

MINISTERS IN A SLOUGH.

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Inscribed to whom it may concern.

Come listen to my story, while I to you relate
The perils of two ministers, in the Hawk-Eye State.
One was a very aged man, his hair as white as snow,
The other was a young man, of sixty years or so.

One Saturday evening, about the hour of four,
They left the town of Kossuth, and their Synod floor—
To ride over to Black Hawk, to spend the Sabbath day;
A distance of twelve miles, a rough and crooked way.

In the night and darkness, their road they might mistake,
So wisely they concluded to stop with farmer Blake;
Kindly they were entertained, and liberally they were fed.
And, after family worship, soon resting in their bed.

A clear and pleasant morning, bespoke a lovely day,
Breakfast and prayers over, they hastened on their way,
Rejoicing that the Lord had thus guided them aright—
And kept them from danger in a dark and gloomy night.

The swollen Iowa river, with its black and ugly sloughs,
All of them they must cross, no other way could choose;
Now, quickly they discovered these dread horrors of the West—
Serpentinely winding, in their deep and muddy nest.

"What shall we do, brother?" inquired the aged man;
"Go forward!" was replied, "for surely we *must* and *can*."
The horse, with the carriage, soon was plunging in;
And the prayers of these men were not the prayers of sin.

Another slough, still deeper, only a little way ahead,
With trees standing thickly in its dark and muddy bed.
No track could they discover, by which to guide their way,
Here they wisely halted to see what each would say.

Age spoke: "What shall we do?" The other said, "Go ahead."
"No, brother, I shall not," the other firmly said;
"There is no must in it, for we can surely turn about,
And by the way we came, we certainly can get out."

But the counsel of the aged the younger did not heed,
So in he plunged alone, horrible sight indeed:
The horse almost swimming, the carriage half out of sight,
Winding round among the trees, not all the time upright.

By the mercy of the Lord, he gained the other shore,
Still the dangers of the way were not yet one-half o'er.
The old man inquired, "What now are you to do?"
"I am to turn about and come back after you."

"I think it will be best, in my returning back,
To hunt out, if possible, a different and better track."
So in again he plunged, a *missionary tramp*,
And, when about midway, brought up against a stump.

The Hero of my story cried loudly at the last,
"Against a stump, brother, I am now surely fast."
"Well, my stalled brother, say, what can you now do,
Fastened tight to a stump in the middle of the slough?"

"Oh, I'll strip off my clothes, then I can feel about,
And find the hidden stump and get the carriage out.
Such a bath this morning will do me no harm,
So you need have no fear or give the least alarm."

The horse getting restless, looked wishfully ashore,
He would sure been plunging in a few minutes more;
But the old man on shore said, "Charley, now stand still—"
He looked steadily ashore and seemed to say, "I surely will."

In water four feet deep, and in a muddy slough,
Relieved from the carriage, he brought his rider through.
Two more sloughs they must pass, but not so awful bad,
And when over the river, these missionaries were glad.

They rode up to the church, the Sabbath school not out,
A meeting for the evening was quickly given out.
To wash up, to dry up, clothes, papers, letters and books,
And get some refreshment, they went to Brother Hook's.

The evening being pleasant, the congregation fair,
A sermon by the younger, the older in the chair.
And to cap the climax, as you shall plainly see,
While the old man was sleeping, the younger got a V.

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