

24      ADVENTURES OF BINDLE

After a time Mr. Gupperduck began to show signs that the first ardour of his appetite had been appeased.

"If it ain't a rude question, mister," began Bindle, "might I ask wot's your job?"

"I'm in the service of the Lord," replied Mr. Gupperduck in a harsh tone.

"Trade union wages?" queried Bindle with assumed innocence.

"Bindle!" admonished Mrs. Bindle, "behave yourself."

"I am a sower of the seed," said Mr. Gupperduck pompously and with evident self-satisfaction.

"Well, personally myself," said Bindle, "I ain't much belief in them allotments. You spend all your time in diggin', gettin' yourself in an 'ell of a mess, an' then somebody comes along an' pinches your bloomin' vegetables."

"I refer to the spiritual seed," said Mr. Gupperduck. "I preach the word of God, the peace that passeth all understanding."

Bindle groaned inwardly, and silence fell once more over the board.

"Mrs. Bindle," said Mr. Gupperduck at length, "you have given me a most excellent supper."

Mrs. Bindle's lips became slightly visible.

"The Lord shall feed His flock," remarked Mr. Gupperduck apropos of nothing in particular, "and——"