

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Budget. Hooper Editor. March 27, 1886

### A Medical Student's Night off In Vienna Austria

“Where shall we go tonight” queried I of Tom, as, with a good day's work behind us we strolled through the great front portal of the Hospital, sauntered across the street, and dropped in at the Café International. Sipping our coffee and rum, we gravely pondered this very serious question, until Tom announced after mature deliberation, that he thought the great Bal Masque at the Coliseum to be the proper go. So after dinner, cigar, and a little billiards had used up the raw edge of the evening, we strolled out through the Maria Hilf and along the Schön-brunn Strasse until we brought up before the great blazing front and noisy entrance of the Coliseum, the Jardin Mabille of Vienna.

As some sort of costume is imperative, we don each a plain domino; and as we know no one, and nobody knows us, we dispense with masks and put on noses which, without concealing our identity, make hideous monsters of two young men, hideous enough to start with.

We enter the great Hall with its dazzling glare of innumerable jets, its interminable rows of pillars, its magnified orchestra clashing away at one end, and two thousand masks filling hall and corridors. A scene gay and bewildering. Whirling in the dance in the open space of the center of the hall, strolling about the lobbies or sitting at the small tables, is every conceivable and inconceivable costume since the dawn of the race; even Mother Eve, after the fall, being very closely approximated to. We met empresses and arch-duchesses; princesses and countesses; and find them even more amiable, sweet, and winning than they are usually described. Here a cat, a bear, a monkey, or any other lowly creature, may literally look at a king, or dance with a queen.

We stroll for an hour through this medley, cordially mingling alike with royalty, and peasantry with true democratic impartiality; when Tom's keen trained eye perceives that we are being followed and singled out by a little shepherdess, and a buxom Tyrolese peasant girl. I am a little dubious but Tom tartly asks if I expect them to stick themselves on silver forks, and

hand themselves out to us; – so we survey the prospect. Now the only chance a man has at a masked ball to form any judgment, is as regards the toute ensemble, but the girls very graciously, and with mathematical rigor had contracted their costumes in all three dimensions, so that the opportunities for inspecting the t.e. were generous. We agree they will do, and are soon whirling away in the dance. I find myself talking at a dimpled chin and pretty mouth around which there lurks and flits constantly a seductive and puzzling smile, but which, young man like, I appropriate exclusively. She answers back with great freedom, in a sweet, soft voice, with a ringing merry laugh. I find myself clasping a well-rounded figure, but lithe and supple, and with a particularly ivy-like cling. She dances perfectly like all Viennese, and the economical cut of her garments allows her a swing and abandon which sends the cool medical blood mounting up. Tom has heavier work, but is getting it in bravely. He has already nicknamed us “Mary and her little Lamb,” which being literally translated, costs me the supper. I find she has a healthy Viennese appetite, ample scientific explanation for the generous t.e., and a rather exceptional capacity for stowing away the mild Tokai. In the comparative seclusion of the outer lobby she does not refuse a Turkish cigarette. So we while away the time until the hour for unmasking arrives. I stand expectant. I see a wave of crimson go over her chin and neck; there is a suppressed giggle, and I am gazing blankly on the mischievous dimples, and into the roughish eyes of Annie, a little Hungarian nurse in the Throat Clinic, one of whose daily duties is to hand me brushes, swabs, towels, and other clinical paraphernalia. I gaze at Tom, and find him glaring at the red cheeks and big blue eyes of Henrietta, the buxom nurse in the Surgical Clinic where Tom was then taking a course in Clinical Surgery. We gaze quizzingly at each other until Tom's school philosophy comes uppermost and he declares “we are in for it, and must see it through.” And we do see it through, while the fun grows wilder and more furious. At three, we leave, and Tom suggests a closed carriage; but the girls, drawing on long cloaks, with a burst of professional fraternal economy, prefer to walk. So we strolled back to the hospital, but little Annie, the Tokai beginning to show its hand, must needs raise an exceedingly fine and sweet, but unfortunately far-reaching soprano in the inspiring strains of the student song “Vindobona.” About the time Henrietta is giving her contralto assistance in the chorus, we turned a corner upon a well-known blue cap and black-braided jacket. There is a polite request to the girls to change partners, and escort him to the nearest “gericht-amt.” The girls show signs of melting, and Tom and I hold a hurried council of war. Tom grasps the situation at once by stating that if no other consideration

bound us, if we went back on the girls they would get mad, give it away to the boys, and the supper would cost us far more than any possible fine; so we announce our intention of accompanying the girls. The officer, on hearing this, and finding we are "Studenten" won't allow this; so we compromise. We deposit a light contribution to this committee of one on law and order, he takes our names and addresses, and orders us to report at ten in the morning; a fair instance of the calm confidence that, owing to the iron system of registration, almighty Austria can put her hand upon any subject or visitor when she wants him. We get back to the Hospital, and the girls slipped in through the back door of the Obstetrical Clinic, ever opened, so that the students summoned can enter at any time. We strolled homeward, silently puffing our cigars and reflectively gazing at the blue, star-lit sky.

In the morning we are on time, and find the girls rather blue. But on being assured that we intended to stand by them until the blue Danube or the River Styx froze over, and realizing that they would not have to pay weeks and perhaps months salary for a fine, their spirits rose to the occasion; and it was a fairly jolly party that walked over to confront the awful judge. The girls gave their names to a clerk, we found our man waving and smiling, and the five filed in before the judge. The simplicity of this court was in refreshing contrast to our American complexity. The judge sat in solitary solemnity; judge, jury, clerk, prosecutor, counsel, and audience. The officer made his statement accurate, nothing exaggerated nothing extenuating. The girls made theirs in like manner; nothing concealed nothing held back. The judge turned to us and asked us if these were our sweet-hearts; the tone implying the full Viennese meaning of the term. Tom and I gazed at each other, and then at the girls. They were smiling back sweetly and complacently, to reassure us they were ready to accept this soft imputation, or anything else to stay the avenging hand of Justice. But Tom's George Washington spirit rose in its might, and he answered no. This seemed to puzzle the Vienna legal mind, and take the case out of the range of his experience. I noticed however two or three characteristic slashes across the judge's solemn visage, so I hastened to explain that we were American students, strangers, knew only these nurses, wanted to see the attractions of that glorious city etc. etc.

This caused his hard mouth to twitch a bit, and brought a twinkle to his pale blue eye. He answered that he was ever ready to guard and keep academic freedom, but that honest, quiet burgers who had old-fashioned desires to rest in quiet undisturbed slumber at three a.m. had some rights to be respected. So he would impose the minimum fine. We filed out, and Tom and I each

paid the clerk our three guilders; about one dollar and a half; Tom remarking that he considered that good and cheap justice. We all four went back to our daily round; the girls kept mum; and Tom who was and incorrigible, always spoke of this as our Court ball to which the diplomatic corps and the American colony were not invited.

David DeBeck