

"What O'Clock is it?"

WHEN I was a young lad, my father one day called me to him that he might teach me to know what o'clock it was. He told me the use of the minute-finger and the hour-hand, and described to me the figures on the dial-plate, until I was perfect in my part.

No sooner was I quite master of this knowledge than I set off scampering to join my companions in a game of marbles; but my father called me back again.

"Stop, Willie," said he; "I have something more to tell you."

"Back again I went, wondering what else I had got to learn; for I thought I knew all about the clock as well as my father did."

"Willie," said he, "I have taught you to know the time of day. I must now teach you the time of your life."

Now, life is very uncertain, and you may not live a single day longer; but if we divide the four-score years of an old man's life into twelve parts, it will give almost seven years for every figure. When a boy is seven years old, then it is one o'clock of his life, and this is the case with you.

I waited rather impatiently to hear how my father would explain this further lesson, for I wished to go to my marbles."

"The Bible," said he, "describes the years of a man to be threescore-and-ten or four-score years. When you reach fourteen years old, it will be two years o'clock with you; and when at twenty-one, it will be three o'clock; at twenty-eight, it will be four o'clock; at thirty-five, it will be five o'clock; at forty-two, it will be six o'clock; at forty-nine, it will be seven o'clock, should it please God to spare your life. In this manner you may always know the time of your life, and looking at the clock may remind you of it. My great-grand-father according to this calculation, died at twelve o'clock, my grand-father at eleven, and my

father at ten. At what hour you or I shall die, Willie, is only known to Him who knoweth all things.

Seldom since then have I heard the enquiry, "What o'clock is it?" or looked at the face of a clock, without being reminded of the words of my father.

The Value of a Minute.

A SMALL vessel was nearing the Steep Holme, in the Bristol Channel. The captain stood on the deck, his watch in his hand, his eye fixed on it.

A terrible tempest had driven them onward, and the vessel was a scene of devastation. No one dared to ask "Is there hope?" Silent consternation filled every heart, made every face pale.

The wind and tide drove the shattered bark fiercely forward. Every moment they were hurried nearer to the sullen rock which knew no mercy—on which many ill-fated vessels had foundered, all the crews perishing.

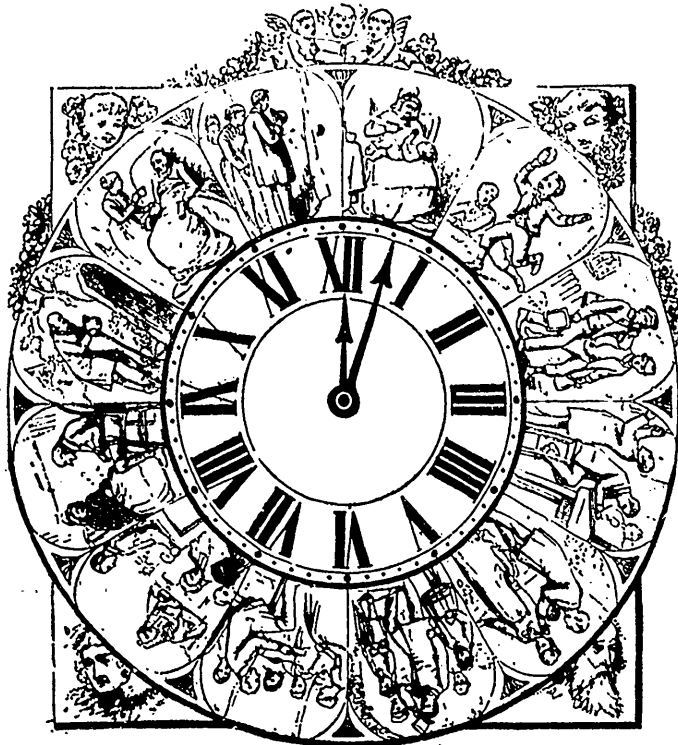
Still the captain stood motionless, speechless, his watch in his hand. "We are lost!" was the conviction of many around him.

Suddenly his eye glanced across the sea; he stood erect; another moment, and

he cried, "Thank God! we are saved—the tide has turned—in one minute more we should have been on the rocks!"

He returned to his pocket his chronometer by which he had thus measured the race between time and tide; and if they had never felt it before, assuredly both he and his crew were on that day powerfully taught the value of a minute.

Friend, perhaps there is but a minute between you and death. How is it to be spent?



WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?