

THE  
JUDGE OF THE FOUR CORNERS.

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PROLOGUE.

DEPARTURE.

It was very dark. At "The Judge's" not a light could be seen, even from the upper windows, although the old oak clock in the hall gave forth only nine wheezily asthmatic notes, and, with a sudden internal grumbling at having broken the stillness, once more settled down to its reposeful "Forever—never, Never—forever." As the last stroke died away, a door opened suddenly on the floor above; there was the soft pad-pad-pad of stockinged feet down the staircase, and some one cautiously crept into the hall.

For a moment, this intruder on the clock's privacy fumbled with the bar across