

‘It is very easy. You come here at ten o’clock and leave at two o’clock. But you have to stay in the office all the time and not leave it for any reason. If you do, you will lose your place.’

‘It’s only four hours a day,’ I said. ‘I won’t leave the office.’

‘And you have to come every day except Sunday. You must not miss a day,’ said Mr Duncan Ross.

‘And the work?’

‘Copying a dictionary. Bring your own pens and paper. You will work at this table. Can you start work tomorrow?’

‘Yes, I’ll be here at ten o’clock.’

‘The next day I left Vincent Spaulding in the shop. I bought some paper and pens and then went to Fleet Street. I arrived at the office at ten o’clock. Mr Duncan Ross was waiting for me. There was a dictionary on the table. I started to copy the dictionary. Mr Ross then left. During the morning he came to see me four times. I left the office at two o’clock.’

‘This continued for the rest of the week. On Saturday Mr Ross gave me four pounds. It was the same for the next month. Every Saturday Mr Ross gave me four pounds. At first he came to see me every day but after a month he only came on Saturdays. The work was easy and the League paid me well, so I was quite happy.’

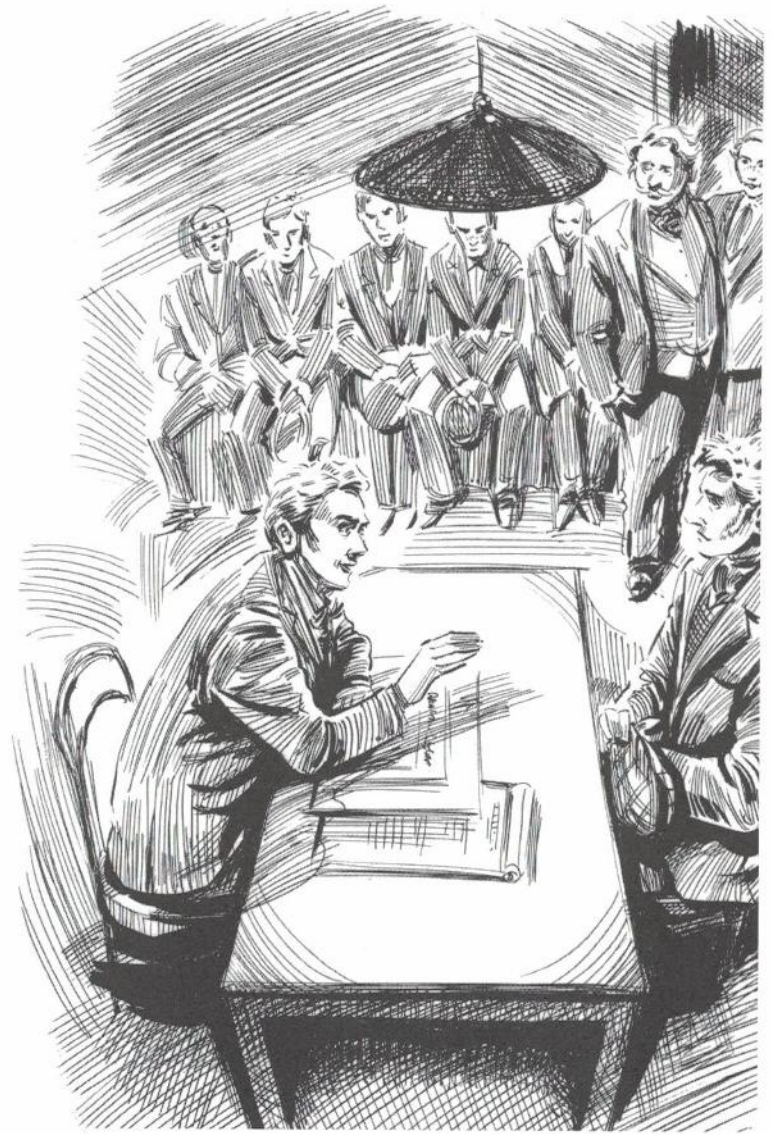
‘This continued for eight weeks. I started at A and reached R in the dictionary. Then suddenly my work came to an end.’

‘Came to an end?’ said Holmes. ‘When?’

‘This morning. I went to the office as usual at ten o’clock. The door was shut and there was a note on it. Here it is. You can read it yourself.’

Mr Wilson gave Holmes a card. On it was written: ‘The Red-Headed League has closed, 9 October 1890.’

Sherlock Holmes and I looked at the card. We looked at Mr Wilson’s sad face and both started to laugh. Mr Wilson was angry.



*‘A small man was sitting behind the table. He had bright red hair like mine.’*