

appearance. He opened his mouth to protest, but Gorman, already, like a true drummer, in the circle of action, stepped on his toe.

"It's very good of you," returned the farmer's wife quickly. "There were several things I was wanting."

Ward picked up the basket of eggs and carried it to the back of the store. The proprietor followed him and Gorman followed the proprietor.

"See here, my boy——" Thomas began.

"Wait a minute," interrupted Ward, and the drummer was within hearing distance. "This woman is one of our opposition's best customers and she doesn't buy ten cents' worth a month from us. Why, I couldn't sell her a bar of soap this morning; I tried her every way. She just dropped in here to chew the rag. So when she upset her eggs I thought that was a chance for us to make good fellows of ourselves and speculate to the extent of a few dozen eggs. They're not all broken, but if they were it would only mean sixty-six cents to us."

Gorman could pretend no longer to be deaf or unconcerned. He intruded upon the conversation.

"Mr. Thomas," he laughed, "I'll bet this fellow will sell that old lady enough to-day to make the egg deal a profit, and maybe get her trade into the bargain."

The proprietor sighed.

"Have it your own way, then," he said, and went about his business in a more or less peevish state of mind.

Gorman faced the clerk.

"Well," he said, "you've supplied me with a laugh this morning, and given me courage to tackle this dead-and-buried burg."