

BROOKE'S MONKEY BRAND SOAP WON'T WASH CLOTHES.

Fair Play

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STRAIGHT TALK

A rumour has been circulated in Wellington during the last few days, by whom we are not in a position to say—although we can make a pretty shrewd guess—that Mr. Bell had arranged to pay the costs of the recent libel action brought by him against FAIR PLAY—that the proprietors of FAIR PLAY had been *squared* and that Mr. Bell would be mildly attacked in the columns of the journal for a few issues in order that the public might not be made aware of his magnanimity all at once—as it were—but that ultimately the story was to leak out through the columns of the other papers. This version of the affair came to the editor of FAIR PLAY from several quarters, and he wishes to take this opportunity of denying it *in toto* and of crushing the stupid *canard* at the start. No one has contributed one cent towards the maintenance of FAIR PLAY since its inception, except its proprietors, its advertisers, and its readers; and no one has contributed one cent towards defraying the expenses attendant upon the recent action. The supposition that Mr. Bell had come to some arrangement with this journal after the decision by Mr. Justice Richmond is absolutely ridiculous on the face of it, and quick though a rumour be to fly and receive credence, it seems incomprehensible that any sane individual should for a moment entertain the possibility of such a story being true.

In the first place Mr. Bell strove by every means in his power to utterly annihilate the paper, because forsooth in a spirit of fair comment, it spoke in a portion of one issue somewhat disparagingly of him. He brought all the weight of family influence, money and legal talent to help to crush us out of existence, and does it stand to reason to suppose that this man, this hyper-sensitive political parvenu, this would-be autocrat, this exponent of grovel, who takes his opinions and creed ready

made from the decision of the House of Lords, would in any way assist to sharpen the thorn that pierces his side! Does it seem probable that he would furnish the sinews of war to bombard the battlements of spurious Colonial caste that he has hedged himself in with? Rubbish; the suggestion is on its face an absurdity.

Again, Mr. Bell is not a man who would perform an action of that character by stealth. He does not come of a race that possesses such characteristics. No, had such a proposition been possible its accomplishment would have been shouted from the house-tops and blazoned in the papers. The Associated Press would have telegraphed it throughout the Colony, and the people of New Zealand would have been informed in lurid head lines of the "marvellous magnanimity," the "more than generous great heartedness" of Wellington's "Worthiest Citizen." The editor of the *Evening Post* would have gushed, the editor of the *Press* would have grovelled, and the editor of FAIR PLAY would, like Judas Iscariot of old, have had no resource but to hang himself for disgracefully betraying his master—the people, for a few paltry pieces of silver.

FAIR PLAY courts neither death nor dishonour, and had such a proposition been probable or even possible it would have been met with the contemptuous refusal it deserved. There are plenty of needy institutions that would be the better off for a few of Mr. Bell's hoarded hundreds, plenty of starving men and women who come before the Benevolent Trustees daily, who could feed their little ones on the price of his "two whiskies and sodas" a day, and myriads of the unemployed whose hungry eyes would have feasted on the sight of the "dinner given to his canvassers and supporters." FAIR PLAY could accept neither his money nor his patronage, and whoever circulated the rumour referred to gave birth to a deliberate and wilful mis-statement of the truth, and we wish to emphatically and absolutely deny any such rumour or suggestion.