

Chapter II

José Vaca

THE young Mexican's face was beaded with sweat as he rose and stared down at the wounded man. Clumsily he attempted to help Waring, who washed and bandaged the shattered shoulder. Waring had shot to kill, but the gun was not his own, and he had fired almost as it had touched his hand.

"Get your uncle on his horse," he told the youth. "Don't make a break. We're due at Juan Armigo's ranchito about sundown."

So far, as concerned, that was all there was to it for the time being. He had wounded and captured José Vaca, notorious in Sonora as leader in outlawry. That there were no others of Vaca's kind with him puzzled Waring. The young Ramon, Vaca's nephew, did not count.

Ramon helped his uncle to mount. They glanced at each other, Vaca's eyes blinking. The gringo was afoot. They were mounted. Waring, observing their attitude, smiled, and, crooking his finger, whistled shrilly. The young Ramon trembled. Other gringos were hidden in the arroyo; perhaps the very man that his uncle had robbed! Even now he could hear the click of hoofs on the gravel. The gunman had been