

Until what time a kidnapped boy,
 By ruffians whipped and stole,
 Should in the groves of Haunted Point
 Convert his stealer's soul!
 They stole the island parson's child,
 He said a little prayer:
 Down sank the ground; a gliding sound
 Went whispering through the air.
 And in the depths the pungy sank;
 And, as the divers told,
 They sought the wreck to lift again,
 And found the pirates' gold.
 And in a chapel close at hand
 The pious freedmen toil;
 No slaves are left in all the land,
 Nor any pirates' spoil.

TICKING STONE.

PEOPLE say that a certain tombstone in the London Tract "Hardshell" Baptist graveyard, near Newark, Delaware, will give to the ear placed flat upon it the sound of a ticking like a watch. The London Tract Church, as its name implies, was the worshipping place of certain settlers who either came from London, or chose land owned by a London company. It is a quaint edifice of hard stone, with low-bent bevelled roof, and surrounded by a stone wall, which has a shingle coping. The wall incloses many gravestones, their inscriptions showing that very many of the old worshippers of the church were Welsh. Some large and healthy forest trees partly shade the graveyard and the grassy and sandy cross-roads where it stands, near the brink of the pretty White Clay Cr ek.

I climbed over the coping of the graveyard wall last spring, and followed my companion, the narrator of the following story, to what appeared to be the very oldest portion of the inclosure. The tombstones were in some cases quite illegible as to inscriptions, worn bare and smooth by more than a century's rains and chipping frosts, and others were sunken deep in the grass so as to afford only partial recompense for the epitaph hunter.

"This is the Ticking Stone," said my companion, pointing to a recumbent slab, worn smooth and scarcely showing a trace of former lettering; "put your ear upon it while I pull away the weeds, and then note if you hear any thing."

I laid my ear upon the mossy stone, and almost im-

Tales of the Olden Time
by *James M. Smith*
Copyright, 1870
Published by *James M. Smith*
Philadelphia

mediately felt an audible, almost tangible ticking, like that of a lady's watch.

"You are scratching the stone, Pusey," I cried to my informant.

"No! Upon my honor! That is not the sound of a scratch that you hear. It cannot be any insect nor any process of moving life in the stone or beneath it. Can you liken it to any thing but the equal motion of a rather feeble timepiece?"

I listened again, and this time longer, and a sort of superstition grew over me, so that had I been alone, probably I would have experienced a sense of timid loneliness. To stand amidst those silent memorial stones of the early times and hear a watch beat beneath one of them as perfectly as you can feel it in your vest pocket, and then to feel your heart start nervously at the recognition of this disassociated sound, is not satisfying, even when in human company.

"This is the best ghost I have ever found," I said. "Perhaps some one has slipped a watch underneath, for it is somebody's watch; there is something real in it."

"I took the stone up once myself," said Pusey, "and the ticking then seemed to come up from the ground. While I deliberated, an old man came out of yonder old sexton-looking house, and warned me not to disturb the dead. He crossed the wall, and assisted me to replace the stone, and then bade me sit down upon it, ancient mariner-like, while he disclosed the cause of the phenomenon."

Here my companion stopped a minute—and in the pause we could hear the old trees wave very solemnly above us, and a nut, or burr, or sycamore ball, came rattling down the old kirk roof as we stood there in the graves, to startle us the more, and then he said:

"It is just as queer as the tale he told me—the disappearance of that old man. Nobody about here can recognize him from my descriptions. He walked toward the old mill down the Newark road, and the next

time I looked up he was gone. The people in the house there think I am flighty in my mind for insisting upon his appearance to me at all.

"Go on with the tale right here, my flesh-creeping friend," I said. "It will do us good to feel occasionally solemn."

"This stone, young man," said my Quakerly rebuker, in a hard country farmer's voice; "this stone is the London Tract Ticking Stone. It is the oldest preacher and admonitor in this churchyard. It is older than the graves of any of the known pastors or communicants round about it.

"In the year 1764 the comparative solitude of this region was broken by a large party of chain-bearers, rod-men, axe-men, commissaries, cooks, baggage-carriers, and camp-followers. They had come by order of Lord Baltimore and William Penn, to terminate a long controversy between two great landed proprietors, and they were led by Charles Mason, of the Royal Observatory, at Greenwich, England, and by Jeremiah Dixon, the son of a collier discovered in a coalpit. For three years they continued westward, running their stakes over mountains and streams, like a gypsy camp in appearance, frightening the Indians with their sorcery. But, near this spot, they halted longest, to fix with precision the tangent point, and the point of intersection of three States—the circular head of Delaware, the abutting right angle of Maryland, and the tiny pan-handle of Pennsylvania.

