

no one. When he looked up his eyes had a vacant, glassy expression that gave us much alarm. On the morning of the tenth day after the first stopping of the clock we discovered him dead, with an expression of intense agony on his features and strange blue marks about his throat. We found also that the old clock had again stopped at ten minutes past five, and when it was started the pipes sounded the solemn notes of the requiem.

"After this it continued with its customary regularity, but my brain was haunted by its extraordinary performances. I tried to shake it off, but I could not. I beheld looming up before me everywhere I went a tall spectral clock, the hands of which were fixed on what I now began to regard as a fatal hour, ten minutes past five. Besides this the slow notes of the requiem rang constantly in my ears, and my every motion seemed in cadence with it. At length I thought I saw a connection between the stopping of the clock at the time of my mother's death and the later one. There suddenly appeared to be meaning in it. I recalled the fact that my father had died precisely five years after my mother, and I believed the stopping of the clock was some kind of a premonition. The matter worried me for weeks, and then, unable to form a solution of it, I gradually forgot it amidst the distractions of other affairs. About a year after my father's death the clock stopped a third time in the same mysterious way, at ten minutes past five, and persisted, as before, in stopping at that hour as often as it was started. Out of respect for my father's fondness for the clock, a servant was instructed to keep it going. I believed the stopping to be a harbinger of misfortune, and my thoughts on the subject after the death of my father now returned to me with double force. When I divulged my ideas, however, I was ridiculed, and, being the minority, I was obliged to refrain from further expressing my views on the subject. The clock continued to stop exactly for ten days at the same hour. On the morning of the tenth we were shocked by the discovery of our eldest brother dead, his throat marked with blue, and a dreadful expression of fear on his countenance. The clock hands pointed to ten minutes past five. I was now certain that the stopping was full of horrible significance. I hated and dreaded the diabolical machine. I wanted to crush it out of existence. I longed to destroy it to the very last wheel and pinion, but my remaining brothers regarded me as one demented when I suggested it. They appeared to inherit from my father the singular reverence for the hateful clock, as well as the desire to have its motion uninterrupted. I said nothing more, but began a close analysis of its peculiarities. I discovered that my brother had died one year after my father, almost, if not exactly, to the minute, and my naturally superstitious nature was thoroughly imbued with the idea that there was some mysterious and fatal connection between this curious clock and our family life. I felt sure the ten minutes past five so persistently adhered to on the different occasions was a symbol of destruction for us. I reviewed the whole matter. My mother had been

foully murdered by some person or persons unknown. The clock had been found stopped, with her corpse within its huge case. No doubt, I thought, the clock had stopped at the very moment her spirit fled and her poor body was crushed into the case. My father had died precisely five years after my mother, and the clock had stopped in its singular fashion, apparently giving him ten days' warning of the approach of the fatal hour. The five years, I decided, after much consideration, must correspond to the number of hours recorded on the dial at the moment of the murder. So I concluded that this meant that five years after the murder there was to be another death, with as many days' warning as there had been minutes on the dial, i. e., ten. Who was to die? was the next question I put to myself. There could be but one answer, it seemed to be—the murderer. Could it be possible, then, that my father was actually the murderer? In one of his fits of delirium he was irresponsible and capable of anything. It was a horrible thought, yet it was the natural sequence of my investigation.

"I resolved not to quail, and accepted it as philosophically as possible. He had doubtless done the deed in a delirious moment. The gash in his head I explained by supposing that he fell against some hard object when the frenzy was spent. It was highly probable that he afterwards had no recollection whatever of the matter. I remembered the pricking sensation I had experienced on attempting to enter the case when a boy, and it occurred to me that the clock might be so constructed that when an object was placed inside it, and the door completely closed, that object would be subjected to a violent galvanic shock that in most cases would produce death. Then I thought my father had only imprisoned my mother in the clock without knowing its dreadful power, though, even had he known, he would not have hesitated in his madness. The constructor of the machine had responded to the demands of the duke by giving him a clock by which a mysterious death might be produced, but it was evident that he had also invested it with properties that would avenge the murder by making the life of the perpetrator miserable just at the time when he considered the crime a thing of the forgotten past. The old duke, so the tradition ran, had died in a sudden and mysterious way, and considering all these circumstances, I believed that if I could only secure the clue to the secret machinery, I might know not only all about my mother's death, but everything that had occurred in the same room with the clock since the day of its completion. I was confident that it was telling the time in its singular way when our blood-stained family should be extinct.

"I racked my brain for the meaning of the 5:10 symbol, and I finally found it. In order that you may better understand it, I must recall the fact that my eldest brother died exactly one year after my father, and that I had four brothers. Counting myself, we were therefore five; and supposing that one of us should die with each succeeding year, five years after the death of my father, and ten after the morning of that dreadful occur-