

ma'am. Don't scratch him. We want him to look as pretty as possible."

"Mister!" she cried, flinging her head back and turning to Blandford, "don't git me stirred up. You seed what he wuz tryin' to do, but you don't nigh know what he kin do. Ontie him, an' he kin whip arry one of you, fair fist an' skull, rush an' scramble." Her tone was both argumentative and appealing. As she spoke a shell went spinning and singing overhead. The hunchback dodged involuntarily, but the woman remained unmoved. "I tell you, now," she went on, "you don't know him. You can't carry him to town ef it wuz to save the world. He'd hamstring your creeturs an' git away. You think he's cripple, an' he does look cripple, but the man don't live that kin out-do him. You think I want to take the inturn on him, but I don't. I ain't nothin' but a woman, but me an' him is got a score to settle. Ontie him, ef he ain't done ontied hisself, an' give him a knife or a pistol or anything. I don't want nothin' but my naked han's." Her bosom rose and fell convulsively and her hands refused to remain at rest.

"Don't do it, gentermen!" exclaimed the hunchback. "She'll kill me."