

### Dr. Kalmenius Extracts

Dr. Kalmenius of Schatzberg, at your service,' he said, in a harsh, grating voice. 'I have come a long way tonight, and I am cold. A glass of brandy!'

The landlord poured it hastily. The stranger drained it at once and held out the glass for more. Still nobody moved.

'So silent?' said Dr Kalmenius, looking around mockingly. 'One might think one had arrived among the dead!'

[...]

Oh, dear, dear,' said Dr Kalmenius solemnly. 'Laugh? I wouldn't dream of it. I've come here to help you.'

'What? You? How?'

Dr Kalmenius smiled. It was like a flame suddenly breaking out of an ash-covered log, and Karl recoiled. The old man came closer.

'You see,' he said, 'I think you may have overlooked the philosophical implications of our craft. You know how to regulate a watch and repair a church clock, but had you ever considered that our lives are clockwork, too?'

'I don't understand,' said Karl.

'We can control the future, my boy, just as we wind up the mechanism in a clock. Say to yourself: I will win that race – I will come first – and you wind up the future like clockwork. The world has no choice but to obey! Can the hands of that old clock in the corner decide to stop? Can the spring in your watch decide to wind itself up and run backwards? No! They have no choice. And nor has the future, once you have wound it up.'