

Midnight Reverie

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TICK . . . TICK . . . TICK . . .”, or did it go “Tick-tick . . . Oh, well, never mind, the minutes flew by just the same, no matter what the rhythm.

Alice searched through the pale yellow rays of her study lamp, her tired eyes seeking the tiny clock on her dresser. Half past twelve; another half hour gone and her paper only half written. It was a paper on child care and training and was due at eight o'clock the next morning. Another minute gone . . . wasted . . . she must hurry or she wouldn't finish until very late. The little clock ticked on, tick . . . tick . . . tick . . .

Let's see now, where was she? Oh, yes . . . “the child must be given sufficient time each day to develop his creative interests, and.” True, thought Alice, but that did not apply to children only. Time! Maddening to think of time; each minute gone forever, not nearly enough time for everything one wanted to do. Whoever thought of leisure time, anyway? It was a sure thing he never went to college. “Tick . . . tick . . .,” there was that annoying little clock again. Funny how such a little thing could make so much racket. Wish it would stop . . . stop . . . always reminding me.

PRESENTLY the little clock didn't bother Alice any more. “Funny,” she thought fuzzily, “but what a relief!”

Queer swirls of noises revolved in her brain, tick . . . tick . . . tick . . . buzz . . . , then, snap! All went dusky brown in Alice's head.

It seemed to be another day; tomorrow. The little clock said eight o'clock. She picked up the morning student paper, and glanced through it. What was this? It said all students would find new clocks in their rooms and they should plan their schedules by them from now on. The clocks were theirs; any hours they would like to arrange would be all right with the administration; they could arrange their classes to suit themselves.

Alice examined her clock. Sure enough, it had a regulator on

the back with which to set her own hours. If she wanted a longer hour for psychology class (an attractive boy sat next to her), she could lengthen it to one hundred and twenty minutes. The next "hour" of her schedule was taken with chemistry. Alice didn't like chemistry; she felt all that one really needed of chemistry could be taught in much less time than it was now. All right, make the chemistry lecture ten minutes long. That would give her fifty extra minutes in the art lab . . . but that wasn't enough, she thought; let's make it four hours plus the fifty minutes long. She would spend all of her time in art lab if there weren't a few other important courses one had to take.

WHAT about the evening? At night she could take all the time she wanted to write the papers she was required to write. Perhaps, then, they wouldn't come back from the English committee all marked up. She would study economics ten minutes and spend the rest of the evening reading that book of short stories she'd taken from the library and hadn't had time to read.

Alice floated through the day. It worked, . . . oh, it worked beautifully; it was really wonderful. She was getting things done. What a truly remarkable clock. She struggled to catch a glimpse of it.

She blinked her eyes. Why, what was the matter? The light was on. There was her child training paper before her, unfinished. She stared at it, then at the little clock. "Tick . . . tick . . . tick, or was it tick . . . tick, tick?" It mocked her. Its hands stood at one-thirty.

