

A FRONTIER FUNERAL.

The Eastern Article Not as Lively and Spirited.

"It's all very well to talk about your Brooklyn funerals," said a Dakota man, as the mourners crowded up to the bar, "but you don't put the life and spirit into a plant that we do in our parts," and the western gentleman shook his head lugubriously. "I watched this yere racket to-day, but I wasn't satisfied. You throw lots o' weeds and the pa'son cut it fat, but the whole thing was tame business compared with the time when we drove Peter Mullins into the turf."

"Did you have a superior article of funeral on that occasion?" asked one of the bereaved.

"You called the turn, pardner," replied the Dakota man. "Compared with that game your little play to-day was deuce box. I was living in Bismark city then, and I'm languishing when I say that your style to-day wasn't a seven spot to that lay out."

"Would you object to give us the particulars of that sad affair?" asked one of the lamenting.

The Bismarck man called for refreshment and braced himself for the relation.

"Pete had some trouble with seven or eight soldiers, and when they'd all played in their hands we laid out to lock up shop and slide him under in shape. Pete wasn't no summer coon. He wore meat and hair all the year round, and as he was the first man that had turned down in the settlement, we agreed to start a bone-yard and plant him for a crop. There wasn't any pa'son ther in them days, but Lounsberry, the postmaster, knowed a hymn, and John McClean, the mayor, was a dog-fight on a speech. So we got out the engine for a hearse and built a box for the stiff and started in. We'd staked out a claim up on the Buford road for a grave, and Tom Fortune had drilled a hole to put Pete in. Everything was in gay shape for business and the boys was braced for a time that would be a credit to the lamented. You bet your life! Well, sir, we held the funeral in Keno hall. The corpse was stretched on the faro table, all fixed up with dandelions and cactus, and the boys sat around in rows. You can bet a blue stack it was stylish, stranger! The mills was all closed, and we had a nigger fiddler for the orchestra, and McClean had bought a white shirt to give tone to the racket.

"Lounsberry announced that the game was open and commenced with a hymn play about 'Dearest Pety, thou has left us and thy loss is deeply felt, but no bean-eater could hereaft us if thou had'st have just been heeled.' He said he made it up himself, but I reckon he heard it somewhere in the States. Then John McClean started in on the Declaration of Independence, and whenever he throwd up his hand the boys howled 'Amen!' You can smile, stranger, but I'm remarking that you don't often lite into a high-toneder spread than the send-off we gave Pete. When Jack got through with the Declaration we liquored up, and Jim Emmons took hold. He'd found an act of the Illinois legislature somewhere, and he read that so that you could not hear the stove rattle. Then Lounsberry sang 'Marching Through Georgia,' and by that time we were all feeling pretty good. You never seen a better shake-up in all your life. Jake Richards was keeping cases, and he proposed three cheers for the stiff, and you double your gamble he got 'em. We was just warming up to the work when George Peoples shied his hat and made the dog-gondest best oration that was ever played in that kind of a game. George is a humerous cuss, and he got

off the best conundrums you ever listened to. Fun! Well now, pardner, you may blush.

"Well, sir, after that part of the exercise was over we hammered the lid down over Pete and histed him up on the engine. Me and Richards steadied him and the gang laid hold of the rope. George Peoples was foreman, and the nigger fiddler straddled the coffin playing, 'We won't go home till morning.' We stopped twice on the way to brace, and we made the last mile in something like five minutes. Talk about your steam machines! That was the best fire engine company in eight territories.

"When we got to the grave we found that Tom had built a hole seven feet deep and just the size of the box. Had to plant him standing up, but that don't hurt him any. Lounsberry started up, 'Good-by, sweetheart,' and McLean read a poem about a boy on a ship that wouldn't go home for fear his dad would warm him. Jim Emmons started on a prayer, and then things grew lively. We didn't want no airs over the funeral, and we told him he could lay no political pipe in that way. But he allowed he'd cash that prayer in or there'd be a row. That settled it," and the Dakota man paused.

"How did you come out?" asked one of the listeners.

"I was dragged out," replied the Dakota man, simply. "Leastwise, I was found some distance off when they broke for me. I didn't see the turn called, and didn't know nothing about the next deal. I didn't get out for a month."

"Is this the kind of funerals you have in Bismarck?" asked a mourner.

"The same, stranger. Many a one since then; but I'll never forget Pete. The coyotes is singing above his grave now, and in the summer the little boys shoots jack rabbits near his plant. We put in a few asparagus to make a shade for him; but I'll tell you, gentlemen, the blizzards never howled over a squarer boy than Pete, and no man was ever put to root in better shape than we laid out for that lad. Let's beer. I'm hoarse."

And they liquidated, the mourners wondering perhaps at the "spirited" style of a frontier funeral, but recognized at the same time that the Dakota man had spoken his last lines with an obvious humidity of utterance.—Brooklyn Eagle.

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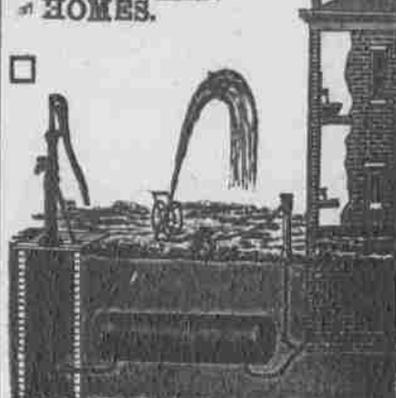
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