

and scrub oak. Through this the horsemen rode at a swinging gallop, followed at some distance, as they could observe, by Cassy, the negro woman, and a few stragglers, whose curiosity had been turned into sympathetic interest. Chadwick bore toward the left calkin of the line that he had described as a horseshoe, and in a little while his companions heard him shout and saw him wave his hand. They swerved to the right and rode toward him, their horses running easily. As soon as they caught sight of the fugitive, Blandford rode at full speed until he had passed the hunchback, and then turned and rode toward him, holding in his right hand a cavalry pistol that sparkled in the sun.

The hunchback saw that escape was impossible, and he made no further attempt. He ceased to run and sat down at the foot of a huge pine, making a vain effort to soothe the frantic baby, which had screamed until its cries sounded like those of some wild animal in mortal agony. This and the sinister aspect of the hunchback so wrought upon Blandford that he leaped from his horse and would have brained the creature on the spot, but for the intervention of Deomateri, who was in time to seize his arm.