

Sherlock Holmes started:

“Obviously he did manual labour, he is a Freemason, he was in China, and he did a lot of writing.”

“How do you know all that, Mr. Holmes?” asked Mr. Wilson. “How did you know that I did manual labour? It’s true, of course.”

“Your hands, my dear sir. Your right hand is much larger than your left hand. You worked hard with it, and the muscles are more developed.”

“And the Freemasonry?”

“Elementary, against the rules of the Freemasons you wear an arc-and-compass breastpin.”

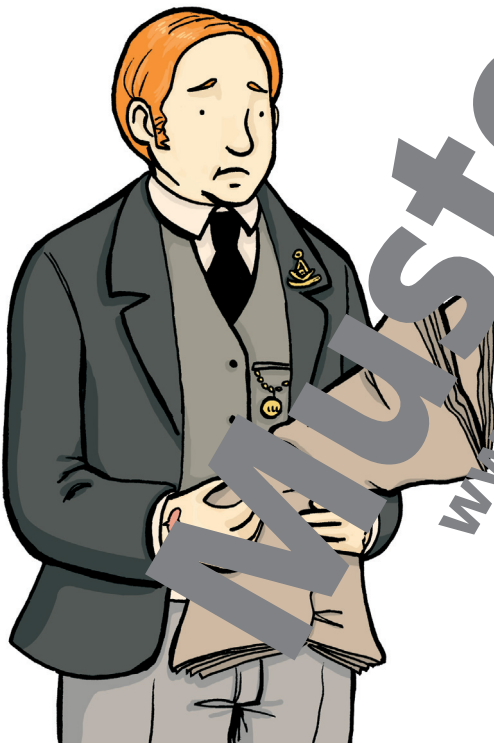
“Ah, of course, I forgot that. But the writing...”

“The right cuff of your coat is very shiny, and the left arm has a smooth patch near the elbow where you rested it on a desk.”

“And China?”

“The fish tattoo above your right wrist can only come from China. I study tattoos and the delicate pink colour of the fishes’ scales is unique to China. And I can see a Chinese coin hanging from your watch-chain. Once more, elementary.”

Mr. Jabez Wilson laughed loudly.



“Well, well!” he said. “Elementary.”

“I begin to think, Watson,” said Holmes, “that I made a mistake in explaining things. ‘Unknown things seem important’ – do you not find the advertisement, Mr. Wilson?”

“Yes, I have got it now,” he answered with his bent red finger pointing halfway down the column. “Here it is. This is what I mean it all. Read it, sir.”



