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which he would not ordinarily take thousands of dollars for, but which he sold now because he was out of work, penniless; and when his wife and children cried to him for bread, he could not say them nay when he had that in his possession that would, in any intelligent community, bring them food and plenty.

"Gentlemen, he said, "look at that clock. A relic of antiquity. One of the oldest Chinese clepsydras in the world. Bamboo case and sandal-wood running gear. Not an ounce of metal in its construction. Made in China by the eminent horologist Tchin Pitshoo, as near as can be ascertained, three hundred years after the flood. Worth a thousand dollars if its worth a cent; but of course I don't expect to get half its value in these hard times. The inscription on the face is in the characters of the purest Confucian Chinese and the interpretation of them is, 'Time flies and money is twelve per cent.' Now what are you going to give me for that clock? Who will buy this clock, and present it to the Iowa Historical Society or the Burlington Library? How much? Start her up; send her ahead at something, gentlemen; there's a woman and five children that haven't had a bite to eat for two days, and can't get a crumb till the money for this clock is in my pocket. A marvellous time-piece; never lost—"

A man in brown overalls and a dirty face lounged up to the clock, and after scratching the case with a pin, to assure himself that it was really a genuine Chinese clepsydra, bid ten cents.

"Ten cents!" roared the man, rolling his eyes—"Heaven hold back your lightnings! Don't strike him dead just yet! Give him time to repent. Ten cents to buy food for a starving woman and five children. Tencents for a d—" He choked with emotion, and could not go on for a moment. "Ten cents! Why, that clock only has to be wound once a month, and it records every minute of time; tells just how long it will take you to get to the depot; tells when the train starts, and when the children are late to school. This clock, gentlemen, will tell when the oldest boy has played hookey and gone off fishing; it tells how late the hired girl's beau stays Sunday night, and it will register the exact minute of our oldest daughter's arrival and departure at and from the front gate after ten o'clock at night. Why, after you've had it six weeks, you'll not take six hundred dollars for it. It runs fast all day and slow all night, giving a man fourteen hours' sleep in the winter and sixteen hours' sleep in the summer, without disturbing the accurate average of the day a minute. Ten cents for such a clock as

that! Ten cents! Gentlemen, this is robbery; it's cold-blooded murder. At ten cents; at ten, at ten, atten, atten, tennit-tennit-tennit-tena-tena-tena-ten a-a-ten cents only am I offered, twenty do I hear? At ten—"

An old rag man, after a critical examination of the marvel, bid fifteen cents, and was instantly regarded as a mortal enemy by the first bidder.

"Fifteen cents!" exclaimed the seller. "Gentlemen, knock me down and rob me of my clothes, strip me naked if you will, but don't plunder a gasping, starving woman and five weak, helpless babes. Don't rob the dying. Fifteen cents. Why, I've suffered more than three hundred dollars' worth of privation and sorrow and misery, rather than sell this clock at all. Fifteen cents. Why, you set that clock where the sun shines on it, and it will indicate a rain storm three days in advance, and will tell where the lightning is going to strike. Why, you could make millions by buying this clock to bet on. It will tell, just three weeks before election, who is going to beat. It's a credit to any household, and will run the whole family on tick. Fifteen cents! why, it won't pay for the shelf you stand it on. Fifteen cents for a clock that used to be owned by an emperor! Fifteen cents. Oh, kill me dead. At fifteen cents, fifteen, fiftn, fift, fift, nift, nift, niftnniftnnift, t-a-a-a-at fifteen cents for a clock that can't be duplicated this side of the Yang tee Kiang. At fifteen ce—thank you sir, twenty cents I have; twenty cents to feed a starving family of seven souls; twenty cents for a barefooted woman and five ragged children that haven't tasted food since Monday morning; twenty cents, from a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, for a starving family; there's Christian philanthropy for you. Twenty cents from the commercial capital of Iowa, for a clock that would be snapped up anywhere else in the world at hundreds, merely for its antiquity; there's intelligent appreciation of the arts and culture for you. Gentlemen, I can't stand it much longer; my heart is breaking. Twenty cents, twenty cents, twenty, twenty, twen, twen, twentwten, and sold—a thousand dollar clock, starving woman, dying children, heart-broken man, and all to the second-hand-store man for twenty cents."

He took his money, a ragged shinplaster and two street-car nickels, and walked away with a dejected, heart-broken air. He stopped in at a bakery with frosted windows and transient doors, to buy bread for his starving wife and babes, and his voice was husky with emotion as he said to the natty-looking baker, whose diamond pin glittered over the walnut counter,

"Gimme a plain sour."