

10            ADVENTURES OF BINDLE

might be on a desert island for all the company you are."

Bindle gazed at Mrs. Bindle over the small bone from which he was detaching the last vestiges of nutriment by means of his teeth. He replaced the bone on the edge of his plate in silence.

"You think of nothing but your stomach," Mrs. Bindle continued angrily. "Look at you now!"

"Well, now, ain't you funny!" remarked Bindle, as he replaced his glass upon the table. "If I'm chatty, you say, 'Old your tongue!' If I ain't chatty, you ask why I ain't a-makin' love to you."

After a moment's silence he continued meditatively: "I kept rabbits, silkworms, an' a special kind o' performin' flea, an' I seemed to get to understand 'em all; but women—well, you may search me!" and he pushed his plate from him as a sign of repletion.

Mrs. Bindle rose from the table. Bindle watched her curiously; it was never wise to enquire what course was to follow.

"I answered an advertisement to-day," she announced, as she banged an apple-pie upon the table.

With difficulty Bindle withdrew his interest from the pie to Mrs. Bindle's statement.

"You don't say so," he remarked pleasantly.

"And about time, I should think, with food going up as it is," she continued, as she hacked out a large V-shaped piece of pie-crust which she