

### THE MINISTER MAKES A CALL

MR. ALLEN, the new Baptist minister, had just made an early morning call at the library. It was a lovely morning and a warm breeze was stirring. He walked briskly along, with the "Evolution of the Soul" under one arm and the "History of the Early Christian Church," sticking out of his pocket. He was thinking complacently of disagreeable duties well-performed. The afternoon before he had spent calling on some of the most important pillars of his church, who, altogether, had pretty well mapped out his future course for him.

Mr. Allen grinned reminiscently, but immediately recalled himself and put on his gravest manner, glancing carefully around. Mr. Allen was still quite young.

Suddenly he halted. He had just remembered that he had forgotten something. Somebody had told him that someone was ill. Pulling out his memorandum book he found this entry: "James Nelson—ill. Address, 526 South St. Call."

"Jove!" he exclaimed to himself. That's this street, I may as well stop this morning."

It was only a few blocks on and in a short time he came to the Nelson home and rang the bell. He rang it again and then the third time before he heard anything. Finally he heard a woman's footsteps coming through the house and an exasperated looking woman came to the door.

"Well?" she inquired coldly.

"Good morning,—er—Madame", (confound it, he had forgotten the name), "May I—"

"No," she said decidedly, "You may not!" She glared at the "Evolution of the Soul", under his arm.

"I beg your pardon," said the young minister, considerably surprised, "I am—"

"No doubt," she snapped, "You always are, but you'll have to excuse me this morning for Jim's down and is probably wanting something right now."

"Ah, your husband! May I see him?"

"Gracious no! I couldn't have you pestering him while he's in bed, besides he ain't got any use for anything in your line anyhow."

"My line!" he ejaculated. "My line!"

"Yes," she said impatiently, "Your line. He don't take much stock in men that go 'round bothering folks the way you do."

"Madame," Mr. Allen said sternly, "I cannot understand this outrageous attitude! I was told that you were a good, religious woman, a faithful church-goer."

It was now Mrs. Nelson's time to be surprised, but her surprise turned speedily into anger.

"Do you mean to insinuate that I'm not?" she said excitedly. "You, that's picked out the easiest job, trying—"

"Woman," he said grandly, pointing at her, "Do not utter one word against my calling. It is the noblest, most unselfish—er—finest profession in the world, I—"

But suddenly she stepped back, looking at him anxiously.

"It ain't very hot this morning," she said, "But you do talk the queerest of any agent I ever heard, Italians not excepted."

"Eh, what," he jumped, "An agent, you say!"

"Why yes, that's what I said," holding to the door nervously, ready to call for help.

Suddenly it dawned on him.

He stepped forward, inclining his head and said, "Madam, I am your new pastor."

She stared, her face went blank and slowly her jaw dropped until it reached the limit, then became stationary.

MILDRED PANCHAUD.

### JOSH AND HIS STEER

"Say, did you hear about old Josh's steer running away with him?" said Uncle Ebb as he was sitting in an old chair behind the stove of Whitcome's grocery.

This being the only grocery store in Wheatville, it became a custom of the old men of the village to gather about the store and talk of the news and tell their stories.

"How was that?" asked Jim, as he slipped from a sugar barrel which was sitting in the corner, and drew a large box up to the stove.

"Well, sir, it be the funniest thing you ever see," said Ebb as he spit a large mouthful of tobacco juice into a small box, half filled with ashes from the stove, which looked as if it had not had a coat of polish for several seasons.

"Let's hear it," said Bill Hawkins, as he drew his soap box close to the stove.

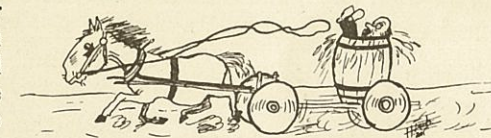
"Well, you know Josh got a yoke of steers 'bout a month ago, and one of the critters up an' died. Old Josh wouldn't buy another so decided to break the one he had left.

"Me and Pete was workin' on the road back of his barn and we seen he was up to something. Now, what does that fool do but yoke himself up with that there steer!"

"I don't believe it," said Bill, and he gave the floor a whack with his cane.

"Yes, sir, that's just what the durn fool done, Bill, and as soon as Josh untied the critter he started going 'round and 'round, and then he started across the medder. Josh had to keep goin' to save his neck.

"Then me and Pete took after them, but it was like trying to catch a scared jack rabbit. When Josh and the steer came to the road, they like to run into old Zeb Armstrong, who was going to the creamery. Old Zeb had a cider-barrel full of sweet milk on his wagon. He had a sack over the top to keep the milk from sloppin' out and a board across the barrel for a seat. Well, you know Zeb 'most allers talks to himself, and he must a talked himself to sleep, fur he said he didn't see that there steer, or Josh either. Now, fur some reason, Zeb's mare got terrible interested, and started right down the road after old Josh and the steer. Before they had gone fur, the wagon hit a chunk, and one end of the board slipped off. Old Zeb just closed up like a jack knife and fell into the barrel. All we could see of Zeb was his feet and the top of his bald head stickin' out. There they went, Josh and the steer ahead, Zeb's mare going to beat the band, and me and Pete doin' our best to catch up.



"Just as we went around the bend of the road we met old Hiram Martin drivin' a flock of sheep. Well, sir, them sheep turned right around and started up the road, too. Hiram tried to stop them, but a big buck ran between his legs and knocked him down in the whole flock. Most of the sheep ran over him, old Josh and the steer ran over him, and Zeb's mare came mighty nigh it."

Uncle Ebb was interrupted at this point by a gasping and choking from old Bill. Jim gave him a slap on the back and said, "What in thunder's the matter?"

Bill soon recovered, cleared his throat, and wiped his mouth on the back of his hairy hand.