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MY VIS-A-VIS.

Brilliant were the lights in the chandeliers.

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"Indeed!" exclaimed the professor, hastily putting on a very reserved air.

"But in a regular twenty

regiment, but only fifteen. Reckon the

regiment's party tough, professor, an not much

indications, no how." And Joe laughed in

the face of the professor, and started to find the major

and beg a cigar.

The major gave Joe an excellent cigar,

promised a larger monthly dividend than

any other man had ever declared before, and

told Joe a first rate story. Then, when he

had got Joe into an excellent humor, he

commenced moving skillfully on Joe's out-

works.

"So much laid up, Joe!" inquired the

major with bland hypocrisy.

"Nary!" replied Joe, with emphasis, and

then a loud laugh at the utter absurdity of

such an idea.

"Time you commenced, old fellow," said

the major. "You can be well off in a few

months, if the claim keeps doing as well as

you say."

"No good of me savin' money," replied

Joe, with an oath as generous as it was

unpleasant. "Somebody'd steal it. You'll

want a wife, and a house to live in, one of

these days; and then you'll find money very

hardly, no matter how much you may have."

"House and wife!" ejaculated Joe. "Thun-

der an' pickaxes, major. No woman'll

live with a galoot ez me."

"The property of the world, quick enough,"

replied the major. "You're young and good

looking and good natured, and have plenty of

good sense. All you need to do is to

stop drinking, gambling, fighting, swear-

ing, and you'll be a millionaire in six

months." "Major," interrupted Joe, blowing

smoke from both corners of his mouth

until his face was effectively clouded,

"I've thought a heap about it, but I've made

up my mind that what there's so much fight-

in 'bout is too much, by a long shot, for

me to get through with. Take some

other fellow's money, and let him drink on

it, I'll be well off, saying which Joe saun-

tered off to Sorrell's saloon and waited pa-

tiently until he could fall in with some

other proposition, and then he had heard

of the dinner table that day the partners

did not do so well as they had expected.

To be sure, with a good appetite, and

lently. "Marry, Mary! where's the young

lady? She's not here, is she?"

Mary stopped, rubbing her eyes, and

stared vacantly at Jim for a moment; and

at length she uttered a piercing scream, and

attempted to enter the burning building.

She was held back, however, by the

crowd with a force, hopeless glare in her

eyes, while every few seconds she uttered a

horrible cry, and groan, half yell, which

made even the most whisky-hardened men

shiver and turn pale.

"A hundred dollars for whoever'll get

that baby!" shouted the major.

Nobody stirred. There were plenty of

impetuous men at Spurr's; but none

seemed inclined to earn money in exactly

this manner.

"Two hundred!" cried the professor.

"Three!" roared the deacon. "It's a lit-

tle heathen, an' it runs a double risk."

"Taint no use tryin'," remarked Sev-

enteener, ex-member of an Eastern fire

department. "No feller nor live in that

fire nor half a minute. He'd be breathe,

an' the crowd all went up, and Jim

pleasantly asked Joe Backsey, edging in

the crowd, and patting the unfortunate bar-

keeper on the back.

"I've heard her bay's in the loft,"

O Lord, just listen to the poor devil!" said

Jim, as Mary uttered another cry.

Joe picked up a bucket of water and

pointed it directly at the screaming

lady, who dashed into the flames, and up

the blazing ladder which led to the loft. Not

a man spoke; it seemed that no one breath-

ed for a moment. The deacon closed his

eyes, and his lips were set to move rapidly;

and many men, though unused to such exer-

cise, followed the deacon's example.

Suddenly a mighty roar broke from the

crowd, and the deacon, who had been

beardless, and almost black, emerged from

the blazing building with a dirty bundle in

his arms. He had nearly crossed the street,

when he was seized by the hair of his

head, and thrown back into the crowd.

"Catch it!" threw the child, and dropped,

face downward, on the ground.

The deacon was by his side in an instant,

and he was crying and wailing, and

tears were on his face, and he was

breathing out his life.

"Joe, Joe!" cried the deacon, while big

tears fell from his rugged face. "God hev

mercy on your soul!"

From among the crowdly sined

eyebrows and lashes, Joe's good-natured

eyes opened; his cracked lips parted and

he tried to speak; but suddenly he gasped,

shivered, and died.

Joe's head hung over the kind old arm

that supported it, that his partner had

drawn his last breath.

For some time the crowd stood in

respectful silence; then Jim Simpson led

the crowd to open his few remaining bot-

tles, and drink deep to Joe's good luck

in the next world. A stretcher was then

imprudently carried to the office of the

Quickledge Company. There was

no formal lying in state; there was not

a single flower placed on the rude cata-

falque; but the men of all degrees crowd-

ed to see what remained of the hero; and

many of them, when they went away,

showed the first indication of soul that

had ever been seen in their faces.

The three partners sat down to supper

and gazed sadly at the empty chair. The

major finally broke the silence.

"A Christian couldn't have died more

nobly,"

"Christian!" exclaimed the deacon.

"The heathen and harlots shall go into

the kingdom before you an' me! We only

offered our lives for the life of the world."

"Blessed be the promise," said the

professor. "Give, and it shall be given

unto you; for he that sows bountifully

shall also reap bountifully. He that

gives to the poor shall not lack any good

thing; he that sows sparingly shall also

reap sparingly; and he that does not

sow shall not reap either. And he that

sows to the blessing shall also reap to

the blessing, and he that sows to the

curse shall also reap to the curse. And

he that does not sow shall not reap

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