

Half-past—Deborah Matthews gasped for breath. She turned her back on the clock and dashed up the window full length.

The night seemed blacker than ever. A cloud had rolled solemnly over the mountain, and hung darkly above the house. The stalks of corn looked like corpses. But they talked like living beings still. They put their heads together and nodded. As she leaned out, trembling and panting, a flash of unseasonable lightning darted and shot; it revealed the arm of the locust tree pointing down the road. A low mutter of distant thunder followed; it rolled away, and lapsed into a stillness that shook her soul.

She came back to her chair in the middle of the room, by the centre-table. The final struggle with hope had set in. It seemed as if the clock knew this as well as she. The ticking filled her ears, her brain, her veins, her being. It seemed to fill the world.

Half-past ten. It was as if some spirit appealed to the minister's clock: "Oh, tell her so softly! Say so, gently as religious love, though you be stern to your duty as religious law." Twenty-five minutes of eleven—a quarter of—

The woman has ceased to look the clock in the eye. It has conquered her, poor thing; and, now that it has, seems sorry for her, and ticks tenderly, as if it would turn back an hour if it could. Her head has dropped into her hands; her hands to her knees; her body to the floor. Buried in the cushions of the old rocking-chair, her face is invisible. Her hands have lifted themselves to her ears, which they press violently. She herself lies crouched like a murdered thing upon the floor.

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## SUNDOWN.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

THE summer sun is sinking low,  
Only the tree-tops redden and glow;  
Only the weathercock on the spire  
Of the neighbouring church is a flame of fire;  
All is in shadow below.

O beautiful, awful summer day,  
What hast thou given, what taken away!  
Life and death, and love and hate,  
Homes made happy or desolate,  
Hearts made sad or gay!

On the road of life one milestone more!  
In the Book of Life one leaf turned o'er;  
Like a red seal is the setting sun  
On the good and the evil men have done,—  
Naught can to-day restore!