

## BLUE MONDAY.

[It is our rule to devote this page of THE HOMILETIC to original contributions from our own subscribers. On occasion, however, there appear in the pages or columns of our contemporaries some things too good to be kept from the eyes of our readers. Of such a character are the following, from a recent number of *Harper's Young People*. No doubt the experience of many of our readers would enable them to enlarge the list of incidents by others of a similar nature. —Eds.]

The tongue is unruly in other ways than that pointed out in such vigorous terms by James the Apostle. It seems sometimes to take the bit in its teeth, if so mixed a metaphor may be permitted, and to run away from the directing mind, with results that hardly ever fail to cause no less confusion to the speaker than amusement to the hearer. The incident of the gentleman who, in cordially inviting some friends to hear his pastor preach, said to them, "You may occupew my pie," is perhaps already familiar. Equally laughter-provoking was the transposition made by a friend of mine who had undertaken to recite Bret Harte's "Heathen Chinee," and surprised both himself and his audience by the statement that

"For ways that are dark  
And for tricks that are vain  
The heathen pecu is chineliar."

It is probably because they more frequently appear before the public as speakers than any other class of men that clergymen are the heroes of the majority of the stories told as to slips of the tongue. The Rev. Mr. A— has this to tell of the Rev. Mr. B—: Brother B— is tall and gaunt of figure and pale and serious of countenance. Once, in bringing a meeting of special solemnity to a close, he caused many a smile by saying impressively, "Now let us pronounce the Doxology, and I will sing the benediction." Then, as if realizing that something had gone wrong, he drew himself up, and looking, if possible, more solemn still, added, "No; I mean I will sing the benediction, and we will pronounce the Doxology." The quick wit of a hearer, who at once started "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," in stentorian tones, rescued the others from disgracing themselves by an outburst of laughter. After the meeting had dispersed, said Brother B— to Brother A—, "Now, you know, I saw that thing coming wrong end first, but for the life of me I could not turn it round."

Here are some more amusing stories of a similar character. It was but a very insignificant change of a letter, but it spoiled what was intended to be an eloquent denunciation against idolatry, when the preacher cried, with impassioned earnestness, "Bow not thine eye to a neeple," having meant to say, "Bow not thy knee to an idol." In the same way, the young clergyman with the correct Oxford pronuncia-

tion, in giving out the hymn "Conquering Kings," merely stumbled over the first vowel; but being unable to save himself was hurried over the precipice, and startled his congregation with the announcement, "The concluding hymn will be 'Kinquering Congs,' 'Kinquering Congs.'" After that experience he was in a position to fully sympathize with his brother clergyman who, in place of saying "Behold the fig-tree, how it withereth away," asked his bewildered audience to "Behold the whig-tree, how it fithereth away."

In a similar case did the preacher find himself who, describing conscience, and desiring to get his listeners to recognize the promptings of its inward voice in the half-formed wishes of the mind, appealed to them whether there was one present who sometime or another "had not felt within him the effect of a half-warmed fish."

We were present some time since at the funeral of an honored minister of the Gospel. At the close of the service the officiating clergyman, by one of these unaccountable slips of the tongue, announced "We will conclude these exercises with the Doxology," at the same moment extending his hands to pronounce the benediction. The act fortunately relieved the grief-stricken household of the amazement consequent upon such an announcement.

It was our first pastorate. Fresh from the seminary, we had begun work in a certain summer resort of well-known name. Of course we had the usual dignity that attaches to young ministers, perhaps were inclined rather to magnify ourselves than our office. We had not been there many weeks when the information came that the wife of one of our elders was quite ill. With anxious steps we hastened to the house and pulled the bell. No answer. Again. No answer. We were about turning away with sinking heart, fearing that the messenger who does not stop to ring bells had been before us, when up the pathway from the gate came one, evidently of the root of Hibernicus, who as she drew near asked in those unmistakable accents: "And who is't ye wahn't to say?" "Mrs. S., if you please," in the most conciliatory tones. "I'll say whider ye can or no." In she pushed, leaving the front door open and us without, but in easy hearing of her voice. Soon we heard a rap, rap, rap on an inner door, and a voice from within asking: "Well, what is wanted?" "Shure, ma'am, there's a bye out here at the door wants ter say ye." The shock to our nervous system was so violent that on an instant we were reduced to minimum. "A bye!" And this the result of a four years' course at college and a three years' course in the seminary. Who that knows the bitterness of a stricken dignity can fail to sympathize? The humiliation of that supreme moment still lingers with us. "A bye!"