

succeeded in covering it up a second after they had seen it.

"To the girl who waits for you, eh?" laughed Bob.

Ward was quick to answer:

"No, sir; this is an old bank friend."

The skepticism of Peel's laugh was overwhelming. Ward realized that his honor must be vindicated without hesitation,—and that meant a lie and a trick.

But why should he be sensitive about the writing of a letter to some girl in his home town? Heaven only knows,—but he was.

"I'll prove to you guys that I'm not writing slush to a girl," he said, with masterly assurance.

Addressing an envelope to J. M. Blake, a bankclerk in Barnsville, he enclosed the letter he had written and handed it to Linny.

Whether it was the suspicion Ward's seriousness aroused or a natural love of the original that prompted the action, Bob took a stamp from his wallet, stamped the letter and put it in his pocket. He pretended to forget that it was there and purposely stood close to Ward. By and by he felt a hand descend caressingly along his spine, and secretly he transferred the letter to Peel.

Half an hour later, as they were passing the post-office, Ward discovered that he needed stamps, and went inside to write a post-card, while the other drummers discussed the advisability of posting his letter through the outside wicket. When he came out they told him what they had done.

"Thanks," he said, good-naturedly; "I'd forgotten all about it."

This letter was his reply to Bertha's girlish com-