

The angular woman in the sun-bonnet yelled, "Oh, mercy on us!"

The fat woman with the market-basket called wildly for a doctor.

The gloomy woman who talked bass shouted hoarsely.

"He's killed it!"

And Mr. Thumbledirk hooked his finger into that child's mouth and choked it until its face was purple and black, trying to find that pin. And Mr. Thumbledirk couldn't hear even the chattering women. It beat the air with its clenched fists, and thrashed and kicked with its fat bare legs, and wailed, and howled, and choked, and screamed, and doubled up and straightened out until Mr. Thumbledirk, steeling his nerves to the awful effort, clasped the screaming baby in his arms and rose to his feet.

He was going to go out and throw himself and the baby under the first train that came along.

The baby's mother sprang in through the door like an angel of mercy.

She took the baby in her arms and with one slight motion of one hand had its raiment straightened out so exquisitely smooth there wasn't a wrinkle in it.

The baby lay in her arms as placid, quiet, flexible, graceful and contented as a dream of Paradise.

The mother thanked Mr. Thumbledirk for the agony and torture he had endured so patiently for her—this was the way she thanked him. She did not look at him. She looked straight out of the window with a stony glare, and said, in tones that made the thermometer shiver:

"Mr. Thumbledirk isn't a very good nurse, is he, baby?"

All the women smiled, except the gloomy woman who talked bass. She nodded approvingly.

The baby looked up into Mr. Thumbledirk's face and laughed aloud.

What Mr. Thumbledirk said when he dashed in at the sanctum last evening was this:

"By the avenging daughters of Night, the everlasting, snake-haired Erynnes, the terror-haunted shades never knew the horrors that haunt the soul of a sensible single man that tries to take care of some other fool's howling, squalling, squirming baby!"

SITTING BULL'S JOKE.

Sitting Bull never perpetrated but one joke. That was one day last autumn, when he sat down on a cluster of clover, in which there lingered the bumble bee of all bumble bees. The petulant insect prodded the war-

rior with a sting that marked one hundred and ninety degrees in the coolest place, and with a mighty howl the chieftain rose up in the air and felt around for his tormentor. "Now is the winter of our discontent," he said, holding the writhing bee up in his thumb and finger, "this is the Indian's hummer." And no one laughed and no one said anything, nor asked him to say it again and say it real slow, and the forest monarch withdrew his card from the paragrapher's association, and never joked again.

ANOTHER BROKEN ENGAGEMENT.

Not that Mr. Jasman was particularly bashful, for a young man. On the other hand, he rather prided himself on his natural, unspoiled, inartificial manner. But he lacked presence of mind. He was easy and free in his manner so long as everything went off well, but any little incident out of the ordinary run of events upset him, and left him helplessly floundering in a slough of unutterable, because not proper to be uttered, thoughts and sentiments.

Last Sunday afternoon Mr. Jasman strolled out to enjoy the air, and for the further purpose of making a short call on Miss Whazernaim, who lives out on Columbia street. The day was too lovely to be mocked by an overcoat even of the spring variety, and Mr. Jasman, as he sauntered up Third street, looked perfectly lovely in a pair of lean lilac pants, short coat and helmet hat. He also wore, as is the custom with our best young men, a large yellow cane, weighing seven pounds, which tended to give him the appearance of a commercial traveller for a wood-yard, selling cord-wood by sample.

He found the family all at home. They were sitting on the front stoop, taking the air, just for the novelty of sitting out-doors in December. The old gentleman soon blew his hat off with a sneeze that threatened to dislocate his neck, and went in; the old lady, in an effort that was just like it, went off into a paroxysm that sounded like the name of a Russian general in a fit, and she went in, declaring to goodness that she never, in all her born days, did. And then Mr. Jasman went up and sat down on the top stair, right at Miss Whazernaim's lovely 1½ feet.

"Be careful where you sit, Mr. Jasman," she said, in tones whose liquid sweetness ran into Mr. Jasman's ears and penetrated every fibre of his being like snow water gliding into a last summer shoe. But his heart sank as her remark came to a close. Like the chicken the Irishman swallowed, she had spoken too late. "The children," she said,