

the rough frieze garment that had seen hard wear;—"But possibly it is the head of the Firm" (*tap-tap*) "you want, and not Son? . . . In which case I'm afraid you'll have to wait some time, as the old gentleman stayed very late at work yesterday. I should mention that I am employed in the capacity of head-clerk by" (*tap*) "a firm of solicitors who have offices on the ground-floor immediately underneath Mustey and Son" (*tap*), "and—"

Mr. Crown, still industriously tapping, nodded at the lowest of a series of legends in letters of black paint, flanking the right-hand row of bells, and setting forth the titles of "Wotherspoon and Cadderby, Attorneys and Commissioners of Oaths." He continued: "And though I was detained myself, and did not leave till eight-thirty, I noticed particularly—when I shut the front-door behind me, that the gas in Mr. Mustey Senior's private room was burning still."

"For the matter of that, it's burning now!" said the strange young man, whose head was plentifully covered with a crop of decidedly red and obstinately curly hair, crowned with the battered gray felt wideawake previously mentioned; and whose square, blunt-featured, fresh-coloured, rather freckled face was illuminated with a pair of very clear and intelligent eyes of a good gray, curiously flecked with yellow. He indicated with a knotty vine-stick he carried, two dingy, wire-blinded windows on the first floor, and Messrs. Wotherspoon and Cadderby's head clerk, with an irrepressible start of consternation, saw that the darkness of the room behind them was thrown into relief by a greenish patch of radiance that indicated the position of a paper-shaded gas reading-lamp which to his knowledge hung over the heavy writing-table that occupied the middle of the elder Mustey's private room.

"God bless my soul, so it is!"

The speaker, with a tallowy change in his complexion,