

THE COMING OF THE LODGER 15

"I was, Mrs. B.," agreed Bindle; "an' wot is more I probably always shall be as long as you go on cookin' it. Wot I shall do when you go orf with the lodger, I don't know," and Bindle wagged his head from side to side in utter despondency.

Mrs. Bindle made an unprovoked attack upon the kitchen fire.

"Well," said Bindle after a pause, "if it's rations or a lodger, I suppose it's got to be a lodger," and he drew a deep sigh of resignation. He turned once more to *The Gospel Sentinel*. "Musical, too, ain't 'e," he continued. "I wonder wot 'e plays, the jew's 'arp or a drum? Seems a rare sport 'e does, chapel-goer, temperance, quiet, musical, fond of 'ome-comforts, good cookin'; an' don't want to pay much; regular blood I should call 'im."

"He's coming to-night to see the place," Mrs. Bindle announced, "and don't you go and make me feel ashamed. You'd better keep out of the room."

"'Ow could you!" cried Bindle reproachfully, as he proceeded to light his pipe. "Me——"

"Don't do that!" snapped Mrs. Bindle.

Bindle regarded her over the flaming match with eyebrows raised interrogatingly.

"Perhaps he doesn't smoke," she explained.

"But I ain't goin' to give up tobacco," said Bindle with decision. "'Oly Angels! me with a wife an' a lodger an' no pipe!"