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THE WORLD FOR SALE

By Gilbert Parker

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INTRODUCTION

'The World for Sale' is a tale of the primitive and lonely West and North, but the primitiveness and loneliness is not like that to be found in 'Pierre and His People'. Pierre's wanderings took place in a period when civilization had made but scant marks upon the broad bosom of the prairie land, and towns and villages were few and far scattered. The Lebanon and Manitou of this story had no existence in the time of Pierre, except that where Manitou stands there was a Hudson's Bay Company's post at which Indians, half-breeds, and chance settlers occasionally gathered for trade and exchange-furs, groceries, clothing, blankets, tobacco, and other things; and in the long winters the post was as isolated as an oasis in the Sahara.

That old life was lonely and primitive, but it had its compensating balance of bright sun, wild animal life, and an air as vivid and virile as ever stirred the veins of man. Sometimes the still, bright cold was broken by a terrific storm, which ravaged, smothered, and entombed the stray traveller in ravines of death. That was in winter; but in summer, what had been called, fifty years ago, an alkali desert was an everlasting stretch of untilled soil, with unsown crops, and here and there herds of buffalo, which were stalked by alert Red Indians, half- breeds, and white pioneer hunters.

The stories in 'Pierre and His People' were true to the life of that time; the incidents in 'The World for Sale', and the whole narrative, are true to the life of a very few years ago. Railways have pierced and opened up lonely regions of the Sagalae, and there are two thriving towns where, in the days of Pierre, only stood a Hudson's Bay Company's post with its store. Now, as far as eye can see, vast fields of grain greet the eye, and houses and barns speckle the greenish brown or Tuscan yellow of the crop-covered lands, while towns like Lebanon and Manitou provide for the modern settler all the modern conveniences which science has given to civilized municipalities. Today the motor-car and the telephone are as common in such places as they are in a thriving town of the United Kingdom. After the first few days of settlement two things always appear—a school-house and a church. Probably there is no country in the world where elementary education commands the devotion and the cash of the people as in English Canada; that is why the towns of Lebanon and Manitou had from the first divergent views. Lebanon was English, progressive, and brazenly modern; Manitou was slow, reactionary, more or less indifferent to education, and strenuously Catholic, and was thus opposed to the militant Protestantism of Lebanon.

It was my idea to picture a situation in the big new West where destiny is being worked out in the making of a nation and the peopling of the wastes. I selected a very modern and unusual type of man as the central figure of my story. He was highly educated, well born, and carefully brought up. He possessed all the best elements of a young man in a new country—intelligent self-dependence, skill, daring, vision. He had an original turn of mind, and, as men are obliged to do in new countries, he looked far ahead. Yet he had to face what pioneers and reformers in old countries have to face, namely the disturbance of rooted interests. Certainly rooted interests in towns but a generation old cannot be extensive or remarkable, but if they are associated with habits and principles, they may be as deadly as those which test the qualities and wreck the careers of men in towns as old as London. The difference, however, between the old European town and the new Western town is that differences in the Western town are more likely to take physical form, as was the case in the life of Ingolby. In order to accentuate the primitive and yet highly civilized nature of the life I chose my heroine from a race and condition more unsettled and more primitive than that of Lebanon or Manitou at any time. I chose a heroine from the gipsy race, and to heighten the picture of the primitive life from which she had come I made her a convert to the settled life of civilization. I had known such a woman, older, but with the same characteristics, the same struggles, temptations, and suffering the same restriction of her life and movements by the prejudice in her veins—the prejudice of racial predilection.

Looking at the story now after its publication, I am inclined to think that the introduction of the gipsy element was too bold, yet I believe it was carefully worked out in construction, and was a legitimate, intellectual enterprise. The danger of it was that it might detract from the reality and vividness of the narrative as a picture of Western life. Most American critics of the book seem not to have been struck by this doubt which has occurred to me. They realize perhaps more faithfully than some of the English critics have done that these mad contrasts are by no means uncommon in the primitive and virile life of the West and North. Just as California in the old days, just as Ballaret in Australia drew the oddest people from every corner of the world, so Western towns, with new railways, brought strange conglomerations into the life. For instance, a town like Winnipeg has sections which represent the life of nearly every race of Europe, and towns like Lebanon and Manitou, with English and French characteristics controlling them mainly, are still as subject to outside racial influences as to inside racial antagonisms.

