

in the latter case ; its movement is the same, neither faster nor slower. The sick person looks at it and complains that it is horribly slow ; the happy person casts a quick glance at it and says it has wings. Neither the one nor the other is right ; the clock has neither hastened nor slowed its movement ; it is the step of time, firm, inexorable, never receding.

And this is the step that takes us to the grave, to eternity.

Ah ! what serious teachings come from this article of unceasing usefulness, this companion of our lives ! How far its warnings spread and its feeble voice extends ! Its duty does not consist only in measuring out to man the hours of his mortal life. Its mission is a higher one ; it is the messenger from beyond the tomb, the anticipated echo of the trumpet that will wake the dead. The Church understood this well when it placed the clock in the top of its towers. From our steeples, the clock speaks to all, and to all it says the same thing ; it scatters its ever serious warnings through the air, in order that the husbandman in the country, the citizen in the town, the workman in the workshop, the traveller on the road, the sick man in his bed may remember that life on earth is but a pilgrimage ; that their hours are numbered and that the lives of all, like small streams, will fall into that vast abyss that is called eternity.

The clock serves to direct all man's doings *during time* ; it marks off all the stages on the journey of life ; but *it hides* the future from him ; it conceals the *hour* when he will reach the fated bourn called *the grave*. How many times more will the hands go round the clock *for us* ? How many times more will the silvery bell strike on *our ears* ? This is an unknown mystery and unsolvable problem which God knows, but of which His faithful messenger is ignorant. One thing alone is certain and that is that the hour now beginning may be the last for us and that *one* will come when our soul will leave this land of *exile* to appear before its judge and receive eternal punishment or reward according to the use it has made of time.

We read one day on a clock these words : « *Ultima latet*, the last hour is unknown to us. » If this simple truth were less forgotten, what a change it would effect in the conduct of most men ! How their hearts would be detached from the things of