"The people of this region were sparse in number, but of strong, sober, and yet wild characteristics. The long boundary quarrel had made them predatory, and though God-fearing people, they would fight with all their religious intensity for their right in the land and the dominion of their particular province. They suspended their feuds when the surveying battalion came into their broken country, and looked with curi-

ous interest upon all that pertained to the distinguished foreign mathematicians. Around their camp of tents and pack-mules, peddlers and preachers called together their motley congregations, and the sound of axes clearing the timber was accompanied by fiddling and haranguing, the fighting of dogs, and the coarse tones of religious or business oratory. It was in the height of the era of the great period of the Dissenters in England, and Methodist, Baptist, and Calvinistic zealots were piercing to the boundaries of English-speaking people, wild forerunners of those organized bands of clergy which were speedily to make our colonies sober-minded, and prepare them for self-government.

"Charles Mason was the scientific spirit of the party—a cool, observing, painstaking, plodding man, slow in his processes and reliable in his conclusions, and the bond of friendship between himself and Dixon was that of two unequal minds admiring the superiorities of each other. They had already proceeded together to the Cape of Good Hope on two occasions to study an eclipse and an occultation. Mason liked Dixon for his ready, spirits, almost improvident courage, speed with details, and worldly bearing. Though little is known of their memories now, because they left us no prolific records and spent much of the period of service among us in the midst of the wilderness or in the reticence required for mathematical calculation, yet they were the successors of Washington in the surveying of the Alleghany ridges. Their survey was reliable; the line was true. How much superior does it stand to-day to the line of thirty degrees thirty minutes, which is the next great political parallel below it, and was partly run only a few years afterwards! Up to their line for the next hundred years flowed the waters of slavery, but sent no human drop beyond, which did not evaporate in the free light of a milder sun. God speed the surveyor, whoever he be, who plants the stakes of a tranquil commonwealth and leaves them to

be the limit of bad principles, the pioneer line of good ones!

"Charles Mason had spent many years of his life, up to his old age, experimenting with timepieces of his own invention. Many years before, Sir Isaac Newton had called the attention of the British Government to the necessity for an accurate portable time-keeper at sea, to determine longitude, and in 1714 Parliament offered a reward of 20,000 pounds sterling for such a chronometer. Thenceforward for fifty years the inventive spirits of England and the Continent were secretly at work to produce a timepiece which would deserve the large reward, amongst them Charles Mason, who labored with such perfect discretion and uncommunicative self-reliance that none knew, none will ever know, the motive principle he employed or the ingenuity he devised. While he was working at this survey, near the spot at which we stand, the Board of Award gave the £20,000 to one John Harrison, almost at the very instant when Mason and Dixon's line was begun. This you can confirm by any history of Horology. Charles Mason lived down to the year 1787, surviving Dixon, who had died in England ten years previously, and he was known to say to the end of his days, to people resident in Philadelphia, that a child had eaten up £20,000 belonging to him at a single mouthful.

"The child whom the neighborhood at that time accused of this act was known in later life as Fithian Minuit, babe of a woman of mixed English and Finnish-Dutch descent, who came from the fishermen's town of Head of Elk, a few hours' jog to the southward, to sell fish to the surveying camp. She was a woman of mingled severity of features and bodily obesity, uniting in one temper and frame the Scandinavian and the Low Dutch traits, ignorant good-humor, grim commerce, and stolid appetite. Her baby was the fattest, quaintest, and ugliest in the country; ready to devour any thing, to grin at any thing, go to the arms

"The child of the fish-woman ate it!"

"The fish-woman screamed, and reversed the urchin after the manner of mothers, and swung him to and fro like a pendulum. He came up a trifle red in the face, but laughing as usual, and the ludicrous inappropriateness of the great loss, the unconscious cause of it, the baby's wonderful digestion, the assistant's distress, and the surveyor's calm but pallid self-control, made Jeremiah Dixon, dropping in at the minute, roar with laughter.

"Dixon," said Mason, "the work of half my life, my everlasting timepiece, just completed and set going, has found a temperature where it requires no compensation balance."

