

## THE CLOCK-WINDER

It is dark as a cave,  
Or a vault in the nave  
When the iron door  
Is closed, and the floor  
Of the church relaid  
With trowel and spade.

But the parish-clerk  
Cares not for the dark  
As he winds in the tower  
At a regular hour  
The rheumatic clock,  
Whose dilatory knock  
You can hear when praying  
At the day's decaying,  
Or at any lone while  
From a pew in the aisle.

Up, up from the ground  
Around and around  
In the turret stair

He clammers, to where  
The wheelwork is,  
With its tick, click, whizz,  
Reposefully measuring  
Each day to its end  
That mortal men spend  
In sorrowing and pleasuring  
Nightly thus does he climb  
To the trackway of Time.

Him I followed one night  
To this place without light,  
And, ere I spoke, heard  
Him say, word by word,  
At the end of his winding,  
The darkness unminding:-

"So I wipe out one more,  
My Dear, of the sore  
Sad days that still be,  
Like a drying Dead Sea,  
Between you and me!"

Who she was no man knew:  
He had long borne him blind  
To all womankind;

And was ever one who  
Kept his past out of view.