

The Great Silence Match.

The match was arranged on the following basis: Mr. Hunn offered to bet Mr. Banks that Mrs. Banks could keep absolutely silent longer at a single stretch than Mrs. Hunn. Mr. Banks said he did not know much about Mrs. Hunn's capacity as a talker, but he felt certain that Mrs. Banks couldn't hold her tongue for ten minutes excepting when she was asleep, and even then she always talked a little. So it was agreed to make a trial, Hunn to pay for a silk dress if Mrs. Banks spoke first, and Banks to pay for it if Mrs. Hunn spoke first. When the match was proposed Mr. Hunn suggested that the contestants should go into training, but Banks protested, upon the ground that if Mrs. Banks got to trying too hard to keep quite it would kill her. The contest took place in Mr. Hunn's dining room, the two ladies sitting opposite to each other. When the signal was given Mrs. Banks was in the midst of some remarks about the cheapness of calico, but she broke off short, and by holding her hand over her mouth resolutely suppressed a powerful impulse to finish the sentence. There was profound silence for ten minutes; and then Mrs. Hunn started to say something, but remembering herself, she turned it off by pretending that she was clearing her throat. Mr. Hunn claimed the stakes upon the ground that it was a foul, but Banks objected. Then Hunn, with malignant ingenuity, started a discussion with Banks about spring bonnets, and as they talked it was noticed that Mrs. Hunn had to hold on tightly to the chair to restrain herself, while Mrs. Banks was absolutely pale from suppressed emotion.

This having failed, Banks turned the conversation on the infamous price of butter, with a diabolical purpose to strike Mrs. Banks in the weakest point. Violent twitchings were observable about the muscles of her mouth, and Banks felt certain for a moment that he was going to win; but Mrs. Banks suddenly arose and pounded the dinner table half a dozen times vigorously with her fist and this seemed to give great relief to her feelings.

Mrs. Hunn meantime had her fingers in her ears. She recognized that as her only hope. A brief discussion of the hired-girl question, of



SIR JOHN: "WILL THEY NEVER LET UP."

the incapacity of servants, and of the awful dimensions of their wages, followed; but both contestants held out, although Mrs. Hunn rushed to the cupboard, and getting a piece of paper, wrote on it: "I must scream! Is screaming allowed!" Banks said it wasn't, and then Mr. Hunn burst into an extravagant eulogy of Mrs. Hunn's present servant-girl, with such effect that Mrs. Hunn became partly hysterical. And then Hunn, with unparalleled brutality, actually expectorated right upon the carpet. Mrs. Hunn bounded from her chair and shook her fist at him and when he laughed she flew round the room at the rate of sixty knots an hour, disheveling her backhair and behaving wildly. Hunn thought she would succumb, but she didn't. Banks's little Harry was playing in the yard, waiting for

of the Canadian North-west rebellion debt."

"Madam, in order to treat your disease successfully, I must know your age," said a physician to a spinster.

"W-h-a-t! Are you going to ask me how old I am?"

"Oh, no; all I wanted to ask you was how young you are."

"I really don't know. The family Bible strayed off somewhere, and I can't tell."

"That's enough! I know all that I want to," replied the doctor, as he wrote out a prescription for a person 65 years of age.

The girls want the papers, of course—for court reports and marry-time news.

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