



SELECTED MATTER.

IF OUR OLD CLOCK COULD SPEAK.



It isn't a scrumptious thing to see—
It's rather short o' paint—
Its brows will always wrinkled be—
Its tick is growing faint;
The circulation's noways good—
The j'int's to stiffly play—
It some't of ner than it should
Forgits the time o' day:
'Twill stop and try to recollect
For somethin' like a week,
For ther'd be music, I suspect,
'Our ol' clock could speak.

In rain or shine, through peace an' war,
It's still been, as appears,
A member of our family for
Some five and fifty years.
It's stood right there, through thick and thin,
An' kep' track of the sun,
An' raked its own opinions in
'Bout what we mortals done;
It's hed good watch o' young an' old
(An' looked so mild and meek!)
Some anecdotes ther' would be told,
If our ol' clock could speak.

It's stood aroun' at every meal,
Mid clash o' plate an' cup.
An' heard us our id's reveal,
An' size the neighbors up;
It's traced our little bickerin's, too,
An' seemed to sympathize,
A squintin' softly at us through
Them solemn key-hole eyes;
It's umpired many a lively game
O' social hide-an'-seek;
'Twould score a number o' the same,
Providin' it could speak!

How our folks drove to town one day,
An' lef' us chilrun free
With self-protectin' things to play,
"But let the ol' clock be"
An' though we young 'uns (never still)
Haden't thought o' that before,
We now couldn't let it 'lone, until
It crashed down on the floor!
We tremblin' set it up again,
Half-runnin', with a squeak;
'Twas lucky for our jackets then,
The critter couldn't speak!

How o' folks went to church one night,
An' lef' us all—sly elves—
If we'd conduct there—good an' right—
A meetin' by ourselves;
But neighbor gals an' boys in teens
Walked in—an' first we knew,
We fell to playin' "Cats, peas, beans,"
"Snap up an' catch 'em" too;
We scattered when, by good ear-luck
She heard the big gate creak;
The ol' clock frowned an' ticked an' struck,
But couldn't make out to speak!

Ah me! the facts 'twould just let fly,
Suppose it had the power!
Of courtin' chaps, when on the sly,
They turned it back an hour;
Of weddin's—holdin' tender yet,
The bride's last virgin grace;
Of fun'ra's—where it peeped to get
A good look at the face;
It knows the inside-out o' folks—
An' nature's every freak;
I'd write a book if I could coax
That wise ol' clock to speak.

Still straight as any gun it stan's
Ag'n the kitchen wall;
An' slowly waves its solemn han's
Outlivin' of us all!
I venerate some clocks I've seen,
As e'en a'most sublime;
They form revolvin' links between
Eternity an' time,
An' when you come to take the pains
To strike a dreamy streak,
The figurative fact remains
That all the clocks can speak.

—Will Carleton, in *Home Journal*.

SAVED BY A DIAMOND RING.



ONCE noticed during dinner at a village inn a stranger who, as is the habit of some widowers, wore a wedding ring, which had presumably been his wife's, and over it another ring of the kind usually worn by ladies, in which were set three very handsome brilliants. After dinner the conversation took a turn in the direction of precious stones, and one of the guests said something about the difficulty of distinguishing, in the

absence of tests, a true stone from a well executed imitation. He took from his waistcoat pocket an imitation diamond, which I certainly should have pronounced genuine. For the purpose of comparison, Mr. Fitzpatrick (for that, as I afterward learned, was the widower's name) slipped from his finger the ring which I have just mentioned, and after it had been examined and replaced, said:

"There is a curious story connected with that ring; I daresay you have heard it?"

"I've heard something about it," said the other, "but I don't know the particulars, and I think they would interest the company."

"Well, then," said Mr. Fitzpatrick, "I may as well tell it if you care to hear it. The story begins and ends a long time ago. It is forty years this month since I became engaged to