

must have known that you were bound to find and rescue me," said Madge. "He only wanted time to get clear away. He probably didn't realise what a terribly difficult and dangerous feat my rescue would be."

"I can understand now why Bird and Holt and the others murdered him," said Sir Donald. "They probably asked him what he had done with you, Madge, and when he wouldn't tell—you remember, Payne, he refused to say where Madge was on the previous night—and very likely declined to have anything further to do with them, they killed him in a fit of rage."

"It was Bird who did it," I said.

"Whatever Hawker's crimes may have been, we owe him something," said Sir Donald. "We will give his body decent burial to-morrow. The blacks are certain to return and remove all their dead. Those of us who may come back here again will not find a trace of the fight unless it may be the breast-work that sheltered us."

But now the Southern Cross had described a half-circle in the jewelled heavens, so setting a watch, and bidding one another good-night, those of us who were not on duty unrolled our blankets and turned in.

Next morning we were all early astir, for was it not the first day of the return journey to civilisation and all that that meant!

Those of us who were not in the secret, were astonished to find a remarkable change in the general appearance of Captain Smith. In place of the disreputable and scanty rags he had worn on