The Clock Speaks

Long since I took a week off from business up the hill—that is, I still covered my faces with my hands and still beat the fellows' time; but I confined my observations solely to the range commanded by one of my faces—the one that looks down the hill and beyond the 1906 bridge. Falling in with the spirit of my surroundings I took notes during the course of that week, jotting them down on some handy oak leaves. These are some of the jottings that I found among the nineteen hundred seven other things floating around my belfry:

Monday—There! I mustn't let Mary Slawson's alarm clock get in ahead of me. Five A.M.—Will she have time to go over that whole Greek lesson that she studied thoroughly on Saturday night, but forgot over Sunday? Poor Mary! If only she wouldn't take Greek so seriously. Why even Professor Hamblin himself considers it all a huge joke compared with what she regards it.

Six A.M.—I must ring up those steam pipes or they'll forget to make their charge that throws the girls out of bed, folds up the beds, shakes all the windows noisily, and gives the effect of a brilliant overture for the day.

Ten A.M.—Everything going at full blast! Downstairs Miss Schilling is trying to out-shout her strongest-lunged pupil in a piece of high tragedy. In the kitchen, the maids are airing their vocal apparatuses lustily over the clattering dishes. Upstairs, in the parlor, Miss Isaac is trying her best to outdo "Chief" Parsons in a deep bass solo, but isn't succeeding very well. At the "Gym" piano Beth Mulford is reeling off ragtime, forty-five inches to the yard, while at every corner throughout the three buildings electric bells are wildly screeching, on the general principle that there is more likely something doing that ought to be rung off than not.

Six forty-five P.M.—Time for chapel—S-h-h-h! "Tommy" is choosing the hymn to be sung; don't disturb him; it is a matter of life and death. At last he announces it, and all sink back with relief that the crisis is past and then drag through eight stanzas of "Now the Day is Over." Then he calls the roll—one hundred forty names, and after each one he must needs clear his throat, wipe his glasses, and gaze around for approval. It is the one time of the day when doing their duty and neglecting their work are synonymous terms to "Tommy's" charges.

Seven P.M.—Ah! the "Orange and Blue" has arrived. What's that? They're all reading the advertisements. "No time to read it all through, so we just read the most important part," they say. Ah, yes, I see! Cf. Woodpecker Staff.

Nine P.M.—Study hour over. Some have been studying English Bible. They have mustered a meagre but courageous band under a modern Gideon; there they go through the halls carrying huge white water-pitchers and tiny candles, and singing "Marching Through Georgia." Crash! smash! the pitchers are in fragments, and in one great, concurrent, indignant body all the teachers of the "Sem" rush to the spot to demand explanation and retribution. To little purpose. Oh, fie, incorrigibles!
Tuesday, twelve M.—What, I'd like to know, are those three girls doing there leaning far out the window and laughing down at someone? Oh, it's ice-cream day and "Daddy" Kahle is turning the freezer just outside the kitchen, and they are pelting him with missiles from above—chunks of petrified fudge galore! 'tis a wonder if they won't have chocolate ice-cream for dinner to-night and get back what they've sent.

Six-thirty P. M.—In the old "Gym," dancing; everyone is there; the floor is like a washtub, but what care they! Who couldn't dance anywhere to "Afraid to Go Home in the Dark" and "Honey Boy"? There goes the prayer-meeting bell! A rush and a scramble—oh, no! not to prayer-meeting; it's "too late" or "they're too tired from dancing." Woe unto ye!

Seven-thirty P. M.—Electric bell again—this time the call to Freshmen to assemble in the lower hall to start for the basketball game. At the door of his room Professor Aviragnet is urging upon a passing Freshman girl his little camp-stool: "It will be comfortab' for you at ze game!" But she smiles him away and hastens on. In the front hall a bevy of importunate gentlemen are thrusting their cards into the hands of the bewildered little maid. What is it that one of them is pressing into her hand with his little bit of pasteboard? The maid looks uncomprehending, but she goes and in a few minutes she is delivering to a fair lass a card and a ten-cent piece. The lass looks at the coin for an instant with a puzzled expression, then hands it to the maid and proceeds leisurely to comb her hair, clean her shoes, and write a short letter before she dons her wraps and saunters down to the impatient gentleman who is silently heaping anathemas upon the poor little maid.

Nine P. M.—I smell oyster stew. Yes, there, in that casserole. Such huge oysters, but they are using condensed milk for the stew—"Forgot to get other kind of milk, but this will do, surely." In another chafing dish across the room a batch of fudge is being briskly stirred up. "The chocolate in this fudge has been packed away with camphor in a box of things for a year; I just fished it out to-day, but it'll be all right, I guess." Alas, for digestions!

