

A STRANGE DOG STORY.

THE man with the shiny coat! He needs no introduction; you all know him. Well, last Tuesday afternoon he gave us a look in. It was his first visit to the GRAPHIC Office, and he found the dramatic critic, the society editor, and your humble servant—the religious reporter—congratulating each other on going to press so early.

'Good afternoon, gentleman,' said the Shiny Man in a hollow voice, as he opened the door of the sanctum and glided in, closely followed by a mangy-looking cur of the terrier tribe.

'The same to you, Mr S.' replied the Editor.

'By "the holy smoke" of Scazzle where did you get that mongrel? This from the critic.

In my capacity of R.R. I clasped my hands on behalf of Dramatics and turned my eyes upon Shiny.

He too was strangely affected, and giving the critic a look that made him tremble, said: 'Su you don't see anything particular about that dog, eh? If you had half the intelligence of that canine, sir, your notes would be read. I had a wash-house once that needed painting, and had not time to attend to it personally, and was moreover, then as now, "hard pushed." Scrub, there, was a pup at the time, very frisky and for ever wagging his tail. See it now, gentlemen, with what grace it moves from side to side. Well, do you know, I believe that dog knew what I wanted, as one morning, prior to going to business, I stood in the back-yard surveying the shed. He came along and looked me full in the face with his knowing little eyes and ran towards the corner of the shed where the paint-pot stood ready, and dipping in the tip of his tail, began painting the wall. I comprehended him in a moment, and saw he was willing to work. Improving upon Scrub's plan, however, I tied a light brush to his tail, set him to work, and believe me, gentlemen, when I returned from the city that night, not only were the lower boards of the shed beautifully painted, but the sagacious animal had mounted a ladder leaning against the wall, and completed the whole work.'

Shiny Coat stopped speaking for Dramatics was in a faint, and the society editor looked pale. The 'sagacious' Scrub had made an invasion of the adjoining office of the *New Zealand Farmer*, and was wrestling dogmatically with a mutton ham. As for me I had heard such tales before from the 'funny men' at church socials, so looked carelessly up at Suiny and said interrogatively, 'Well, what next?'

When Dramatics had partly recovered, the Shiny Man continued: 'Not only is he an accomplished painter, but in a thousand ways is he useful to me. But one example more will suffice, eh?' said he, turning sharply upon Dramatics and smiling grimly.

'It will!' gasped the critic, faintly, 'make it short.'

'Most people when they go out of a dark night in the suburbs carry a lantern. I don't, I simply take Scrub. You observe how thinny the hair grows upon his body. Well—'

'You put a candle inside him,' I broke in.

'No, I do not. Well, as I was just going to remark, when this gentleman so rudely interrupted me, Scrub is

very fond of fish, which article of diet, as you know in New Zealand is very cheap. Fish, then I get for Scrub, and thus kill two stones with one bird, so to speak, for not only does it serve to keep him in the robust state of health which you see at the present moment he enjoys (he had just returned from the mutton ham), but the phosphorus of the fish illuminates his tender skin, and he is in very truth, "a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

'Good afternoon, gentlemen, good afternoon;' and whistling the brush and lantern prodigy, the shiny Man vanished, leaving me speechless, for had he not encroached upon my domain, and stolen one of my most treasured phrases.

THE R.R.

MARRIAGE A LA MODE.

THERE is an old belief of the maseline Anglo Saxon mind that a woman, to be loving, should have no marked individuality. But with this world's rapid advance through the Victorian age, woman has become more than ever perplexing to the male atom, who poses himself for a second to make a study of her. She no longer needs man's apparel to practise a profession or to journey forth on foot under the green leaves of Arden. She has grown self-reliant and cosmopolitan, equally at home in the White House or on the banks of the Neva. She never plucks daisies and buttercups nowadays, to test her lover's affection by pulling apart their petals. You find her, instead, arranging orchids in a glass and making cynical reflections upon the worthlessness of the entire race. Individual love or hate in the opposite sex is apparently all one to her.

Half the marriages in this world are nothing but bubbles and barbers. A man wants a wife. He casts about for an even exchange. In a year he is tired of his bargain. In five years love is dead, and cold-browed tolerance inherits love's cast-off garments. In twenty years tolerance is in its grave and hate reigns supreme. The wife is naggy and prickly and peckish; the husband is dogmatical and reticent and mean. But there they hang together, on the bough, like two gnarled and frosted apples, until the winds of death dislodge them, and away they go!

