

ried a long spit by way of weapon. "Kill him! Kill him!" she kept crying in shrill tones of rage.

McAlpine had but one moment to plan in. His mind was made up before that instant was over. The negro must be stopped first although he was farthest off. Pulling a pistol from his holsters, he threw them and the saddle bags aside as useless encumbrances in the fight that was before him, took good aim and fired. There was no moonlight in the piazza, for the shadow of the house fell that way. The only light McAlpine had to aim by came from the kitchen and streamed irregularly through the windows and the open doorway. But Ahab had come by this time just where the light from one of the windows streamed full upon him. McAlpine was a good shot, and the negro fell stone dead.

But Basmorne was closing with his would-be victim now, and it behooved the latter to be wonderous quick in his movements if he would not be run through.

McAlpine dropped the smoking pistol, drew his sword, and fell upon the advancing Basmorne. He had no time for fence, as the Basmorne hag was close by with her long spit. So, with one headlong rush, he beat down his opponents rapier, closed with him, and hurled him to the floor. Not stopping to see how the fellow fared, he continued his mad charge, having now run under Mrs. Basmorne's threatening spit, and tumbled her down in turn.

The moment she was down, he jerked off her apron and with it tied her arms behind her back. Then, turning about he was ready once more for her husband, who by this time had risen and was looking around for something more serviceable than his rapier. He espied McAlpines holsters and had just drawn his other pistol from them, when the owner came down upon him. He fired as McAlpine ran him through, and the ball would have put an end to the traveler but for the jerk given to Basmorne's arm by the thrust of the sword entering his body. As it was McAlpine's face was badly burned by the powder.

He had overthrown his immediate assailants. But how