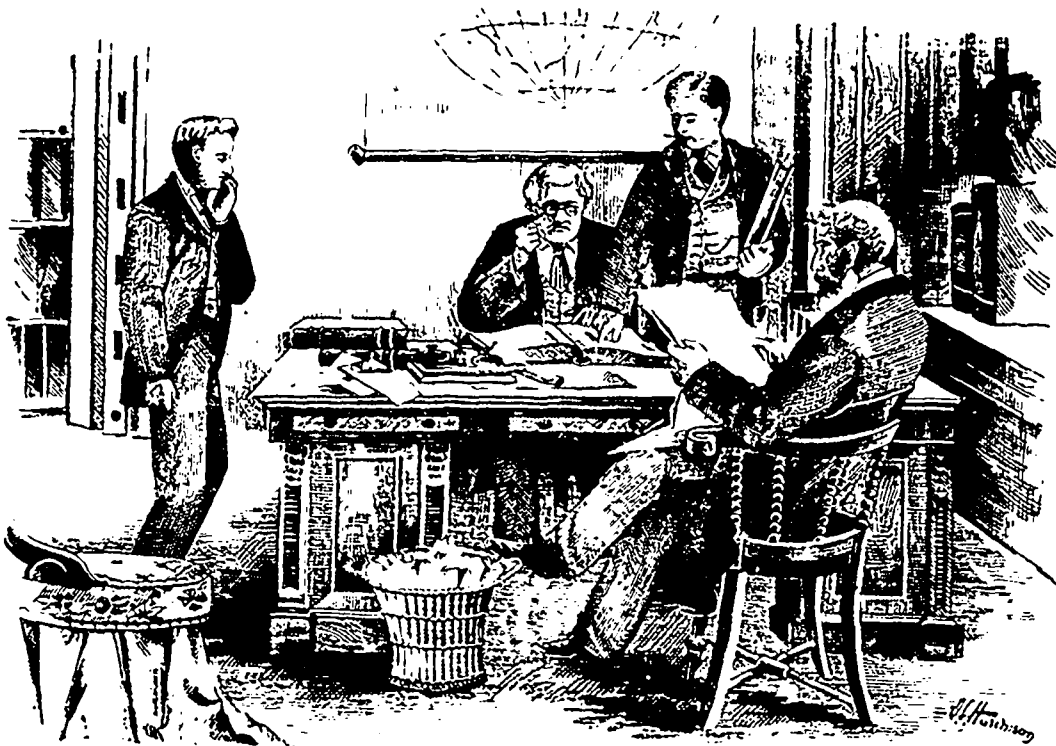


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"THESE ARE THE ENTRIES THAT REQUIRE EXPLANATION."

BEECH AND I.

CHAPTER I.

"**W**HO are you youngster?"
 "My name is Spottiswood. I am the new clerk."
 "Ho, ho! Spottiswood, eh? I like that name. 'Spot' will do nicely. Where do you come from?"

"Deneworth. Who are you?"
 "Who am I?" exclaimed the first speaker, in utter amazement, stepping back a foot or so, to get a good look at the young gentleman he called "Spot." "Who am I?" he repeated, wonderingly. "Well, I never!"

And then he laughed until the office echoed again with the sound.

"Why do you laugh?" I asked, seriously.
 "Why?" he exclaimed, but before he could frame an answer he was convulsed with laughter again. "That is good," he said, at length. "well, you are a rum'un!"

Not feeling particularly "rum" in myself, but rather sore at this unceremonious introduction, I merely said, "It's not of very much consequence either way."

"My name is Beech, I am the old clerk," he answered, mimicking as closely as possible my words and manner.

"I see you wish to turn me into ridicule!" I said, looking at him steadfastly and with compressed lips.

"No, no, Spot," he said, in his natural voice, "it was