

The tragic features of the situation escaped Blandford and Deomateri, but the simple mind of Chadwick recognized them, — recognized, in fact, nothing else.

“ I think,” said Blandford, winking at Deomateri, “ that we ’d better untie this chap until he and his wife settle this family quarrel. What do you think about it ? ”

“ Oh, by all means let the family quarrel be settled ! ” remarked Deomateri in a matter-of-fact way.

The result of this grim humor could hardly have been foreseen. In some way the hunchback had worked his hands loose from the thong that bound them, and he made a desperate dash for liberty. The woman was after him in a moment. As she ran, she drew forth from under her apron the hatchet that Chadwick had seen her conceal there. She was hardly a match for the hunchback in a foot-race, but passion, hatred, the venom that had supplanted anxiety for her child, lent swiftness to her feet, and the soldiers, who stood watching as if paralyzed, expected every moment to see her bury the hatchet in the man’s deformity. She poised her glittering weapon to strike, but at that moment her