

at our throats. But he saw—and instantly became calm.

"Slaves!" he grated out in Spanish, "throw your weapons on the floor, or die!"

Slowly they obeyed. At my master's nod I caught up their pistols, and they broke down.

"Mercy! Spare our lives!" they cried.

The little brown man nodded. "More than that," he replied. "Do as I bid you, and I shall give you your freedom and every penny in those bags!"

They glanced at each other in extravagant amazement, and even I was dumbfounded.

"Well?" shouted my master, "do you agree?"

"Gladly, your Brilliancy!" they cried.

The little brown man smiled. "Good, then go about the house, collect and bring here all the wood you can find, put this corpse on the top, set fire to the pile and then to the house. You understand? Afterwards you can carry out your gold, put it aboard your waggon, and go to the deuce for all I care."

The men sprang to obey, and soon a great mass of wooden furniture, sashes, broken tables and chairs was littered up in a heap in the middle of the room. Over this one poured a can of kerosene oil, and the others lifted up de Guira's corpse and laid it on the top. Working with nervous speed, they next removed the bags of coin from the room and from the building. Returning again, some set fire to the house in different places, and finally applied