

"Ola, señor, what do you wish?" demanded Don Gomez, stepping up to the new comer, "what do you wish?"

"You!" he said savagely, with an oath, "you, that is what I want!" bringing his bony fist into the youth's face, with such force, that had it been unexpected, would have felled any man to the earth; but the knight easily warded it off, at the same time dealing a staggering blow between the eyes, which caused the visitor to measure his length, rather unceremoniously upon the uneven floor.

"Well, friend, take what you desire, I am pleased that it lies in my power to gratify you!"

The man lay upon the floor without motion apparently, and Don Gomez was about to bind him when he noticed two more men untying the rope from their bodies, preparatory to enter the cave. He braced himself as they came up, and before he was noticed he dealt the foremost of the ruffians a blow that nearly sent them both tumbling backward down to the abyss. To recover themselves was the work of an instant, and before the knight was able to renew the attack they dashed upon him. But he was ready for the emergency. It was a battle of blows, and he must needs be a master boxer who will contend with such odds opposed to him.

The contest became frightful. His opponents were not unskilled in this mode of petty warfare, and their united blows were beginning to tell upon him, still he watched their every movement, and baffled many a stunning blow, at the same time dealing right and left, taking great care that no blow of his should fall without taking effect. By thus keeping the defence, and only making a thrust where it would count in his favor, Don Gomez began to revive. His success, thus far in buffeting them, inspired him with new courage, and he began looking upon himself as the victor, when the first man, whom he thought secure, bounded forward, from behind him, inflicting a dangerous cut on his forearm, as he flung himself upon him. But in his wild thirst for revenge, he had loosed out a wedge which held one of the rocks in its place, and had not Don Gomez seen it in time, as it came rolling down the passage, they must all have been crushed. He succeeded in flinging his adversary aside, and sprang into a small opening in the rock. The two men were close upon him, chuckling, probably over what they now considered their triumphant moment, when with a crash, the stone rolled from the cave and fell with a dull sound upon the rocks below, which echoed mournfully through the many rooms of the cave. Two of the combatants were crushed to atoms as it passed over them, and the third, who had unconsciously removed the wedge, was rewarded for his blindness, by losing both of his limbs. The blood was flowing freely from the youth's arm, and he too sank through loss of blood, and quite unable to maintain any other posture, even when he saw two more men emerge from the outer world, looking even more blood-thirsty than the two who had last preceded them. But he was unable to face them—he attempted to rise, but fell back upon the rocky floor. A strange sensation was coming over him which he had never experienced before. A dull weight seemed pressing upon his forehead, and a giddiness rushed over him, which seemed to

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