

these men with such undisguised contempt. The result was, the Governor saw the affair in the same point of view as myself, and condescended to meet them and converse with them for about five minutes; and with that they were satisfied. Other heads of departments (civil and military) behaved differently, and evidently felt a pleasure in having them with them. The Commander of the troops suffered them to sit at the same table with himself

and officers, and had the war-dance performed in the mess-room, which I thought would have brought the house down upon our heads. He likewise permitted them to fall into the ranks with the soldiers, which pleased them beyond everything, inasmuch as they considered it a higher honour in being permitted to stand by our warriors on the martial parade than to take food with our Chiefs at their own table!

The Attorney-General of the colony took a particular interest in these savages, and gave a large party, to which they were invited. Several of the visitors on this occasion came out of curiosity to see how these cannibals would conduct themselves, expecting, no doubt, to witness a display of disgusting gluttony; but in that they were disappointed, for never did any set of men behave with greater decorum than they did.

Musings AND Meditations

By Dog Toby

GOD'S RIDDLE.

MY horse had knocked up, and, to my intense annoyance, I found myself compelled to spend Sunday in the small hotel of the little township. In the morning I wandered aimlessly round inspecting the scenery. There were one or two pretty fruit farms, but the land seemed of poor quality, and stunted trees and gorse met the eye on every side. In the afternoon I went up to the little building that did duty as a church. It was very plainly furnished, with a platform at one end, on which stood a table and a harmonium. Quite a number of people were present, considering the size of the settlement, and I noticed that the presence of a stranger seemed to occasion considerable interest. The congregation all joined heartily in the service, and at the close one or two came up and spoke to me. One man who had acted as organist asked me where I was staying, and when I explained that I had put up at the hotel for a day or two to give my horse a spell, he very kindly asked me to bring my things and stay at his place. He had a very pretty little farm, and, though he was a bachelor, everything in the house was beautifully neat and tidy. He was evidently very fond of music, and he appeared to have a number of other hobbies besides, as I noticed some water-colour sketches on the wall, and a book of photos, that he had taken himself lay on the table. He talked interestingly on a variety of different topics, and somehow or other the conversation drifted round to the subject of marriage. A look of wistful sadness seemed to come into his face, and I feared I had touched some tender memory. But, after smoking in silence for some little time, he turned to me, and said: "I am only a plain man, mister, brought up to a rough, hard-working country life, and I can't express myself very well, but I would like to talk to you for a bit, if you don't mind, and tell you why I never married. My father bought this place when he came out to the colony. It was quite in the rough, and we had a hard struggle to live while we were getting it in order. My mother died, went out by the isolation and the privations, and the unceasing toil of pioneer life. My father was never the same man afterwards, and he often used bitterly to curse the day when he had brought my mother away from the comforts of English town life to the dreary monotony of the bush. He told me no woman should be called upon to live such a life. He died when I was just twenty-two, and I found myself alone on the place. I could not bring myself to sell it, though I often thought about it, as it held for me many happy associations, and memories as well as the sad ones, and I also felt that it at any rate secured me a home, and a competence which I might find it difficult to obtain elsewhere. But I felt terribly lonely, and I used to spend a good deal of my time visiting the different settlers round. Then the inevitable happened. One family I used to go and see had a very pretty daughter, a girl of about twenty-one, with the fresh beauty and natural grace and kindness of manner of those unspoilt by city life. A lonely lad, my whole heart went out towards her, and I loved her with the love that only comes to a man once in his lifetime. I was by this time fairly well-to-do, my place

had considerably increased in value, and I was making good money as things go in the country. I pictured my future life as one of perfect happiness, in which even the sorrows would be sweetened by mutual trust and love. And then a young fellow from the city came to spend a holiday in the township. He met the girl at a dance given in the schoolroom, and I could see she was taken with his assumption of knowledge and his city manners, so different from those of our country lads. He was a clerk in some office or other, and assumed a patronising manner towards the rest of us. He stayed for some time in the place, and used frequently to come down from Saturday to Monday, and during the various holidays, which city men get so freely given them. And the girl got dissatisfied with the country, she longed to see some of the town life which he used to describe; he was a hero in her eyes, and she gave him of her love, though he was only amusing himself with her. She told me she would never marry if she could not marry him. He came down one Saturday and called at my place. I noticed he looked worried, and he had lost the jaunty air he generally affected. He told me he had been in difficulties, and had stolen money from his employers, hoping to repay it out of the dividend on a horse he had backed, but the horse had lost, and unless the money was repaid on Monday the theft would be discovered and he would be arrested. I fought a hard battle with myself. If I refused to help him I might win the girl. But would she be happy with me? Could I not better prove my love by trying to secure her happiness? I told him I would give him the money on condition he married her. She never knew, nobody ever knew. The young fellow kept his billet and prospered, and they were married at the end of the year. They are now living in Wellington, and I only hope that she is happy. My own life is lonely, and I often think on the past and all life might have been for me had things been different. But I feel I was not worthy of her. I had had no education and no city manners. I am, as you see, just a rough and ready country settler, with none of the pretty ways that please women. But, oh, I did love her, and God forgive me I love her still! I think of her as she was when I first knew her—with her fresh girlish beauty, her ready smile, her free and frank welcome with which she used to greet me. I think of her surrounded by simple, honest, kindly neighbours; I picture her in her country home amid the green fields and the fruit blossoms, so unaffected and yet so gracious, and I can only pray that in finding the social and intellectual life I could never have given her, she has also found a love as great as mine." I did not care to break in upon his thoughts. My eye wandered round the sketches on the wall. I saw they told their own tale. There was the farm, the orchard, the shady creek, and in every picture the same face, a face of rare beauty idealised by the hand of love. When I was in Wellington I got an introduction to the people he had been talking about. I gathered the husband was looked upon as a pushing, ambitious man, but cold, calculating and not over scrupulous, and people thought his wife didn't lead a very happy life.