The only way to rid the world of bubble marriages—marriages that turn out emptiness with one drop of water as the residuum and that drop a tear—is to educate our girls and boys to something higher than playing with pipes and soapy water. Give them something more earnest to do, and see that they do it. Compel men and women to chose their life companions with at least a tittle of the solemnity they bring to the selection of a carriage horse or ribbon. Legislate laws against early marriages. 'I can't tolerate children,' said a little idiot the other day, 'but I adore dogs!' And yet that idiot had an engagement ring on her finger. There should be a special seclusion for such girls until they develop some instinct of womanliness, and they should no more be allowed to marry than a Choctaw chief should be allowed to take charge of a kindergarten.

THE PROPOSAL.

I.

It's purty hard fer fellers when they gets to twenty-one, Fer then the time's arrived fer solid work to be begun, A boy can be right smart 'n' slick when he is in his teens, But when he comes of age he's got to show 'at he knows beans:

'Nd of the problems as is sot before him in this life, The hardest to solute, I think, is who's to be his wife.

II.

It's that what's bothered me of late—it's bothered me right bad—

Which one of six young ladies is the best that can be had? There's Sarah Ligges; she's mighty smart at bakin', so they say,

But ain't a bit o' use when't comes to tossin' up the hay.

'N' Marthy Pollock knows too much—she's been to boardin'-school—

'N' thinks unless a man can read 'thout stumblin', he's a fool,

'N' Sadie Peter's mighty sweet to look at, 'nd all that,

But there is them as says when Sade gets mad she's like a cat.

III.

'N' Polly Hankey's party fine; but I'm afear'd o' her; She's kind o' flirty; that's a trait in wives I don't prefer,

'N' Marthy Pollock knows too much—she's been to boardin'-school—

'N' thinks unless a man can read 'thout stumblin', he's a fool,

'N' Sadie Peter's mighty sweet to look at, 'nd all that,

But there is them as says when Sade gets mad she's like a cat.

IV.

'N' Susan Jones is rather nice; but say, she's kind o' queer. She's of the kind to squeeze yer hand, 'n' wink, 'n' call you 'dear.'

'N' somehow when I meet Sue Jones, I kind o' want to run For fear 'at she'll propose to me—'nd I don't call that fun—

Although I'm fond o' Susan—that's a fact I can't deny;

But 'twouldn't hurt her, not a jot, to be a bit more shy.

V.

Them six I can't decide about, 'n' seein' 's that's the case, I've called on you, Miss Perkins—or, if you'll allow me, Grace—

To say 'at what upon the hull I think's the style fer me 'S a kind o' quiet, modest girl sech as you often see—

The kind 'at ain't afear'd o' work, knows how to cook 'n' sew,

Don't sing or play planners, 'nd ain't allers on the go.

VI.

Ain't stuck on literary work, is allers clean 'n' neat; Don't know so awful much she knocks a feller off his feet;

'N' though she's plain, has looks enough, 'n' looks she's like to keep,

'N' with her talkin' isn't like to kill a feller's sleep—

That there's the kind, Miss Perkins, as I think 'll do for me;

'N' do you know, I sorter think—I sorter think you're she!

THE HABIT OF HEALTH.

CIVILIZATION by Soap is only skin-deep directly; but indirectly there is no limit to it.

If we think of Soap as a means of cleanliness only, even then **PEARS' SOAP** is a matter of course. It is the only Soap that is all Soap and nothing but Soap—no free fat nor free alkali in it.

But what does cleanliness lead to? It leads to a wholesome body and mind; to clear thoughts; to the habit of health; to manly and womanly beauty.

PEARS' SOAP

Has to do with the wrinkles of age—we are forming them now. If life is a pleasure, the wrinkles will take a cheerful turn when they come; if a burden, a sad one. The Soap that frees us from humours and pimples brings a lifeful of happiness. Wrinkles will come; let us give them the cheerful turn.

Virtue and wisdom and beauty are only the habit of happiness.

Civilization by Soap, pure Soap, **PEARS' SOAP**, that has no alkali in it—nothing but Soap—is more than skin-deep.