### ? All about Jabez Wilson

How does Sherlock Holmes know that Mr Jabez Wilson

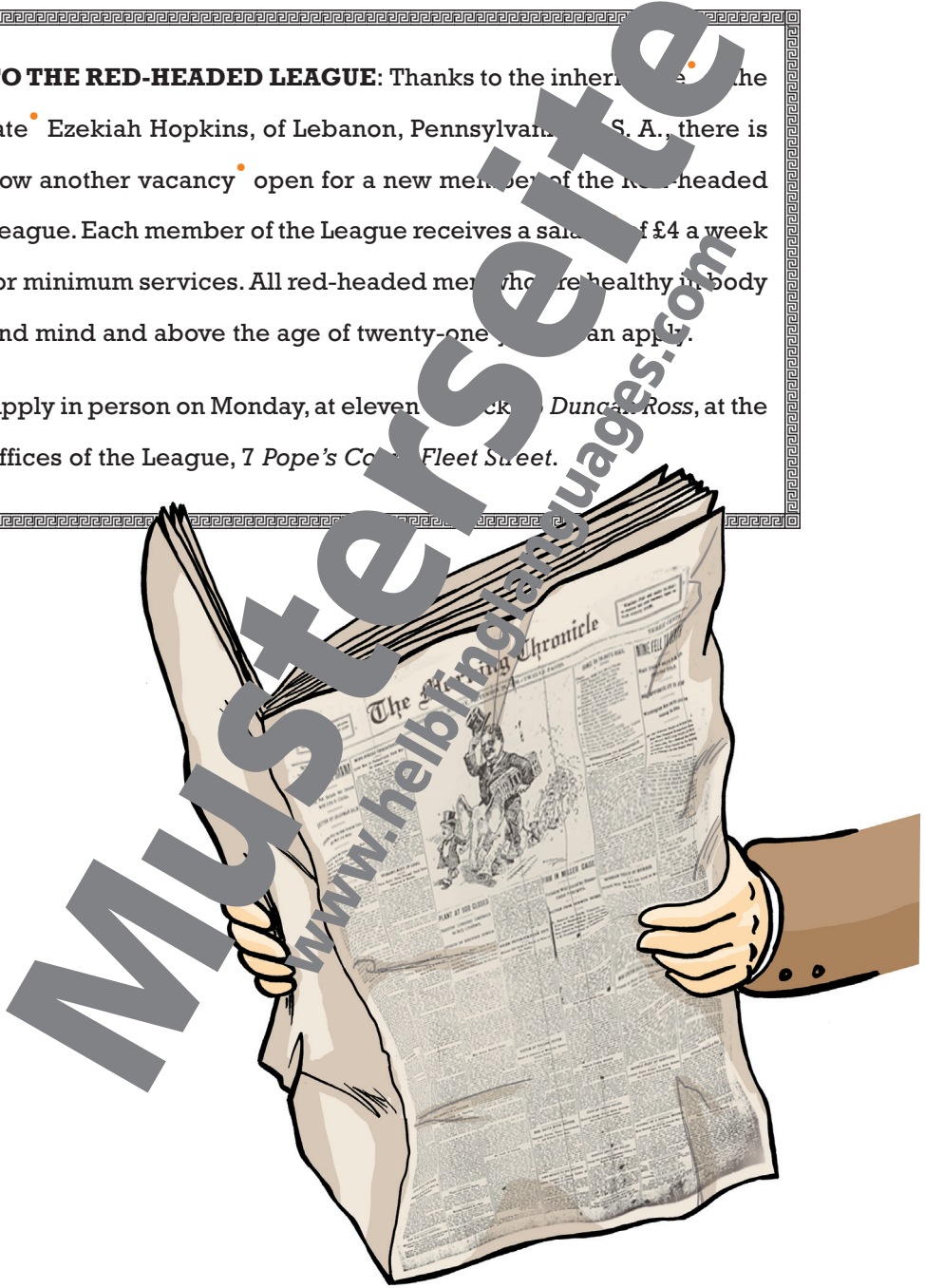
- a did manual labour.
- b is a Freemason.
- c was in China?
- d did a lot of cutting?

### Glossary

- **cuff:** the end of a sleeve
- **Freemason:** member of a secret club for men (Freemasonry/Freemasons)
- **manual labour:** low-paid work with your hands (eg digging or building, but not surgery or programming)
- **scales:** (here) small, hard, translucent pieces of skin on a fish's body
- **smooth:** flat
- **tattoo:** (here) a picture or design on someone's skin, made by using needles and inks

I took the paper from him and read as follows:

**TO THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE:** Thanks to the inheritance of the late Ezekiah Hopkins, of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, U. S. A., there is now another vacancy open for a new member of the Red-headed League. Each member of the League receives a salary of £4 a week for minimum services. All red-headed men who are healthy in body and mind and above the age of twenty-one years can apply. Apply in person on Monday, at eleven o'clock, Duncan Ross, at the offices of the League, 7 Pope's Court, Fleet Street.



“What on earth does this mean?” I exclaimed after I read the extraordinary advertisement.

Holmes laughed and wriggled in his chair. “It is a little strange, isn’t it?” he said. “And now, Mr. Wilson, tell us all about yourself, your household, and the effect that this advertisement had on your life. First make a note, Doctor, of the paper and the date.”

“It is **The Morning Chronicle** of April 27, 1890, just two months ago.”

“Very good. Now, Mr. Wilson?”

## The Red-headed League

What is strange about the advertisement?

Invent another league. What would you join?

### Glossary

- **household:** people who live in a house
- **inheritance:** money left to other people when someone dies
- **late:** dead
- **salary:** money paid for work done ('professional' work)
- **wiggled:** made small, quick movements
- **vacancy:** place



“Well, as I told you, Mr. Sherlock Holmes,” said Jabez Wilson, touching his forehead, “I have a small shop at Saxe-Coburg Square, near the City. It’s not very large and in recent years it is not very successful. In the past I had two assistants, now I have one, and I can only pay him because he is willing to work for half wages in order to learn the business.”

“What is the name of this young man?” asked Sherlock Holmes.

“His name is Vincent Spaulding, and he’s not so young, either. It’s hard to say his age. I could not have a smarter assistant, Mr. Holmes. I know very well that he could get a better job and earn twice what I give him. But, he is satisfied.”