"I am glad of it," said his associate, "for now we can proceed with Mason and Dixon's line, and nothing else!"

A look, more of pity than of reproach, passed over Mason's scarcely ruffled face—the pity of one man solely conscious of a great object lost, for another, indifferent or ignorant both of the object and the loss. He took the smiling urchin in his hands, and raising it upon his shoulder, placed his ear to its side. Thence came with faint regularity the sound of a simple, gentle ticking. They all heard it by turns, and, while they paused in puzzled wonder and humor, the undaunted infant looked down as innocent as a chubby, cheery face painted on some household clock. The innocent expression of the child touched the mathematician's heart. He filled a glass with good Madeira wine, and drank the devourer's health in these benignant words:

"May Minuit's baby run as long and as true as the article on which he has made his meal!"

"Next day they set the great stone in the corner of the State of Maryland, and, breaking camp, vanished westward through the cleft of light opened by their pioneers, pursued yet for many miles by a motley multitude.

"Before many years this fertile country filled up with

of everybody, and, in short, it represented all the traits of the Middle State races—the government of the members, including the brain, by the belly.

"One day this Finnish-Dutch baby—aged perhaps two years—was picked up by one of the assistant surveyors and carried into the tent of Charles Mason. The great surveyor was at that instant bending down over a small metallic object which he was examining through the medium of a lens. He recognized the child, and seemed glad of the opportunity to dismiss more serious occupation from his mind, so he instantly leaped up and poked the fat urchin with his thumb, tempting the bite of its teeth with his forefinger, and was otherwise reducing his tired faculties to the needs of a child's amusement, when suddenly the voice of its mother at the tent's opening drew him away.

"Fresh fish, mighty surveyor! Fall shad, and the most beautiful yellow perch. Buy something for the sake of Minuit's baby!"

"The celebrated surveyor, who seemed in an admirable humor, stepped just outside the tent to look at the fish, and in that little interval his assistant, seized with inquisitiveness, stole up to his table, and picked up the tiny object lying there under the magnifying glass.

"This is the little ticking seducer which absorbs my master's time," he said. "Why, it isn't big enough for an infant to count the minutes of its life upon it!"

"At this the fat, good-humored baby, anticipating something to eat, reached out its hands. The surveyor's assistant, in a moment of mischief, put the object in the child's grasp. The child clutched it, bit at it, and swallowed it whole in an instant.

"Before the assistant surveyor could think of any other harm done than the possible choking of the child, the child's mother and the great surveyor entered the tent. The arms of the first reached for her offspring, and of the second for the subject of his experiment.

"My chronometer!"

hamlets, mills, and churches; the War of Independence scarcely interrupted its prosperity, because the Quaker element adhered with constancy to neither side, and only one campaign was fought here. The story of the boy who ate a watch passed out of general knowledge and remark; he was known to have been a drummer at the battle of Chadd's Ford, and to have buried his mother before the close of the war, at the Delaware fishing hamlet of Marcus Hook, amongst her Finnish progenitors.

"But soon after the peace, the short, fat body and queer, merry Dutch face of Fithian Minit were known all along the roads of Chester, Cecil, and Newcastle counties, by parts of the people of three States, as components of one of the least offensive, most industrious, and most lively and popular young chaps around the head of the Chesapeake.

"He was respectful with the old and congenial with the young—always going and never tired, up early and late, of a chirruping sort of address and an equal temper, and while he appeared to be thrifty and money-making, he did all manner of good turns for the high and the humble; and, although everybody said he was the homeliest young man in the region, yet more village girls went to their front doors to see him than if he had been a showman coming to town to do feats of magic. He was not unintelligent either, and could play on the violin, compute accounts equal to the best country book-keeper, and as he was of religious turn, although attached to no particular denomination, the meeting-houses on every side, hardly excepting the Quakers themselves, delighted to see him drive up on Sundays and tell an anecdote to the children and sing a little air, half-hymn sort, half stave, but always given with a good countenance, which apologized for the worldly notes of it. If any severe interpreter of Christian amusements took the people to task for tolerating such a universal and desultory character, there were others to rise up and ask what evil or passionate

word or act of sorry behavior in Fithian Minit could be instanced. The severe Francis Asbury himself raised the question once on the Bohemia Manor amongst the Methodists, and got so little support that he charged young Minit with the possession of some devilish art or spell to entrap the people; but Fithian once, when the good itinerant's horse broke down on the road, met Mr. Asbury, won his affections, and mended his big silver watch.

