

There was a grimness in Bindle's voice that caused Mrs. Bindle to pause in the process of pinning a brooch in her bodice.

"Yes, Mrs. B.," continued Bindle, "that little gal means an 'ell of a lot to me, I——"

Mrs. Bindle looked round, a little startled at a huskiness in Bindle's voice. She was just in time to see him disappear through the bedroom-door. When she returned to the looking-glass, the face that was reflected back to her was that of a woman in whose eyes there was something of disappointment and cheated longing.

Mrs. Bindle proceeded with her toilet. Everything seemed to go wrong, and each article she required appeared to have hidden itself away. Finally she assumed her bonnet, a study in two tints of green, constructed according to the inevitable plan upon which all her bonnets were built, narrow of gauge with a lofty superstructure. She gave a final glance at herself in the glass, and sighed her satisfaction at the sight of the maroon-coloured dress with the bright green bonnet.

When Mrs. Bindle emerged into Fenton Street, working on her white kid gloves with feverish movement, she found Bindle engaged in chatting with a group of neighbours.

"'Ere comes my little beetroot," remarked Bindle; at which Mrs. Rogers went off into a shriek of laughter and told him to "Go hon, do!"

Mrs. Bindle acknowledged the salutations of