

DEALING WITH THE DESPERATE 303

Sure as death itself of its marked victims, the dealer readily conceded whatever value the hidalgo set upon these his last belongings.

Play was resumed, but now reduced to petty larceny terms, the bets so small that it took the dealer more than two hours to win the fourth of the values that, earlier in the contest, fell to him on a single layout, and to leave his victim plucked to the pin-feathers.

Rising quickly, the game thoroughbred remarked:

"Well done, son; you have won my money, all, but I still own my pride. Good night."

And it proved his good-bye as well, for straight away out into the darkness he marched, and we never saw him again.

Of course, that evening's diversion divorced me from my prospecting mate. With winnings that totalled well up in five figures, he was keen to blow himself where the most fun could be bought, not too dangerously near his old Colorado haunts.

The shortest trail to Tucson was good enough for him, and I took it with him.

Then followed for me several more years of drifting, unprofitable as their predecessors. Service on the Tucson police force; ranching near Gila Bend, where I soon starved out; merchandising in butter, eggs and honey at the Harquahala Mines,—where I got touched up by the needy for my profits so systematically that I philosophically concluded I'd worked about long