

creation of his brain, or, to be more accurate, fancy.

Speckles sidled up to the cubby-hole, and, without any peroration, took the plunge.

"I came to ask you to put me on again, Mr. Healy,"—he spoke rapidly, as though he feared his courage might ooze out before he could finish.

Healy wheeled round with a grunt.

"Oh, ut's you, is ut?" he demanded grimly.

Speckles, ready to run at the first sign of violence, acknowledged the impeachment by nodding his head affirmatively, and smiled sheepishly while Healy scrutinized him with a long stare from head to foot.

"Well," said Healy, "you wait a minute an' I'll give you me answer."

Speckles' heart bounded in joyous hope. Healy very deliberately gathered up his papers, folded them carefully, and opening the cupboard where his coat hung—it was a hot day, and Healy was in his shirt-sleeves—tucked them into the inside pocket. Then, like a flash, he turned and reached for the first thing in sight. It was a broom.

But, quick as he was, Speckles was quicker, and he led Healy by the length of the pit as he dodged around the tail end of a tender and darted out of the running-shed across the tracks to the freight-house.

Healy followed no farther than the turntable. There he halted, and Speckles, from his retreat, saw him shake his fist and listened to the threat that thundered across the yards: