

My Watch

(USA) *Mark Twain*

MY beautiful new watch had run eighteen months without losing or gaining, and without breaking any part of its machinery¹ or stopping. I had come to believe it infallible² in its judgments about time of day, and to consider its constitution and its anatomy³ imperishable⁴. But at last, one night, I let it run down. I grieved⁵ about it as if it were a recognized messenger and forerunner⁶ of calamity⁷. But by and by I cheered up, set the watch by guess, and commanded my bodings⁸ and superstitions⁹ to depart. Next day I stepped into the chief jeweler's to set it by the exact time, and the head of the establishment¹⁰ took it out of my hand and preceeded to set it for me. Then he said, "She is four minutes slow-regulator¹¹

¹**machinery** n. the working parts of a machine

²**infallible** adj. not capable of being wrong or making mistakes

³**anatomy** n. the parts or causes that form or create sth

⁴**imperishable** adj. never to be forgotten

⁵**grieve** v. to cause (someone) to feel sad or unhappy

⁶**forerunner** n. a sign of sth that is going to happen

⁷**calamity** n. an event that causes great harm and suffering

⁸**bode** v. (n. boding) to be a sign of (a future event or situation)

⁹**superstition** n. a belief or way of behaving that is based on fear of the unknown and faith in magic or luck

¹⁰**establishment** n. a place or organization where people live or do business

¹¹**regulator** n. a device for controlling the level or amount

wants pushing up.” I tried to stop him—tried to make him understand that the watch kept perfect time. But no; all this human cabbage¹² could see was that the watch was four minutes slow, and the regulator *must* be pushed up a little; and so, while I danced around him in anguish¹³, and implored¹⁴ him to let the watch alone, he calmly and cruelly¹⁵ did the shameful deed. My watch began to gain. It gained faster and faster day by day. Within the week it sickened¹⁶ to a raging¹⁷ fever, and its pulse¹⁸ went up to a hundred and fifty in the shade. At the end of two months it had left all the timepieces of the town far in the rear, and was a fraction¹⁹ over thirteen days ahead of the almanac²⁰. It was away into November enjoying the

of sth (such as speed or temperature)

¹²**cabbage** n. a person who leads a dull or inactive life

¹³**anguish** n. extreme suffering, grief, or pain

¹⁴**implore** v. to make a very serious or emotional request to (someone)

¹⁵**cruel** adj. (**adv.** cruelly) used to describe people who hurt others and do not feel sorry about it

¹⁶**sicken** v. to become sick or to cause (someone) to become sick

¹⁷**raging** adj. causing a lot of pain or distress

¹⁸**pulse** n. a strong, regular beat or pattern of sounds in music

¹⁹**fraction** n. a part of amount of sth

²⁰**almanac** n. a book published every year that contains facts about the movements of the sun and moon, changes in

snow, while the October leaves were still turning. It hurried up house rent, bills payable, and such things, in such a ruinous²¹ way that I could not abide²² it. I took it to the watchmaker to be regulated²³. He asked me if I had ever had it repaired. I said no, it had never needed any repairing. He looked a look of vicious²⁴ happiness and eagerly pried²⁵ the watch open, and then put a small dice-box into his eye and peered²⁶ into its machinery. He said it wanted cleaning and oiling, besides regulating—come in a week. After being cleaned and oiled, and regulated, my watch slowed down to that degree that it ticked like a tolling²⁷ bell. I began to be left by trains, I failed all appointments, I got to missing my dinner; my watch strung²⁸ out

the tides, and information of general interest

²¹**ruinous** adj. causing or likely to cause damage or destruction

²²**abide** v. to accept or bear (someone or sth bad, unpleasant, etc.)

²³**regulate** v. to set or adjust the amount, degree, or rate of (sth)

²⁴**vicious** adj. very violent and cruel

²⁵**pry** v. to raise, move, or open (sth) with a tool

²⁶**peer** v. to look closely or carefully especially because sth or someone is difficult to see

²⁷**toll** v. to ring slowly

²⁸**string** v. (pt./pp. **strung**) (string out) to make (sth) take longer than it should

three days' grace to four and let me go to protest²⁹; I gradually drifted³⁰ back into yesterday, then day before, then into last week, and by and by the comprehension came upon me that all solitary and alone I was lingering along in week before last, and the world was out of sight. I seemed to detect in myself a sort of sneaking fellow-feeling for the mummy in the museum, and a desire to swap news with him. I went to a watchmaker again. He took the watch all to pieces while I waited, and then said the barrel was "swelled"³¹. He said he could reduce it in three days. After this the watch *averaged* well, but nothing more. For half a day it would go like the very mischief³², and keep up such a barking and wheezing and whooping and sneezing and snorting, that I could not hear myself think for the disturbance; and as long as it held out there was not a watch in the land that stood any chance against it. But the rest of the day it would keep on slowing down and fooling along until all the clocks it had left behind caught up again. So at last,

²⁹**protest** n. sth said or done that shows disagreement with or disapproval of sth

³⁰**drift** v. to change slowly from one state or condition to another

³¹**swell** v. to become larger than normal

³²**mischief** n. behavior or activity that is annoying but that is not meant to cause serious harm or damage

at the end of twenty-four hours, it would trot³³ up to the judges' stand all right and just in time. It would show a fair and square average, and no man could say it had done more or less than its duty. But a correct average is only a mild³⁴ virtue³⁵ in a watch, and I took this instrument to another watchmaker. He said the king-bolt³⁶ was broken. I said I was glad it was nothing more serious. To tell the plain truth, I had no idea what the king-bolt was, but I did not choose to appear ignorant³⁷ to a stranger. He repaired the king-bolt, but what the watch gained in one way it lost in another. It would run awhile and then stop awhile, and then run awhile again, and so on, using its own discretion³⁸ about the intervals. And every time it went off it kicked back like a musket³⁹. I padded my breast for a few days, but finally took the watch to another watchmaker. He picked it all to pieces,

³³**trot** v. to move quickly

³⁴**mild** adj. gentle in nature or behavior

³⁵**virtue** n. a good and moral quality

³⁶**king-bolt** n. a vertical bolt by which the forward axle and wheels of a vehicle or the trucks of a railroad car are connected with the other parts

³⁷**ignorant** adj. lacking knowledge or information

³⁸**discretion** n. the right to choose what should be done in a particular situation

³⁹**musket** n. a type of long gun that was used by soldiers before the invention of the rifle

and turned the ruin over and over under his glass; and then he said there appeared to be something the matter with the hair-trigger. He fixed it, and gave it a fresh start. It did well now, except that always at ten minutes to ten the hands would shut together like a pair of scissors, and from that time forth they would travel together. The oldest man in the world could not make head or tail of the time of day by such a watch, and so I went again to have the repaired. This person said that the crystal had got bent, and that the mainspring was not straight.