

had affected were too much taken aback, and disgusted, to offer any dissent.

I returned with the king and queen to the camp, and though I confess to a dislike of courtly functions, I must say the big corroboree those blacks held in my honour was extremely entertaining and interesting. The only unpleasant incident in the festivities was the public punishment of the black who had thrown the boomerang to Crocodile while in the arena. I ventured to plead for him, but the queen would not listen to me.

After that, my liberty was practically assured, and I went backwards and forwards amongst these blacks for months unmolested. Of course, I had to keep my eyes pretty well open on account of those belonging to the rival faction, for had any of them managed to surprise me, I would certainly have been murdered.

And all this time I was endeavouring to find the quartz-reef from which that magnificent specimen of gold had come, and which I had seen in the blacks' camp. I avoided asking the savages about it, as I knew that doing so might only get them into trouble. With patience I was bound to find the reef before long.

And then, unexpectedly, came the greatest menace to my safety—no less than the appearance in this valley of the notorious outlaw Hawker. And a pretty game we had dodging and trying to get ahead of each other.