

BLUE MONDAY.

Pomposity at a Funeral.

HIGH on the mountain, near the country village where I was pastor, an aged man of high temper and low intelligence died. His youngest son, who was fifty years old and large of stature, but diminutive in common sense, came for me to preach the funeral sermon. The gentleman with whom I boarded asked him if he felt bad when his father died. His reply was :

"I didn't cry a tear, but I held my breath as much as twenty minutes. We didn't know at first whether pop was *dead* or whether he was *mad*. We knew he wouldn't *talk*. We put a pipe in his mouth, and he wouldn't smoke, and then we knew he was dead."

The day of the funeral came, and it being in the spring, there was snow, water, and ice in the road, so I was to meet the procession at a school-house at the foot of the mountain. As I neared the house I saw the country teams coming down the side of the mountain on a stiff trot. Leading them, on foot, was a little man with round, prominent eyes bulging out with excitement, wearing a round-crowned hat with a straight brim, pulled down over his ears. He had been chosen from the neighbors to conduct the funeral. Having been in the army, and now feeling elated over the authority he found himself possessed of as the chosen leader of a funeral procession, he had put on his military suit, buttoned to the chin, with long, tired-looking yellow whiskers flowing over his breast, and his trousers tucked into his high rubber boots. He ran ahead and shouted to me as I was hitching my horse, "Don't hitch him there, elder, I want to come up here on a kind of a circle." He made a desperate effort to display his military knowledge in seating the mourners and the people. Then he came to me, saying, "Here are the hymns he wanted sung," and handed me a paper on which was written simply, "Hark from the tomb a doleful sound." We had no books,

and I asked if any one could sing the hymn beginning with the words, "Hark from the tomb a doleful sound." An intelligent but very modest gentleman with a noticeably long head and one white eye said, "I think we can sing it to the tune 'New Durham.'" He rested his elbow on his knee, put his head in his hand, and tried for the key. "Do, me, sol, do." Then he commenced in a low, solemn voice the tune. Just then a lady with a narrow forehead, sharp nose, and red hair struck up in a high key a different tune, "Hark from the tomb," etc. The first singer kept on hesitatingly, "Hark from the tomb," looking at me appealingly, as if to say, What shall we do? The people began to laugh, the singers sung, and I tried to think of all the solemn things I had ever read. After the sermon the military leader sprang to the middle of the floor, and with great pomposity cried, "*Mourners keep their seats.* You that want to look at him march to the right. *March!*" Then he came to me with instructions.

"You get your horse and get into the road and wait. I want you to go ahead of the whole of um. Wait till I get um into *rank*." He said they were going by the village. This I objected to, as the roads were bad and the distance three times as great. But said he, "Some of the others who died went that way, and we want to do as they did. You patrimony me in that." At length he had the procession in "*rank*," and gave the order, with a commanding voice and a swing of his arm, to "*move*." He would run up the line and then down, kicking the water higher than his head and panting for breath; all the time giving orders to "get um a little more compacted, it will look better." When we had passed the village, there was a high fence built by the side of the railroad. One of the bearers remarked that he had not been that way before since it was built. The military conductor had now climbed into the