

in no way interfered with them in that particular district. So skilful had the stranger been that the surveyor had not elicited the slightest information regarding his identity.

When Mrs Taylor had finished her extraordinary story, Sir Donald exclaimed :

"That was Smith, my old friend Smith ! He was always reserved concerning himself, and I can remember his weakness for good tobacco. To me the strangest feature of the whole affair is that Smith is as level-headed in most things as any man I know, so what he is doing out here is a mystery I cannot fathom."

Despite the General's earnest manner, his remarks were received with significant silence and, I am afraid, suppressed smiles. He evidently noted this fact, for he immediately began to expatiate upon the virtues of his ubiquitous friend, than whom, he declared, there was no better fellow breathing. He had especially a way with niggers, he said, that nothing could stand up against—certainly not the niggers. At the same time, Smith was goodness itself, and he had known him give a black man, who possessed neither shirt nor collar, a favourite neck-tie, simply because the fellow had expressed admiration for it.

The goodness of heart of the absent one having thus been vindicated, Sir Donald proposed to go out and have a look around before lunch. We separated to do as we individually pleased until then.

After lunch the General and I sat with Mrs Taylor on the verandah while Jack and Maitland