

## Tang of Life

Waring nodded.

"And the horses; they shall have feed, water, everything — I myself —"

"Thanks. But I'll look after the horses, Juan. I'm taking Vaca and Ramon to Sonora. See what you can do for Vaca. He's pretty sick."

"It shall be as the señor says. And the señor has made a fight?"

"With those hombres? Not this journey! José Vaca made a mistake; that's all."

Armigo, perturbed, shuffled to the house. Waring unsaddled the horses and turned them into the corral. As he lifted the saddle from Vaca's horse, he hesitated. It was a big stock saddle and heavy; yet it seemed too heavy. On his knees he turned it over, examining it. He smiled grimly as he untied the little canvas sacks and drew them from the tapaderas.

"Thought he showed too much boot for a hard-riding chola," muttered Waring.

He rose and threw some hay to the horses. He could hear Ramon and Armigo talking in the ranch-house. Taking his empty canteen from his own saddle, he untied the sacks and slipped the gold-pieces, one by one, into the canteen. He scooped up sand and filled the canteen half full. The gold no longer jingled as he shook it.

While Waring had no fear that either of the men would attempt to escape, he knew Mexicans too