

Ward had had a bad day, though, and was consequently not in his worst mood—the hilarious mood. A little bird asked him not to be so hard on Bertha for impulsively writing such a natural and truthful letter. Under the spell of this appeal he took a fountain-pen from his pocket and some writing paper from his bag. But there was only ink enough in the pen to write “Dear——” Then he looked in vain for a pencil.

“Darn these one-horsed hotels!” he murmured, because he had lost a cent pencil and forgotten to fill his pen.

The light, too, was bad. He lit a cigar, to brighten the place up a bit, and promised himself that he would write a letter on the following day.

Of course, he could not thus rid his mind of Bertha. The tone of her letter had set up a kind of vibration somewhere within him, half pleasant, half worresome. Did she expect something unusual from him now that he was a drummer? Had he told her enough about his prospects?—maybe that was it.

But, my goodness, he had only been on the road about three months. Worlds were not made in a day. He was going to marry her—that was understood; but there were many things to be considered before weddings. Himself, for instance, and his success. It was all very well for Bertha, in a nice position and among friends, to get restless; but what if she had to knock around like a traveling-man and face the world, including hotel clerks and dining-room servants? What if she had to fill in the evenings with her feet on a window-sill and her mind on a list of grouchy over-drummed customers?