

That is, it would have been the lee side if Healy had come in the other door.

"Cut down operatin' expinses, is ut?" Healy muttered. "Begorra, I'll begin right now!"

And he fired Speckles on the spot.

Now, Speckles—whose name, by the way, was Dolivar Washington Babson—had been fired on several occasions before, and if he swallowed a little more tobacco-juice than was good for his physical comfort it was rather as a gulp of startled surprise at Healy's appearance than because of any poignant regret at the misfortune that had overtaken him. Nevertheless, he felt it incumbent on himself to expostulate.

"Git out an' stay out!" said Healy, refusing to argue.

And Speckles got out.

For a day he kept away from the roundhouse, the length of time past experience had taught him was required to cool the turner's anger; then he sauntered down again and came face to face with Healy on the turntable.

"I came down to ask you to put me on again, Mr. Healy," he began, broaching the subject timidly.

"Phwat?" demanded Healy.

"I came down to ask you to put me on again, Mr. Healy," Speckles repeated monotonously.

"Oh, I heard you—I heard you," said Healy, a little inconsistently. "On ag'in, is ut? Ut'll be a long toime, me son, mark that!"

[This being quite different from Healy's accustomed,