"This mending of clocks, watches, and every description of time-keepers was the occupation of Minit. He had picked up the art, some said, from a Yankee in the army at the close of the war, and certainly no man of his time or territory had such good luck with time-pieces. Residing in the little village of Christina (by the pretentious called Christi-anna, and by the crude, with nearer rectitude, called *Cristene*), Fithian kept a snug little shop full of all manners and forms of clocks, dials, sand-glasses, hour-burning candles, water-clocks, and night tapers. He had amended and improved the new Graham clock, called the 'dead escapement,' or 'dead-beat escapement' (the origin of our modern word *dead-beat*, signifying a man who does not meet his engagements, whereas the original 'dead-beat' was the most faithful engagements-keeper of its time. Perhaps a dead-beat nowadays is a time-server; for this would be a correct derivation). From this shop the young Minit, in a plain but reliable wagon, with a nag never fast and never slow, and indifferent to temperatures, travelled the country for a radius of forty miles—not embarrassed even by the Delaware, which he crossed once a month, and attended fully to the temporal and partly to the spiritual needs of all the Jerseymen betwixt Elsinborough and Swedesboro.

"Over the door of Minit's whitewashed cabin on the knoll of Christina was the sign of a jovial, fat person, bearing some resemblance to himself, in the centre of whose stomach stood a clock inscribed, 'My time

is everybody's.' Past this little shop went the entire long caravan and cavalcade by land between the North and South, stage-coaches, mail-riders, highwaymen, chariots, herdsters, and tramps; for Christina bridge was on the great tide-water road and at the head of navigation on the Swedish river of the same name, so that here vessels from the Delaware transferred their cargo to wagons, and a portage of only ten miles to the Head of Elk gave goods and passengers reshipment down the Chesapeake. This village declined only when the canal just below it was opened in 1829 and a little railway in 1833. It was nearly a century and a half old when Minuit set his sign there, before General Washington went past it to be inaugurated. From Fithian's window the pleasant land was seen spread out below him beyond the Christina; and the Swedish, Dutch, and English farms smiled from their loamy levels on sails which moved with scarcely perceptible motion through the narrow dykes planted with greenest willows. Before his door the teamsters, ill-tempered with lashing and swearing at their teams in the ruts of Iron Hill, schoolboys from Nottingham, millers' men from Upper White Clay, and bargemen and stage passengers, recovered temper to see the sign of the great paunch with a timepiece set so naturally in it indicating the hour of dinner. Within they found the clock-maker, with face beaming as if reflected from a watch-case, working handily amongst a hundred ticking pieces, of which he looked to be one. There were large sundials for the outer walls of barns and farm-houses, very popular in the Pennsylvania hills; sand-glasses for the Peninsula, where it cost nothing to fill them; and hour-burning candles, much affected by the Chesapeake gentry, which gave at once light and time. There were ancient striking clocks, such as the monks may have used to disturb them for early prayers, which, with a horrible rattle of wheels and clash of heavy weights, hammered the alarm. There were the tremendous watches of river captains who had aspired

to go to sea, and old crutch escapement watches which Huygens himself had perhaps handled in Holland. The window was filled with trains of wheels and pinions, snails and racks, crystals, and faces and watches, cackling at each other. There were striking clocks which rung chimes or rocked like little vessels on apparent billows, or started off with notes like grasshoppers. A hundred of the most musical tree-frogs shut up in a piano might give a feeble notion of the tunes and thrummings assembled in this shop. It was the same day or night, and the power of Fithian Minuit over time-keepers was nearly miraculous. He appeared to be able to smile an old watch into action. Transferred to his hand, some spent and rusty sentinel, long silent and useless, seemed to feel the warmth of the mender and resumed the round of duty. He would buy from the old estate halls on the Sasfras and the Chester rivers, tall, solemn clocks, dead to the purpose of their creation, their stately learned faces lost to former automatic expressions or waggery, and when exposed to the infectious influences of his shop, a gurgle of sound as of the inhalation of air into their lungs had been heard, according to some people, and next day the carcass of the clock would be found resonant and its faculties recovered. One day the great patriots, John Dickinson and Cæsar Rodney, riding past Christina together, stopped for dinner, and sent their watches in to be cleaned meantime.

