

thirty were mere boys, mentioned Ward's conduct to Mrs. Clark, and she promised to speak to her boy.

"Mother," he answered her, "dad drove Jack away by interfering with him in every little thing."

The hint was enough. His mother used the corner of her apron to wipe away three or four teardrops which had fallen, one for the wayward John and the rest for her baby boy. Ward put an arm around her and forgave her.

"Your father always did exercise poor judgment," was the only rebuke she had for her younger son.

But the village was not so hard on Mr. Clark as this. It said : "He is a good-natured, honest, easy-going fellow. You can always count on him to fix a wagon or a bicycle for the children, free of charge, and to vote for the worst candidate at elections."

The Sunday following Gorman's call at Barnsville was a dull one for Ward Clark. In the afternoon he let Bertha take him out for a walk and tell him the latest post-office news and about the baby at her aunt's; but very little reference was made to "the road" and other alluring aspects of life beyond the gates of Barnsville.

He went home early after evening church, and was in bed half an hour after dusk. His murmurings beneath the sheets were not of Bible texts nor yet of sweet-natured girls, but had a direct bearing upon the veracity of drummers.

And so the surprise of Monday morning was a surprise indeed. It came in the form of a letter not from Gorman but from Messrs. Steele & Steele, Manufacturers of Hardware Specialties, Windsor. A salary of fifteen dollars per week and expenses was named, and the applicant was asked to report at once.