

Is poor Papa's toothache *very* bad to-day, Ada?

Ada.—Quite too bad to risk the ermine cloaks on it.

Edith.—Oh, of course. But the check?

Ada.—I can't say, really. You might try a little laudanum with him first.

Edith.—But I do so hate the smell of laudanum. Is there nothing else?

Ada.—Why not wait for the check? You don't need it to-day, and his toothache is sure to wear off by to-morrow.

Edith.—Let's hope so, for really I want a lot of money. And if it doesn't?

Ada.—He must have the tooth out. We really can't suffer so from his toothaches. These attacks are getting periodical.

Edith.—Don't you think, all things considered, it might be as well any way to have it out before Saturday?

Ada.—The sooner the better, poor Papa, of course.

Edith.—You had better speak to him about it at once, then.

Ada.—No, I'll write and make the appointment with the dentist. You can speak to him about it.

Edith.—I would rather you did.

Ada.—And I would rather *you* did.

Edith.—I won't.

Ada.—I won't.

Edith.—But some one must. Suppose we *both* do.

Ada.—Oh, well, perhaps that's the surest plan. Poor Papa! What would he do if he hadn't us to look after him?

Edith.—Come on, then.

Ada.—All right.

Both together.—Poor Papa!

Grace Denio Litchfield.

The Independent.

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TICK, TACK.

BY GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD.

"TICK, tack," said a morose old clock to a gay sunbeam that sat saucily astride of the window ledge. "I am well-nigh beat out. Tick, tack. Tick, tack. I am so tired that I can scarcely count. Tick, tack. Never a second's rest, day in, day out; night in, night out; year in, year out. Tick, tick, tack."

The sunbeam smiled compassionately, and slipped a little nearer.

"Of course I've got to keep at it, or old Time would get all out of kilter," grumbled the clock. "Tick, tack, tick. Tick, tack, tick. Never mind, though it does wear my very heart away. I'm too necessary to the world to think ever of myself. Tick, tick, tick. Tick, tick, tack. Tick, tick, tack. Oh! ho! It's all very splendid for you to sit there and smile that eternal little smile of yours, you ornamental good-for-nothing! But I'd like to know where you'd be but for me? Sleeping yet, as like as not. Tick, tack. Tick, tack."

And for a few minutes the clock gave itself up to a very stiff, irascible ticking, while the sunbeam in dismay crept under the edge of the window-curtain, whence only its bright head peeped out, smiling deprecatingly.

"Oh! I see you," said the clock, with an angrier click than usual. "I know well

enough that you're there. You'll be there till I tell you it's time to go, and then go you will, all in a hurry. Tick, tack, tick. I hold the times and the seasons in my hands. Tick. I regulate you and all your brothers. Tick. I regulate the sun and the moon and the stars. Tick. I regulate the hours, the days, and the years. Tick. I regulate gray old Time himself. Tick. Without me there would be neither to-morrows, nor yesterdays, nor to-days, and everything would fall back into chaos. Tick, tick, tick. Tack, tack, tack."

And so heavy a sense of its importance came over the solemn old clock, that it caught its breath and told off a second too few. The sunbeam sided out a little further from under its dark shelter, and drew as long a face as it could in appreciation of so much solemnity and awful responsibility. But even its longest face was a very, very bright one, and it angered the glum old clock to see it.

"Oh! yes, smile away, my fine fellow!" snapped the clock, ticking venomously out toward the offending sunbeam. "Your time's nearly up, nearly up, nearly up. But for me you'd stay and smile there right straight along the whole night through, smiling and smiling till all the world got a jaded, insipid look, just from your too long staring at it. But I'll send you off ere long. I'll tell you when you must take that brilliant face of yours away and leave the tired earth a little space to sleep. I hold you in my power. I control your coming and your going. But for me there would be no

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morning and no night, no resting and no working. I hold the reins of everything. I cannot rest. I cannot pause. I am too necessary to the world. I must toil on and on forever; for upon the labor of my hands a universe depends. Tick."

And the grim old clock was so stuffed up with pride that one of its wheels got clogged, and the hour-hand wouldn't move. The sunbeam smiled thoughtfully and grew a little pale.

"Just one minute more" grumbled the clock, "and you'll be out, my bright fellow, quite out. Tick, tack. I'll give you your full allowance and not a second more. I am just, but not generous. Tick, tack. Tick, tack."

The sunbeam gave itself a little shake and crept hesitatingly along the floor. It had almost reached the clock.

"You needn't be smiling at me so!" said the clock, crossly. "It doesn't warm my heart one bit. I'm the soul of justice. I cannot soften a duty. I'm too strict a regulator to bend to any graces. When I say the time has come, come it has, come it has. Tick, tick."

The sunbeam lay close beside the clock now, and was smiling gently into its stern face.

"Get away, you idle vagrant!" snapped the clock. "I'm sick of your foolish smiling and smiling. I'll send you into the dark, and get the poor world rid of you at last. Tired as I am, there's life enough in me yet to clear the earth of such vagabonds as you!"

And the clock trembled so with indignation that something within its hard breast gave a great, quick whiz, and then stood suddenly still.

"Tick," said the clock. "Tick. What has come over me? I am grown weary unto death. A great languor has seized

me. My very hands are paralyzed. My pulse beats no more. My heart stands still." The sunbeam crept closer yet, smiling with a tender pity.

"Smile on," gasped the clock. "I can do no more. I can help no more. I am dying, and with my death the world must sink into ruin. Henceforth there will be no time; for there will be none to mark the minutes; nor will there be labor done again upon the earth when I once cease to portion off the hours. All, all must fall back into hopeless chaos without my guiding hand. I have not rested night or day. I have done what I could. And now I am dying, and the great world must stand still with me. Tick. T-i-c-k."

The clock gave one last faint beat and trembled, and then was utterly still, and the sunbeam lay like a forgiving kiss upon its white, cold face, and vainly tried to warm it back to life.

"Why, the old clock has stopped," said a careless voice beneath. "Has the old thing run down?"

"Yes, run out," laughed another. "But so much the better. It never was anything of a time-keeper. Nobody ever depended on it, and its everlasting ticking was enough to drive one wild. Send it up to the garret."

And forthwith the old clock was hustled away out of sight and out of mind. Yet the world did not stand still, nor did any labor cease that had been begun, nor did Time lose himself by so much as a second. It would have broken the old clock's heart to have guessed what an unimportant, useless thing it had really always been, and how everything went on just exactly as well without it. For it thought that it ordered the world.

Strange, strange.

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SYMPATHY.

BY GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD.

FRIEND, art thou drowning? So am I.

Hold by my hand.

Nearer is my vain help, than help
From yonder land.

Friend, art thou starving? So, too, I.

Therefore I come

To thee—not to the overfed—
To ask a crumb.

Friend, hast thou nothing? Less have I.

Yet, beggared ones

Give more to those who beg, than e'er
Earth's richest sons.

LONDON, ENGLAND.