

HIRAM GOLF'S RELIGION.

SHOEMAKER BY THE GRACE OF GOD.

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II.

FEW DUTIES, MANY PRIVILEGES.

It was Blue Monday with John Jessig. In the vocabulary of the sensitive clergyman these are the two most appalling words. John had slept restlessly the night before, and in his troubled dreams a frightful hobgoblin had appeared, holding in his hands a sermon of Sunday morning, and laughing contemptuously as he shook it in the trembling parson's face. "Is that the best you can do?" asked the spirit derisively. "Were you educated through long years and at great expense to produce such a flimsy, sleepy apology of a sermon as that?"

Then the scene suddenly changed, and John saw a little knot of his parishioners at the church door indulging in criticisms under their breath, which were far more candid than agreeable. Their words were as indistinct as the far-away echo of muttering thunder, but his heart sank as he came down the aisle.

When he rose from unrestful slumber, it was with the depressing conviction that he was never intended for the pulpit, that the genius of the preacher was wholly lacking, and that the sooner he gave up his profession and made room for a more acceptable pastor, the better for himself and for every one concerned.

I suppose all ministers have such dreams at times, and take a lonely tramp through the valley of humiliation on a Monday morning. It is the one day of the week to be dreaded—an ordeal for body and soul alike. If they can manage to pull through the heavy hours

till the stars come out on Monday night, they can face the other days with cheerful resignation; but Monday is the period of intellectual and spiritual reaction, and its twelve hours are twelve taunting ghouls. The bow has been bent until everything is taut and ready to snap; the brain has been in a whirl of excitement; the heart has been on fire, and the lassitude which follows is almost hopeless in character. The minister finds himself in a state of partial collapse, is haunted by the thought that he ought never to write another sermon, that he has made the fatal mistake of a lifetime, that he is like a fisherman whose net is full of great rents through which the fish escape, that he is bungling the work of the Lord, and is unworthy of the commission he has received.

Mary Jessig was a true helpmate. She knew that John's suffering was the consequence of overwrought nerves, and that a brisk walk in the country air would set him right again. She had prepared an appetizing breakfast, and while the good man at the other side of the table was buttering a roll, and looking downcast and weary, cautiously and tactfully suggested that the sermon was a good deal better than he thought it. She had overheard Deacon Eastwind, who was by no means given to flattery—John must admit that—say to his neighbour that it was worth tackling up his horse and driving ten miles to hear. Such a wife is a friend in need, and as John was hungry for some sort of commendation, he looked relieved and faintly smiled.

Nobody knows or can know