

Linny looked at Peel in astonishment, and then at Ward.

"Sorry," he said, apologetically,—

"You've got him wrong, you simp," exclaimed Peel. "The boob wants to do the buying himself."

"I'd like to hurt you," declared the Barnsvillian, bearing out Peel's interpretation. "What do you take me for—a piker?"

Linny apologized again. Far be it from him to make a piker of a fellow-drummer.

"Simp's my name, boys," he laughed. "But you see, Bill, I didn't know but that Clark here—you see I came from Barnsville myself and——"

"Aw, forget it!" interrupted Peel. "Look at the stains on his fingers, you brooms-and-brushes train-catcher. If you studied character a little more and treated fewer customers you'd be able to size a guy up. Eh, Clark?"

The flattery was sweet, but Ward felt half sorry for Linny. It must make a fellow feel mean to have it rubbed in like that.

"But you were telling us about a missionary," said the Barnsvillian, to change the subject; "weren't you, Bob?"

"Oh, yes," replied Linny, having drowned his embarrassment in a glass, "he's some guy. He caught Bill and me with a little bun on down the line and gave us a small week-day sermon. When he got through we stumped him to a game of poker."

Ward laughed the laugh Goldsmith associates with a vacant mind; but in this case it denoted a mind full of pride and a kind of sporting excitement, a mind fearful of betraying its innocence.