

Basel.

One hour in advance.

Basel was once surrounded by enemies and hard-pressed. The besiegers were in agreement with the malcontents in the town, and arranged with them to conquer the fortress, by attack on a dark night. The attack was to happen on the clock striking 12, but accidentally the watchman of the Tower heard of the intended storming some minutes before its execution; there was no time left to warn the Commander of the garrison, or the guard. Cunning and reflection alone could help, and the Watchman quickly knew a safe expedient; he prevented — in advancing the clock one hour — the announcement of the midnight hour, and made the hammer strike 1 instead of 12. This caused doubt and misunderstanding both in the town, and among the enemy outside the town, both believing to have neglected the concerted hour, and while they reflected what was most advisable to be done, the Watchman had time to communicate with the Magistrate and Commandant. The traitorous plan completely mis-

carried; and the Enemy at last tired of the siege, retired without having obtained any advantage.

The Legend does not relate if the brave Watchman saved the town, or was rewarded, but in remembrance of the remarkable manner by which this safety occurred, the Magistrate ordered that the Town Clock should remain advanced as the Watchman set it, and since, it struck 1 o'clock in Basel, when elsewhere it struck 12 o'clock. This singular regulation, which continued till 1798, gained the inhabitants of Basel the satirical praise, that although they were a Century behind, yet they were an hour in advance. Now, of course, they keep the same time as other towns.

Another remarkable thing was the so-called Lallenkönig, a very large strangely carved head placed on the Clock of the Basel-bridge steeple, which at every movement of the pendulum turned its eyes and thrust out its tongue, this head had been placed there after a dispute, to mock and ridicule the citizens of Little-Basel. In 1839 the tower was pulled down, causing the disappearance of the Lallenkönig.