"'Minuit,' said Rodney, 'you are a devil with a time-keeper!'

"'Nay, Minuit,' said Dickinson, 'thou art the gentlest custodian of time in our parts. I would some one could regulate these States and times like thee.'

"The country round resorted to Minuit for repairs, but he generally came himself along the roads fortuitously about the time anybody's dials stood still. He was almost equal as a weather prophet to his fame as a mechanic, and as his broad, fat face, blue eyes, and

portly body passed some farmer's gate, the cheery cry would go up, perhaps :

"Make hay—the wind's right!" or again: "Time enough, farmer, with another pair of hands. But it's coming from the east!"

"Had it been possible to suggest any superstition about a man universally popular, people would have said that this henchman of time and minute-hand of diligence drew his power from doubtful sources. Further north, where there was less superstition than amongst these mingled unspiritualized populations, Minuit might have been burnt as a wizard. A little doctor in the Deutsch hills, who once prescribed for the clock-mender, reported that his pulse had a metallic beat, and, looking suddenly up, he saw, where Minuit's face had been, a round clock face looking down and ticking at him. This doctor was a worthless fellow, however, and loose of tongue. Minuit, it was observed, never used a tuning-fork in church, like all leaders of religious music, but cast his eyes down a moment towards his heart, and tapped his foot, and then, as if catching the pitch somewhere from within, he raised the tune and carried it forward with an exquisite sense of rhythm.

"A very old man and a cripple, who lived across the way from Minuit's, affected to observe extraordinary changes in his stature according to the weather changes, elongating as the temperature rose, and in very cold weather sinking into himself; this man also observed, on the day of a solar eclipse, that for the period there was nothing at all in the place where the clock-mender's head had been except a ring of light which enlarged as the disk of the sun was released. But who could rely upon the vagaries of an old man, who could do nothing but make memoranda out of his window upon the doings of his neighbors?

"If anybody knew more than that Fithian Minuit was an obliging, neighborly man, and a model for mechanics, it must have been the subject of his romance.

He was related to have told all that he knew upon the mystery of his being to his clergyman, and there is nothing now to confirm the gossip; for the preacher himself has gone to sleep in the old Shrewsbury graveyard in Maryland.

"At Port Penn, where the last island in the channel of the lower Delaware now raises its flaming beacon, and the belated collier steers safely by Reedy Island light, lived the daughter of an old West India and coasting captain, who would permit his chronometers to be repaired and cleaned by nobody but Minuit. His cottage stood where now there is a broad and sandy street leading to a wooden pier and to bathing-houses on a pleasure beach. The few people near at hand were pilots, captains of bay craft, and grain-buyers; although the Dutch and Swedish farms, alternating with long marshes, musical with birds, had lined the wide Delaware at this point many a year. In calm, sunny weather, the broad beauty of the river and its low gold and emerald shores, with bulky vessels swinging up on the slow full tide, combined the sceneries of America and the Netherlands; but when a gale blew over the low shores, scattering the reed-birds like the golden pollen of the marsh lilies, and cold white gulls succeeded, diving and careening like sharks of the sky, the ships and coasters felt no serenity in these wide yeasty reaches of the Delaware bay, and they labored to drop anchor behind the natural breakwater of Reedy Island. There, clustering about as thickly in that olden time as they now seek from all the ocean round the costly shelter of Henlopen breakwater, coaster and pirate, fisherman and slaver, sent up the prayer a beneficent government has since granted in the fullest measure, for a perfect Coast Survey and a vigilant Lighthouse Board.

"The daughter of Captain Lum was named Lois, and she was the junior of Fithian Minuit by several years, a slender, beautiful girl, with hair and eyes of

the softest brown, and household ways, daughterly and endearing.

"The old sea-captain, who made five voyages a year to the nearer Indies, and sent ashore to Port Penn as he passed, returning, the best of rum and the freshest of tropical fruits, looked with a jealous eye upon any possible suitor to his daughter, and had, perhaps, embarrassed her prospects for a younger protector, if such she had ever wished. But he loved to see the clock-maker come to the cottage, who had never shown partiality for any woman, while popular with all.

"Minuit," he used to say, "the best man on watch by land or sea, thou North Star! look to my girl as to my chronometer, and I'll pay thee twice the cost of thy time!"

