

to open Mrs. Bindle's set lips, he became engrossed in his paper.

Mrs. Bindle seated herself opposite to him and, smoothing her skirt, "folded 'er 'ands on 'er supper," as Bindle had once expressed it.

"He's coming Monday," she proclaimed with the air of one announcing an event of grave national importance.

"Does 'e smoke?" enquired Bindle anxiously.

"He does not," replied Mrs. Bindle with undisguised satisfaction; "but," she added, as if claiming for some hero the virtue of self-abnegation, "he doesn't object to it—in moderation," she added significantly.

"Well, that's somethink," admitted Bindle as he proceeded to light his long-neglected pipe. "There was pore 'ole Alf Gorley wot beer made sick; but 'e used to like to see other coves with a skinful."

"Don't be disgusting, Bindle," snapped Mrs. Bindle, piqued that his apparent lack of interest in the lodger gave her no opportunity of imparting the information she was bursting to divulge.

"Wot's disgustin'?" demanded Bindle.

"Him, watching men making beasts of themselves," retorted Mrs. Bindle.

"Them makin' beasts o' themselves!" Bindle exclaimed. "If you'd ever seen Alf after 'alf a pint o' beer, you wouldn't 'ave said it was them wot was makin' beasts o'——"

"Mr. Hearty will like him," interrupted Mrs.