

He looked about him as if in search of sympathy. Then turning to Mrs. Bindle, he demanded :

" You mean to say I got t^o give up smokin' for a lodger ! " Indignation had smoothed out the wrinkles round his eyes and stilled the twitchings at the corners of his mouth.

" It doesn't matter after he's here," Mrs. Bindle responded sagely.

Slowly the set-expression vanished from Bindle's face ; the wrinkles and twitches returned, and he breathed a sigh of elaborate relief.

" Mrs. B.," he said admiringly, " you 'aven't lived for nineteen years with your awful wedded 'usband, lovin', 'onourin' an' obeyin' 'im—I don't think—without learnin' a thing or two." He winked knowingly.

" Yes," he continued, apparently addressing a fly upon the ceiling, " we'll catch our lodger first an' smoke 'im afterwards, all of which is good business. Funny 'ow religion never seems to make you too simple to——"

Bindle was interrupted by a knocking at the outer-door. Mrs. Bindle performed a series of movements with amazing celerity. She removed and folded her kitchen-apron, placing it swiftly in the dresser-drawer, gave a hasty glance in the looking-glass over the mantelpiece to assure herself that all was well with her personal appearance and, finally, slipped into the parlour to light the gas. She was out again in a second and, as she passed into the passage leading to the outer-