock p. m., on Wednesday, the 25th day of May next.

Sureties for the completion of the contract will be required to sign the Tender.

A. WALSH, ED. CHANDLER, C. J. BRYDGES, A. W. McLELAN, Commissioners.

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE, Ottawa, 24th March, 1870. 22d