

*A CHRISTMAS VISITOR.*

It was Christmas Eve. I sat alone in my room in one of the most unfrequented parts of the old college building and meditated. I had long since thrown aside my well worn copy of Faust, in the German, and had given myself up to my own rambling thoughts. The few other students who, like myself, were so unfortunate as to have to spend, for various reasons, their vacation at the college had retired and the old Janitor had gone his rounds, so that the solitude was unbroken save by the radiator which seemed to be enjoying its Christmas far more than I, for it kept up an incessant sissing, rattling and banging, as though it was in the best of humors. The lamp burned low. Ah! how I cursed the poverty, that enemy of all students, that had this year kept me from joining in the Christmas revels in my distant home? How I bemoaned the bad luck which had caused me to lose a cool hundred with which I had backed the Eleven in the game with B——? But for that I might have been listening to the voice of the dear girl in H——, instead of to the jarring tones of a boisterous radiator.

Sleepily I watched the wreaths of smoke rise from my pipe and float gently on the air, picturing to myself scenes of home. Just as the last tones of the college bell striking midnight had died away, I was rudely awakened from my reveries by three low distinct raps upon the closet door. Astounded at the thought of a visitor at such an hour and from such a quarter I instinctively grasped a base-ball bat for protection and excitedly cried,—“come in.”

The door slowly flew back and forth from a chaos of clothes, hats, tennis rackets and old books came not, as I had expected, a murderous house-breaker but a tall sad looking man, apparently of about twenty-two,—dressed not in the seedy garb of a night hawk but in a full evening suit covered with mold and dust.

“Who are you,” I exclaimed fiercely “that you hide yourself in a man’s room like a thief and

disturb his peace of mind by such unearthly visits?”

A wan smile lit up his pale face and he answered, “I am the ghost of Frederick Von Bunderstein.”

“Ghost! Bosh!” I roared.

“Hit me and see,” he sneeringly replied.

With all the force in my arms I let fly the bat right at him, expecting to see him the next instant an unconscious mass. But no,—right through him it went and landed with such force upon the door as to completely demolish one panel. A hollow laugh was all that he uttered.

Terror-stricken I sank down in my chair and it was some minutes before I had sufficiently regained my presence of mind to examine my unearthly visitor.

He had seated himself, lit my pipe and was coolly perusing the pages of my Faust. Evidently he was troubled with the translation for suddenly with a loud oath he threw the book into a distant corner and exclaimed, “Stuff! If it had not been for that accursed language I should at this moment be flesh and blood, instead of having to roam about, the laughing stock of all really swell ghosts, in a dress coat twenty years out of style.”

“Pray, Sir, and how was that,” I tremblingly asked, for I had recovered at length somewhat from my fear of him so gentlemanly did he look.

“And have you time to listen to my sad history? For if so, I will relate it to you.”

I nodded assent. He refilled the pipe, took a few preliminary whiffs and then in hollow tones repeated the following tale:

“My Grandfather, Carl Von Bunderstein, came to this country in the Forties and amassed by long years of toil a fortune reaching well toward a million. I was left an orphan when fifteen years of age and accordingly my grandfather’s roof became my shelter, he my guardian, and from that time I was always treated as his sole heir. Never shall I forget those few years which I spent under his protection. Imagine a cold, crabbed old man of seventy whose sole pleasure consisted in shutting