

The Infidel's Dream.

He dreamed he stood in space dim and abysmal;
A great clock, with a ghastly face before,
That slowly measured seconds long and dismal,
To midnight as it seemed, the moment wore;
Like hideous serpents of corruption crawling,
The clock hands crept around the dial's face,
And there was heard a heavy sound appalling,
Of blood drops falling in that ghastly place.
Each clock tick was a drop that gathered gory,
About his feet in a deep stagnant pool,
And sprinkled in his breast a darksome story,
He strove in vain to cleanse his breast,—ah, fool!
For he beheld his hands, too, stained and hateful,
The clock hands slowly crawled to midnight hour.
Then there arose a vapor hot and fateful,
That wrapped him in a cloud of blighting power.
Then failed within him every aspiration,
Hope, love, and even hate, groaned, gasped and died;
And he, too, groaned and gasped in desperation.
But could not die,—the would-be Deicide.
Each heart-beat was to him a crucifixion:
Each clock tick an eternity of pain;
He felt his flesh rot, and in dereliction
His bones did crumble, and he writhed in vain.
He shrank no longer from the blood-drops teeming.
But moistened lips and brow in clotted gore;
And in the same breath uttered foul blaspheming.
And prayed for morning,—would it come no more?
The clock hands reached the midnight hour and slumbered
And there was no more time for him for aye.
Then deeper darkness nameless horrors numbered,
Thirst him consumed, the blood pool dried away.
After an age of misery so utter,
He cried, "Is there no sunlight, no more life?"
And lo! a voice replied in tones as bitter,
"No sunlight for the stirrer up of strife!"
An age of ages passed, and then despairing,
He broke the awful silence with a shriek,