

Out of compassion for the empty 'bus and its sad-looking driver he rode home—a distance equal to about five blocks. His mother and father were at breakfast.

"I knew you'd come back, dear!" she cried, when the first surprise and greeting was over.

"Yes," added W. Clark, Sr., looking at the prongs of his fork. "I guess the traveling life is no summer holiday."

It took the supposed prodigal several minutes to explain his presence in Barnsville, and the explanation was no pleasant task. Her illusion gone, his mother used a corner of her apron.

Mr. Clark was the first to ask about Jack. Upon hearing of him he observed with some vehemence:

"Always was a smart beggar, Johnny."

The reflection on himself rather annoyed Ward and he began at once to boast. Before he had finished—it was a long story—his mother rapped on the window and beckoned to someone.

Bertha, dressed for church, came in. Her dark eyes and her cheeks betrayed the pleasure she felt at being thus surprised. The signs did not escape Ward.

"Wait till I wash," he said, "and I'll go with you."

"But you must eat something," protested his mother.

"Yes, I *am* hungry," he admitted.

Whereat Bertha took off her gloves and confessed that she was not in the frame of mind for church anyway.

After eating, and the women's eyes were still on him, the drummer relieved his vest pocket of a cigar-case and proceeded in a man-of-the-world