Wednesday, eleven-fifteen A. M.—Lohengrin and Mendelssohn! Why, there are at least seven or eight couples strolling down that long path. Talk about promoting co-education! That one little apple tree at the gate will have more to answer for than even "Tommy" could compute.

Seven-thirty P. M.—That electric bell again. To-night it's one of the Y. M. C. A. courses. A crowd of the girls assemble; the chaperon draws near, looks them over, and marshals them out to the porch. Just as they have reached the steps two more girls rush through the hall and pass the office door. "Tommy" darts out and seizes them: "The chaperon has gone; you will have to remain at home." "Oh, but our tickets must go! we can overtake the chaperon easily if you let us go now." "Not to be thought of. Perhaps we can get another chaperon for you—I'll consider the matter; meanwhile, you can sit down and wait." Oh, red tape! red tape!

Thursday, six P. M.—In the dining-room. What's this we have at one of the tables? A birthday party. Yes, there comes the cake ablaze with candles—twenty of them. Now each one at the table must try her luck at blowing them out. The teacher first; she gives a puff that leaves seven still burning. Expressions of involuntary commiseration on the faces around her; then, quickly reassuring, "Oh, you'll be just the right age to get married, Miss——-!" And now while I'm here I'll have a
look at the Senior table. Ah, there it is!—Miss Bush at the head, a Stage "setting" on one side of her, a Tiffany "setting" on the other, and the right Bower next (this Bower is never left). Unique groups they make.

Nine P. M.—Polite vaudeville performance in full swing in South Hall. Such a racket, such rousing applause! Down the hall patters the hall teacher, very much distressed. A general subsiding ensues, but is followed immediately by indications of an old ladies' sewing circle having been suddenly organized; and the high, cracked trebles are almost more distressing than were the various sounds of the vaudeville. But nine-thirty comes and the crowd disperses. Those who live in Oak Hall must flee, for I notice that every night at this time the door that connects Oak Hall with the Main Building is securely locked. At first I wondered at this, but have since decided that the reason must be due to a belief that if a fire should break out in either building, the locked door would certainly prevent the other building from becoming involved in the conflagration—a somewhat unstable theory.

FRIDAY, twelve-thirty—at the lunch table.—"What's that you say? Spanish exam. You're scared? you don't know anything about it? Oh, just ask Professor and he'll write it all down on the board for you. He doesn't believe in seeing people flunk when he can help them out."

Seven P. M.—Mission Study Class. This evening the topic is "Present Conditions in Hawaii." But the attendants at the class will persist in beating time with their feet to the dance music floating down from the floor directly above. So the class is dismissed early and there is a migration to the scene of the dance.

Eight-thirty P. M.—The scene of the dance has changed to one of a "spread." Not all the girls are here as yet, so a part of the brick of ice-cream is dealt out and the rest is laid on a tray and placed in the snow on the fire-escape to keep hard. But see those two fair maidens creeping stealthily up the fire-escape from the floor below; they heard the placing of the ice-cream there. Swiftly and noiselessly they seize the tray and bear it down with them; they get it safely to the window—a sudden slip—the whole chunk of ice-cream goes sliding smoothly across the roof and into the snow below. Sad fate!

SATURDAY—"Old Gum Shoes" forgot to wind me last night and here I've been sleeping all day. But I was out late; I don't know how late, I lost count, but I know I struck something, and then I didn't know any more until now, and it's seven P. M. Almost time for callers—see those two girls sneaking in behind the cloak rack in the hall! They want to hear things; they'll hear all they want.

Eight P. M.—Annex for mine. There's a thrilling game of five hundred on there. Girls certainly aren't afraid to bid high; they risk too much. There, I said so; she's gone deeper in the hole than she can get out. I never believe in bidding higher than twelve, and that no more than twice a day.

Ten P. M.—Cards over, they're going to have a comb orchestra now. There they go, eight of them, each with a comb; all playing "He Rambled," and all in different keys. Now it's "Starlight"—oh, there comes Miss Wood! "Girls, this is outrageous. Half-past ten, and all this hubbub! You will be reported in the office to-morrow and very probably sent to President Harris on Monday. Go to your rooms immediately." Silence in the camp.

SUNDAY, seven-forty-five A. M.—Oranges, doughnuts and eggs for breakfast instead of the hackneyed week-day diet of prunes, crackers, and tough beefsteak.
Eight-fifteen—Sunday newspapers.

Eleven—What shall we wear to dinner?

One P. M.—Ragtime in the parlor.

Two P. M.—Fudge-making in some rooms, hair-shampooing in others.

Five-thirty P. M.—"I'm going to Christian Forever." "Oh, why?" "Well, I want to shake hands with Mr.— on our way out!" "All right, then; we'll get our studying done later."

My week was over. It had been novel, to be sure; the half has not been told. One thing, the girls of the "Sem" will surely be ready when the last call comes, for their lights are nearly always burning at midnight.