

THE HOUSEHOLD CLOCK

Its lessons of every moment.

THERE are but few houses that do not contain in some corner this *strange* piece of furniture, so remarkable amongst all and yet so little remarked. We call it strange because it alone, moves and speaks. While all else is immovable, the clock moves ; when all else is silent, it speaks. Its movement is not a fruitless one, an agitation without an object ; its speech, its *tic-tac*, is not a vacant sound, a meaningless noise. All its movements have their value, not one of its sounds is uselessly lost to *him who knows how to hear it*.

It mingles with the day's occupations, and with night's repose. To each one it recalls the duty to be performed ; it casts reproach for the fault committed ; it denounces the time that is lost. An indefatigable monitor, it allows nothing to be forgotten. In the morning it calls out to the sluggard : « Now is the time to awake from slumber. Get up ! » At night it says to the tired workingman : « Thy daily task is ended ; go and restore thy strength in sleep. » Three or four times during the day it gives notice that food is needed. Finally whether one has to do something or to rest ; to go out, or come in, to do, or not to do, the clock is there apportioning the day, dividing time into fractions and life into atoms ; its silvery bell ever strikes the ear with unvarying regularity, thereby calling attention and keeping man's powers in working order.

A *strange* piece of furniture we again call it and we also venture to say, greatly *misunderstood*. A discreet witness of all that passes in the family, the clock marks off births, illnesses, deaths, unions and separations, sorrows and joys ; itself ever calm, ever severe, ever inflexible. Whether the eye that looks at it be illuminated with joy or clouded by tears, it is all the same for it ; it points out to every one the moment when he laughed or wept and that is all. When the house is in mourning and weeps for the loss of a loved one, it strikes ; when a young bride enters full of happiness and hope, it strikes again ; but its voice is the same, neither sad in the former nor joyful