

"Anything in the papers lately?" he inquired in a courteous if somewhat casual manner.

"It's nearly a year since I've seen a paper, far less seen a white stranger," exclaimed the surveyor. "But you're very welcome, sir, and you'll pardon me if I express surprise at seeing you. May I ask where you come from?"

"Over the way," replied the visitor, jerking his thumb in the direction of a precipitous mountain-side. "Do you happen to have such a thing as a match about you? Making one's own fire like a nigger become monotonous."

The still wandering surveyor handed him a box, and inquired where the rest of the visitor's party was, and if it had been sent by the Queensland Government to meet them.

"I'm all on my little lonesome," replied the human scarecrow, skilfully striking a match on his trouser leg. "I've been batching it all by myself for some little time now. Could you kindly inform me, sir, what the name of the fortunate quadruped was that won the Derby?"

"Bless my heart, how could I hear!" exclaimed the surveyor.

"Or which of the blues won the boat race?" asked his questioner.

"My dear sir," said the surveyor, "how was it possible to hear such things in this howling wilderness!"

The seedy stranger stroked his long moustache, and as he blew the tobacco cloud into air, meditatively remarked:

"Ah, well, I admit this sort of life has its dis-