

The father of the Pit was a thick-set man, with grey-black hair and moustache, clean-shaven chin, and a wooden leg. This artificial limb was covered with letters, dates, and designs, carved deep into the wood by the owner's hand. Unstrapped, it became useful as a weapon of offence or defence. In times of peace it served as a poker to stir the logs in the stove. The thumping of that wooden stump upon the boards would strike dismay into the heart of a neophyte. The lame man wore, for reasons of his own, the semi-military cap and coat of the Salvation Army.

A watery-eyed Scotchman, with sandy hair bristling through a ragged tam-o'-shanter; a swarthy Greek, wild-eyed and unkempt, owning a very limited knowledge of the Saxon tongue; an insignificant individual, in rusty black, with car'averous features and unhappy eyes; and an adipose wreck of middle age, sucking a water-logged pipe, and crying aggressively in maudlin grief, were some of the more prominent members of the lost.

"I'm through," growled the one-legged man, paying over his fallen match. "Ticket runs out in the morning, an' I've got to raise the stuff if I don't want to put up at Mother Green's to-morrer night. The sign of the moon is good enough summers, but a terror this time o' year."

"An awfu' peety to waste nickels at the gamble," murmured the gentle Scot. "Hold 'em down in yer pocket, father. For peety's sake, don't fool away the leetle precious bits o' siller."

The speaker was far from sober. He lurched over the stove, his red face portentously grave, and might have overbalanced had not the ferrule of the wooden