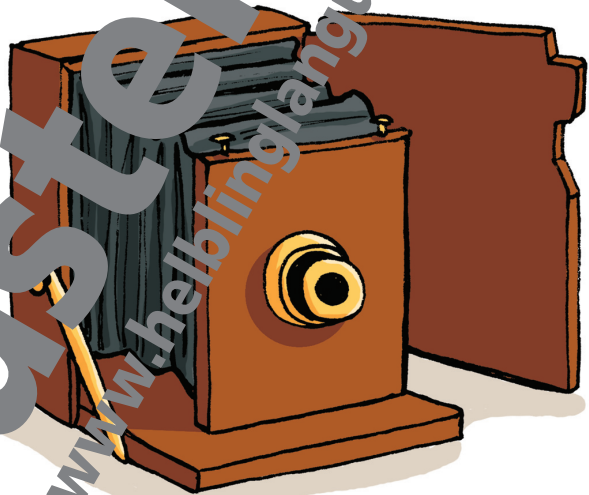


“You are most fortunate in having this employee. It is not a common experience among employers. Your assistant is as remarkable as your advertisement.”

“Oh, he has his faults, too,” said Mr. Wilson. “Photographers taking pictures with his camera then going down into the cellar like a rabbit into its hole to develop them. That is his main fault, but he’s a good worker. There’s no badness in him.”

“He is still with you, I presume?”

“Yes, sir. He and a girl of fourteen, who does some cooking and cleaning. That’s everyone in the house, because my wife is dead and we didn’t have any children. We live very quietly, sir, the three of us.



### Glossar

- **assistants:** helpers
- **cellar:** room under a house
- **City:** the business centre of London
- **develop:** make a photograph from a film
- **employers:** people who other people work for
- **wages:** money paid for work done (manual labour)
- **is willing to:** wants to





“The first thing that disturbed us was that advertisement. Spaulding came into the office eight weeks ago, with this paper in his hand, and he said:

“ ‘I wish, Mr. Wilson, that I was a red-headed man.’

“ ‘Why?’ I asked.

“ ‘Because,’ he said, ‘there’s another vacancy in the League of Red-headed Men. It’s worth a fortune to the man who gets it, and I understand that there are more vacancies than there are men.’

“ ‘Why, what is this ‘League’?’ I asked. ‘Well,’ Mr. Holmes, I am a very stay-at-home man. My business comes to me and I am often weeks on end without putting my feet over the door-mat. So I don’t know what is going on outside, and I am always happy to hear some news.

“ ‘Have you never heard of the League of Red-headed Men?’ he asked with his eyes open.

“ ‘Never.’

“ ‘Why, that is strange, you are eligible for one of the vacancies.’

### Glossary

- **disturbed:** changed our routine
- **door-mat:** small carpet in front of the door for cleaning your shoes
- **eligible:** suitable; one of the right people
- **it’s worth a fortune to:** there’s a lot of money for
- **stay-at-home:** who doesn’t go out



## After Reading

### Comprehension

#### 1 Are the following sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- |   | T                        | F                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) The narrator is Holmes' partner and friend.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Mr. Wilson comes from China.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) The Red-headed League is a league for men with red hair.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Mr. Wilson's shop is big and busy.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) He is unhappy with his assistant, Vincent Spaulding.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) The assistant wants to apply for the Red-headed League.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Mr. Wilson manages to get a place in the League.                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Mr. Wilson has to work from ten to two every day.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) One day Mr. Wilson finds out that the League has been dissolved.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Nobody knew Mr. Duncan Ross, the man who offered Mr. Wilson the place in the league. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k) Holmes thinks Mr. Wilson is a liar.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l) Vincent Spaulding is friends with John Clay the murderer.                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m) Holmes suspects a bank robbery is going to take place.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| n) Holmes, Watson and one other man wait for the thieves in a cellar under the bank.    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o) At the end of the story – Vincent and Mr Duncan Ross – are arrested.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**2 Choose the correct answers.**

a) Mr. Wilson is a

- 1  detective.
- 2  shop keeper.
- 3  thief.

b) Mr Wilson is interested in the vacancy because he wants to

- 1  meet other people with red hair.
- 2  copy the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.
- 3  earn extra money.

c) Vincent Spaulding invented the Red-headed League because he wanted

- 1  to keep Mr. Wilson away from the shop for a few hours every day.
- 2  to take pictures with his camera at any time.
- 3  to leave his job and work in a bank.

**3 The Red-headed League is only a detective story. Find the clues which lead Sherlock Holmes to suspect Vincent Spaulding, Mr. Wilson's assistant**

- a) .....
- b) .....
- c) .....
- d) .....

**4 Holmes suspects that the robbery will take place on Saturday. Write down the reasons he gives to support the idea.**