I found him much as represented. He was a good talker, but too egotistical to be entertaining, and he was always snubbing his wife for her ignorance. He told me he could have done much better for himself if he had married money and got a wife who could have taken a more prominent part in society. She, poor woman, had a look of settled sadness and disappointment. She was listless in every movement, and bore but few traces of her early beauty. She said she was afraid she didn't understand her husband. She tried to help him as much as she could, but she never seemed to do the right thing, and the women she met in society were so different from what she had expected. They always appeared to adopt a patronising, artificial tone towards her, and the really friendly people her husband disapproved of as not being socially eligible. Also, she seemed somehow to have got out of touch with her own relations. They were proud of her having married well, but they appeared out of place and ill at ease when they came to visit her, and her husband who had been glad enough to meet them in the country seemed a little bit ashamed of them when they came to town. I knew and I understood. I thought of my honest, kindly settler friend with his simple, unaffected, self-sacrificing devotion. I saw her life as it might have been, a life of perfect happiness in a peaceful, prosperous home, surrounded by friends tried and true, and ever hallowed by a holy heartfelt love. And there they both were—the one lonely and bereft, the other eating the bitter fruit of disappointed hope and affection unrequited. God knows what is best for His children, but His riddles are often hard to read.

Stamp Collecting.

An instance of how a stamp appreciates in value is the scarce 2 cent stamp of British Guinea. A pair of these stamps realised the high figure of £1000. The story is an interesting one. A lady in Georgetown discovered a pair of these stamps among some old papers, and she, thinking them to be of some little value, placed them in the offertory at Christ Church, Canon Josa, the incumbent, sold them for £205. That was in 1896, and the price has risen enormously since then. In 1897 another pair changed hands for £650.

Sometimes people have a good thing in hand, and do not realise the fact. For instance, the knowledge of the existence of diamonds in South Africa was first obtained by the fact that some children were seen playing with "a piece of glass," which turned out to be a precious stone, and as a result the diamond industry was developed in South Africa. Just the same people occasionally have valuable stamps without being aware of the fact. For instance, some years ago in London a man took eight unused 5/ English stamps to a post office and tried to sell them, but was told he must take them to Somerset House to get them exchanged for current issue. He, however, sold them to a stamp dealer for face value, and was glad to get it. The dealer was equally glad to get the stamps, which he sold for £70. This is only another instance of the truth of the old copy book heading, "Knowledge is valuable."

The 2/6 stamp of Tonga has appeared in dark blue.

A 10 dollar green and black stamp has been added to the issue of Straits Settlement.

The year 1900 was a very busy one in the surcharging department of Salvador. The remainders of the 1 centavo of 1899 were overprinted "1900," and then all the remainders of various values of both the 1898 and 1899 issues were surcharged "1900" and a new value. Whenever there were small blocks or single specimens they were pasted together with strips of paper so as to reconstruct a sheet, and these reconstructed sheets were run through the press with the complete sheets. This is economy with a vengeance.

"The Right Rev. I. O. Stringer, the Bishop of Selkirk, has charge of a diocese comprising 200,000 square miles—a vast tract of land usually known as the Yukon Territory of North-west America. Mrs. Stringer, who is a true helpmeet to her husband, finds the postal arrangements of Yukon somewhat trying at times. Letters do not reach her remote dwelling more often than twice a year; and if, after waiting patiently six months, the mails fail to arrive, the disappointment is keen indeed. One occasion when this calamity took place is still fresh in Mrs. Stringer's memory. The mails are conveyed on sleighs by Esquimaux dogs, accompanied by two natives; but over the very rough ground, where it is impossible to make progress with the sleighs, the bags have to be carried by the men. In this particular instance the Esquimaux to whom the duty fell found the bags so heavy that he hung the lightest of them in a tree, intending to fetch it when he passed that way again—in six months' time. When the post was delivered at Mrs. Stringer's house, it was found to consist of newspapers and advertisements, and the much-longed for letters from friends at home were still hanging in the branches of the tree, many miles distant. After some delay, they were recovered and forwarded, but their failure to turn up at the proper time was a great disappointment."—*Collectors' Journal*."

The Russian Academy of Science has just dispatched a well-equipped expedition to the valley of Santaurakh, in Northern Siberia, in order to excavate the remains of the mammoth which has been discovered about 200 miles from the village of Kasachia.

The cranium and part of the right forelegs were exposed through the action of water, and hair-covered fish was found adhering to the bones. The Arctic foxes had actually begun to eat it, and water has now been poured over the exposed remains so as to form a protective coating of ice.

The scene of the discovery is so remote that the journey there will occupy two months. The remains will be transported by some 30 sleighs, drawn by reindeer, to the River Lena, and the final stages of the journey, from Irkutsk to St. Petersburg, will be completed by train.

Russian scientists attach the greater value to the discovery, inasmuch as the mammoth now exhibited in the Zoological Museum at St. Petersburg is known not to have reached full development. It is estimated to have attained only 25 years.

These mammoths are believed to have lived about 100,000 years ago. The remains of the first one discovered were in such an excellent state of preservation that some of the remnants of flesh, after being thawed, salted, and cooked, were eaten out of curiosity by some Russian scientists.

NEATLY PUT.

Mrs. Gaddler (rising to depart)—Well, you must come and call on me some day, it's your turn now.

Mrs. Chiffon-Kearney—Yes, I think I have been my turn for the last five or six times, hasn't it?