"It was the captain's delight, while ashore, to have every timepiece, stationary or portable, taken apart in the presence of his daughter and himself, while he told his sailor yarns, and Lois stood ready to serve his punch, or pass to the fat, smooth-faced, cheerful Minuit the pieces of mechanism: brass gimbals, chronometer-boxes, wheels and springs, ship-glasses, compasses, the manifold parts of little things by which men grope their way out of sight of land, hung between a human watch and the crystal shell of the embossed heaven. Chronometers were with Minuit attractive and yet awe-giving subjects. The legend of his childhood, well forgotten by all else, said that he had swallowed a chronometer, so small that a sea-captain could swim with it in his mouth. And now the sailors of all the navies cruised by the aid of clumsy watches, big as house-clocks, which to look at made Minuit smile with pity.

"Captain Lum," he said aloud, on the eve of a voyage in the winter season, "I have often yearned to go to sea. The sight of it makes me a little wild. I think I could guess my way over it and about it, by inherent reckoning."

"He saw the pair of white hands holding something before him tremble a little, and he looked up. 'The

spiritual face of Lois was looking at his with wistful apprehension and interest. If ever his pulse beat out of time it was now—for in that exchange of glances he felt what she did not understand—that he was beloved.

"Pain and joy, not swiftly, but softly, filled Minuit—pain, because he had loved this girl and wished never to have her know it, but would keep it an unbreathed, a holy mystery; and joy, like any lover's recognizing himself in the dear heart he had never importuned.

"Next day the good ship Chirpland came off Port Penn. The jolly captain saying adieu to Minuit, clasped his hand.

"I saw thy look and my daughter's yesterday," he said. "It is weak of me to deny her a man like thee, thou sailor's friend. My ship is old. These coasts are dangerous. Nights and days come when we get no sight of lights ashore or in heaven. If thy chronometer fail, fail not thou, but be to her repairer and possessor!"

"The discovery and the trust embarrassed Minuit, but he had never denied the request of any man. His time, as his sign affirmed, was everybody's. Yet a thrill, a twang, a twinge of delicious fear passed through him now. He loved this girl dearly, but he feared to love at all. He had now both the parental and the womanly recognition, and his days were lonely even with his garrulous timepieces, but he felt a lonelier sense of the possibility of turning her affection to awe. Those queer legends of his birth, his affinity for fixed luminaries and motions, and his conscious knowledge that he stood in some way related to spheres and orbits, and the laws of revolution and period, had never disturbed his mind in its calculations. But if he did stand exceptional in these respects to his fellow-men, might another and a beloved one comprehend what he himself did not? Yet the kindly regard of his neighbors, the composure of a conscience well contented, and the hope that he was worthy of human love, made him resolve to keep the captain's admoni-

tion, though he hoped the occasion to obey it might never arrive.

"In the absence of the good ship, however, love could not be deceived. It spoke in waitings and longings, and in tender glances and consideration. She knew the rattle of his carriage-wheels, and he could feel her in the air like the breath of a beautiful day soon to appear in distance. Time, toward which he stood in such natural harmony, was dearer that it contained this passion and life more exquisite, and himself more questionable for it all.

"It was a stormy winter. Ships strewed the coast between Hatteras and Navesink, and the capes of the Delaware received many a tattered barque. The ice poured down and wedged itself between Reedy Island and the shores, and crushed to pieces many that had escaped the ocean gales. One night in a raging storm the door of Captain Lum's cabin was thrown open, and a sailor appeared fresh from the water. He bore in his hand a chronometer, which Minuit recognized in a moment, and he drew his arm for the first time around the maiden's form.

"The Chirpland went down on Five Fathom Shoal, and the captain stood by her. He bade us return his chronometer, and say that he perished in the assurance that his daughter was left to the guidance of another fully as sure.

"My child," said Minuit, "I accept thee wholly, sharing thy griefs! Weep, but on the breast of one who loves thee!"

"The village of Christina rejoiced when its broad-faced, dimpled friend came home with a bride so fair and well-descended. They dressed the sign before his door with flowers. Only the groom wore an anxious face as he led her into his tidy home, now for the first time blessed with a mistress.

"The night of the nuptials came softly down, as nowhere else except upon the skies of the Delaware and Chesapeake, and Minuit was happy. The thrumming

clocks in the shop below mingled their tones and tickings in one consonant chorus, scarcely heard above the long drone and low-monotonies of the insects in the creeks and woods, which assisted silence. The husband slept, how well beloved he could not know. In the dreams of the night he was awakened. In the pale moonshine he saw his wife, clad in her garments of whiteness, standing by his bed all trembling.

