

tion. It is a strange fact that a mere machine has risen to the first place in the thoughts of civilized mankind. Let us confess with shame that we habitually look with more interest on the face of a clock than we do on the face of a dearly-liked friend; that we consult it oftener than we do the one whom we most delight to honour; that we watch its progress with a more careful eye than we do the progress of our nearest and best. What is it that drives one to sleep at night? Is it the fact that one is sleepy? Not always. Rather, it is the apparition of a clock, with its two hands folded together at the most northerly part—to speak geographically. Is the first thought in the morning a blessed realization of the truth that every lesson for that day is learned? Not exactly. One's first mental operation is more likely to take the form of a clock-question, worded in this way: If the sunshine has reached the same point on the wall at the present moment that it did at seven o'clock yesterday morning, must it not be seven o'clock this morning? This is not a difficult problem, and yet it seldom brings satisfactory results.

Now, in return for all the homage—almost approaching servility—which we render to the clock, let us carefully consider what the clock has done for us. First, it reminds us of the flight of time. That is a vile thing to be reminded of. Everyone knows that time flies; and some of us, who are behind time, are apt to think that we will never catch up until we are angels, and learn to fly too. It has, besides, a murderous tick, which, as little "Paul Dombey" said, seems to attack each second as soon as it comes, and strike it dead on the spot. Then it is despotic, omnipresent, heartless.

No doubt you remember the evening when you went for a moonlight sail on the lake. The still waters; the

shadowy, vague shore; the dreamy, enchanting motion of the boat; the wan, unearthly moonlight, gave you a pleasure, acute and penetrating like pain. You began faintly to realize that you had left earth and its dull cares behind you, when your prosaic companion, taking out his watch, with a long yawn, reminded you that it was the unlovely hour of half-past ten, and he guessed it was about time you were at home. Flee to the mountains, but do not imagine that the clock-tyrant will relax even there his pitiless hold upon you. You will have to attend to this or that trivial duty. The eternal hills may wait awhile—they are accustomed to waiting—but time waits for no man. We are slaves of the clock. When we are working, it is with a half-feverish anxiety caused by constant reference to that soulless machine; when we are resting, we are resting like fury. Thrice happy he who can say with Lowell—

" Oh, my life, have we not had seasons
That only said live and rejoice !
That asked not for causes or reasons,
But made us all feeling and voice :
When we went with the winds in their
blowing,
When Nature and we were peers,
And we seemed to share in the flowing
Of the inexhaustible years."

Men are known by the kind of time-keepers they carry. I have always had a warm liking (and not much respect) for Captain Cuttle, who had a watch of which he said, that if he could only remember to set it ahead half an hour in the forenoon, and back quarter of an hour in the afternoon, it would keep time with anybody's watch; and I have always had a great respect (and not much liking) for Washington, who was so rigidly punctual, that when Hamilton, his secretary, pleaded a slow watch as an excuse for being five minutes tardy, he replied, "Then, sir, either you must get a new watch, or I must get a