

"Marriage is a thing of terrible solemnity," resumed Mr. Sopley, "not to be entered upon lightly, or with earthly thoughts. It is symbolical of many things, sometimes terrible things—" 'Ere, 'ere!" interposed Bindle)—but throughout all its vicissitudes, in spite of all earthly woes, desolation, and despair, it should be remembered that there is One above to Whom all prayers should be directed, and in Whom all hope should be reposed.

"In the course of the long life that the Lord has granted me, I have joined together in holy wedlock many young couples—" Shame!" from Bindle, and a laugh from Mr. Dixon),—and I hope our young friends here will find in it that meed of happiness which we all wish them."

In spite of the entire lack of conviction with which Mr. Sopley wished the bridal pair happiness, he resumed his seat amidst murmurs of approval. His words were too solemn to be followed by applause from anyone save Bindle, who tapped the table loudly with the butt-end of his knife. Everyone looked towards Charlie Dixon, who in turn looked appealingly at Bindle.

Interpreting the glance to mean that Bindle contemplated replying, Mrs. Bindle kicked him beneath the table.

"'Ere, who's kicking me on the shins again?" he cried as he rose. Mrs. Bindle frowned at him. "Oh, it's you, is it?" he remarked. "Now, Charlie, you see what's goin' to 'appen to you