

THE DRUMMER

"Very well, I shall," said Gorman, smiling until he had reached the front door.

At noon Ward met the drummer in front of the post-office.

"Mr. Clark," said Gorman, "the old gent got me just sore enough this morning to make that job of yours with the Windsor firm fairly certain."

Ward cagerly entered into the spirit of these words.

"We had a row," he said, "after you'd gone. Thomas told me if I didn't like the way he did business I needn't stay—so if you land that job, Mr. Gorman, I'll have a good excuse for suddenly beating it."

The drummer rubbed his chin.

"Old Ned's account is as good as none, anyway, I suppose," he observed, half to himself.

"Sure," agreed Ward, careless of everybody's interests but his own, now that a bright future seemed to be opening before him.

Promising to write as soon as he had news the traveling man hurried off to catch a train, and Ward Clark entered the post-office. Two girls were employed there. One of them was now waiting on the wicket and the other was seated at a table; but as soon as the grocer's clerk appeared they exchanged occupations, so that Bertha Doran might conduct her daily dialogue with a popular village youth. That he enjoyed these noon-time conversations as much as she was the opinion of the local gossips—a particularly well-informed body.

"He's so tall and fair and she's such a sweet brunette," one said, or something just as interesting, "they would make an ideal couple. And Bertha being