"Tell me," she said, "what it is that I hear? I have listened till I am afraid. As I lay in this room perfectly silent, with my head, my husband, nearest your heart, I felt the ticking of a watch. At first it was only curious and strange. Now it haunts me and terrifies me. I am a simple girl, new and nervous to this wedded life. Is this noise natural? What is it?"

"Minuit trembled also.

"Lois, my bride, my heaven!" he said. "Oh! pity me, who have tried to pity all and make all happy, if I cannot myself explain away the cause of your alarm. I have kept myself lonely these many years, aware that I was not like other men, but that my heart—no evil monitor to me—gave a different sound. There is nothing in its beat, my wife, to make you fear it. Return and lay your head upon it, and you will hear it say this only, if you listen with faith: *love!*"

"Thus the watch-maker turned superstition to assurance, and the admonition of his heart was a source of joy instead of fear to the listener at its side. It ticked a few bright years with constancy, and was the last benediction of the world to her ere she was ushered into that peace which passeth understanding.

"At the death of his wife Minuit felt a deeper sense of his responsibility to time, and the finite uses of it expanded to a cheerful conception of the infinite. The country round was generally settled by a religious people, and the many meeting-houses of different sects had his equal confidence and sympathy. Pursuing his craft with unwearied diligence, and delighting the homestead with his violin as of old, a more pensive

and wistful expression replaced his smile, and love withdrawn beckoned him toward it beyond the boundaries of period. Hard populations, which would not listen to preachers, heard with delight the amiable warnings of this friendly man, and as his own generation grew older, a new race dawned to whom he appeared in the light of a pure-spirited evangelist. 'Improve the time! watch it! ennoble it! It is a part of the beautiful and perpetual circle of everlasting duty. It is to the great future only the little disk of a second-hand, traversed as swiftly, while the great rim of heaven accepts it as a part of the eternal round! Such was the burden of his sermon.

"He could ride all along the roads, and hear his missionaries preaching for him wherever a clock struck, or a dial on the gable of a great stone barn propelled its shadows. His tracts were in every farmer's vest pocket. Whatever he made he consecrated with a paragraph of counsel.

"The old sign faded out. The clock-maker's sight grew dim, but his apprehensions of the everlasting love and occupation were clearer and more confident to the end.

"One day they found him in the graveyard of the London Tract, by the side of the spot where his wife was interred, worn and asleep at the ripe age of three-score.

"The mill teams and the farm wagons stopped in the road, and the country folks gathered round in silence.

"Run down at last,' said one. 'If there are heavenly harps and bells, he hears them now!'

And there they hear the ticking, the preaching of this faithful life, under the old stone, sending up its pleasant message yet. The stone is perishing like a broken crystal, but the memory of the diligent and useful man beneath it rings amongst the holy harmonies of the country. Though dead, he yet speaketh!

THE IMP IN NANJEMOY.

DULL in the night, when the camps were still,
Thumped two nags over Good Hope Hill;
The white deserter, the passing spy,
Took to the brush as the pair went by;
The army mule gave over the chase;
The Catholic negro, hearing the pace,
Said, as they splashed through Oxon Run:
"Dey ride like de soldiers who speared God's Son!"
But when Good Friday's bells behind
Died in the capital on the wind,
He who rode foremost paused to say:
"Herold, spur up to my side, scared boy!
A word has rung in my ears all day—
Merely a jingle, 'Nanjemoy."

"Ha!" said Herold, "John, why that's
A little old creek on the river. Surratt's
Lies just before us. You halt on the green
While I slip in the tavern and get your carbine!"
The outlaw drank of the whiskey deep,
Which the tipsy landlord, half asleep,
Brought to his side, and his broken foot
He raised from the stirrup and slashed the boot—
"Lloyd," he cried, "if some news you invite—
Old Seward was stabbed in his bed to-night.
Lincoln I shot—that long-lived fox—
As he looked at the play from the theatre box;
And it seemed to me that the sound I heard,
As the audience fluttered, like ducks round decoy,
Was only the buzz of a musical word
That I cannot get rid of—'Nanjemoy."

"Twenty miles we must ride before day,
Cross Mattawoman, Piscataway,
If in the morn we would take to the woods
In the swamp of Zekiah, at Doctor Mudd's!"