

DEALING WITH THE DESPERATE 301

called for some high-roller to come and tap the bank.

Tap the bank! Why, at the most it would not stack up above a hundred 'dobe dollars, but a blooded call for a tap of a bank is a dare no Mexican with the price can resist.

Whirling at the sound of my mate's challenge, the hidalgo strolled up to the improvised layout, looked disdainfully on the insignificant pile of silver, and scornfully asked:

' Well, son, have you no more? I do not like to play for trifles.'

"Sorry, *señor*," replied my mate, "but I couldn't dig up another two-bit piece, and I reckon I'm regretting the fact about as much as you, for if my roll was larger I'd waste less of my valuable time winning all of yours."

The insolence of the answer worked as well as it had been hoped, for the hidalgo promptly squatted on the other end of the *serape* and challenged, "Come on, then. You are welcome to all if you can win it — and you can depend there is a plenty."

Covering the bank-roll, the deal began.

Of course the hidalgo never had a look-in, except as, now and then, the dealer allowed him a win to make sure of holding his play.

Meantime, across to and round about the dealer flowed a stream of 'dobe dollars until he looked to be afloat on a sea of silver.

Finally, there came an end of the hidalgo's