I believe The World for Sale shows as plainly as anything can show the vexed and conglomerate life of a Western town. It shows how racial characteristics may clash, disturb, and destroy, and yet how wisdom, tact, and lucky incident may overcome almost impossible situations. The antagonisms between Lebanon and Manitou were unwillingly and unjustly deepened by the very man who had set out to bring them together, as one of the ideals of his life, and as one of the factors of his success. Ingolby, who had everything to gain by careful going, almost wrecked his own life, and he injured the life of the two towns by impulsive acts.

The descriptions of life in the two towns are true, and the chief characters in the book are lifted out of the life as one has seen it. Men like Osterhaut and Jowett, Indians like Tekewani, doctors like Rockwell, priests like Monseigneur Fabre, ministers like Mr. Tripple, and ne'er-do-weels like Marchand may be found in many a town of the West and North. Naturally the book must lack in something of that magnetic picturesqueness and atmosphere which belongs to the people in the Province of Quebec. Western and Northern life has little of the settled charm which belongs to the old civilization of the French province. The only way to recapture that charm is to place Frenchmen in the West, and have them act and live—or try to act and live—as they do in old Quebec.

That is what I did with Pierre in my first book of fiction, Pierre and His People, but with the exception of Monseigneur Fabre there is no Frenchman in this book who fulfils, or could fulfil, the temperamental place which I have indicated. Men like Monseigneur Fabre have lived in the West, and worked and slaved like him, blest and beloved by all classes, creeds, and races. Father Lacombe was one of them. The part he played in the life of Western Canada will be written some day by one who understands how such men, celibate, and dedicated to religious life, may play a stupendous part in the development of civilization. Something of him is to be found in my description of Monseigneur Fabre.

NOTE

This book was begun in 1911 and finished in 1913, a year before war broke out. It was published serially in the year 1915 and the beginning of 1916. It must, therefore, go to the public on the basis of its merits alone, and as a picture of the peace-life of the great North West.

PRELUDE

Harvest-time was almost come, and the great new land was resting under coverlets of gold. From the rise above the town of Lebanon, there stretched out ungarnered wheat in the ear as far as sight could reach, and the place itself and the neighbouring town of Manitou on the other side of the Sagalac River were like islands washed by a topaz sea.

Standing upon the Rise, lost in the prospect, was an old, white-haired man in the cassock of a priest, with grey beard reaching nearly to the waist.

For long he surveyed the scene, and his eyes had a rapt look.

At last he spoke aloud:

> "There shall be an heap of corn in the earth, high upon the hills; his fruit shall shake like Libanus, and shall be green in the city like grass upon the earth."

A smile came to his lips—a rare, benevolent smile. He had seen this expanse of teeming life when it was thought to be an alkali desert, fit only to be invaded by the Blackfeet and the Cree and the Blood Indians on a foray for food and furs. Here he had come fifty years before, and had gone West and North into the mountains in the Summer season, when the land was tremulous with light and vibrating to the hoofs of herds of buffalo as they stampeded from the hunters; and also in the Winter time, when frost was master and blizzard and drift its malignant servants.

Even yet his work was not done. In the town of Manitou he still said mass now and then, and heard the sorrows and sins of men and women, and gave them "ghostly comfort," while priests younger than

himself took the burden of parish-work from his shoulders.

For a lifetime he had laboured among the Indians and the few whites and squaw-men and half-breeds, with neither settlement nor progress. Then, all at once, the railway; and people coming from all the world, and cities springing up! Now once more he was living the life of civilization, exchanging raw flesh of fish and animals and a meal of tallow or pemmican for the wheaten loaf; the Indian tepee for the warm house with the mansard roof; the crude mass beneath the trees for the refinements of a chancel and an altar covered with lace and white linen.

A flock of geese went honking over his head. His eyes smiled in memory of the countless times he had watched such flights, had seen thousands of wild ducks hurrying down a valley, had watched a family of herons stretching away to some lonely water-home. And then another sound greeted his ear. It was shrill, sharp and insistent. A great serpent was stealing out of the East and moving down upon Lebanon. It gave out puffs of smoke from its ungainly head. It shrieked in triumph as it came. It was the daily train from the East, arriving at the Sagalac River.

"These things must be," he said aloud as he looked. While he lost himself again in reminiscence, a young man came driving across the plains, passing beneath where he stood. The young man's face and figure suggested power. In his buggy was a fishing-rod.

His hat was pulled down over his eyes, but he was humming cheerfully to himself. When he saw the priest, he raised his hat respectfully, yet with an air of equality.

"Good day, Monseigneur" (this honour of the Church had come at last to the aged missionary), he said warmly. "Good day—good day!"

The priest raised his hat and murmured the name, "Ingolby." As the distance grew between them, he said sadly: "These are the men who change the West, who seize it, and divide it, and make it their own —

> "'I will rejoice, and divide Sichem: and mete out the valley of Succoth.'

"Hush! Hush!" he said to himself in reproach. "These things must be. The country must be opened up. That is why I came—to bring the Truth before the trader."

Now another traveller came riding out of Lebanon towards him, galloping his horse up-hill and down. He also was young, but nothing about him suggested power, only self-indulgence. He, too, raised his hat, or rather swung it from his head in a devil-may-care way, and overdid his salutation. He did not speak. The priest's face was very grave, if not a little resentful. His salutation was reserved.

"The tyranny of gold," he murmured, "and without the mind or energy that created it. Felix was no name for him. Ingolby is a builder, perhaps a jerry-builder; but he builds."

He looked across the prairie towards the young man in the buggy.

"Sure, he is a builder. He has the Cortez eye. He sees far off, and plans big things. But Felix Marchand there—"

He stopped short.

"Such men must be, perhaps," he added. Then, after a moment, as he gazed round again upon the land of promise which he had loved so long, he murmured as one murmurs a prayer:

> "Thou suferedst men to ride over our heads: we went through fire and water, and Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

"THE DRUSES ARE UP!"

"Great Scott, look at her! She's goin' to try and take 'em !" exclaimed Osterhaut, the Jack-of-all-trades at Lebanon.

"She ain't such a fool as all that. Why, no one ever done it alone. Low water, too, when every rock's got its chance at the canoe. But, my gracious, she is goin' to ride 'em!"

Jowett, the horse-dealer, had a sportsman's joy in a daring thing.

"See, old Injun Tekewani's after her! He's calling at her from the bank. He knows. He done it himself years ago when there was rips in the tribe an' he had to sew up the tears. He run them Rapids in his canoe—"

"Just as the Druse girl there is doin'—"

"An' he's done what he liked with the Blackfeet ever since."

"But she ain't a chief—what's the use of her doin' it? She's goin' straight for them. She can't turn back now. She couldn't make the bank if she wanted to. She's got to run 'em. Holy smoke, see her wavin' the paddle at Tekewani! Osterhaut, she's the limit, that petticoat—so quiet and shy and don't-look-at-me, too, with eyes like brown diamonds."

"Oh, get out, Jowett; she's all right! She'll make this country sit up some day-by gorry, she'll make Manitou and Lebanon sit up to-day if she runs the Carillon Rapids safe!"

"She's runnin' 'em all right, son. She's—by jee, well done, Miss Druse! Well done, I say—well done!" exclaimed Jowett, dancing about and waving his arms towards the adventurous girl.

The girl had reached the angry, thrashing waters where the rocks rent and tore into white ribbons the onrushing current, and her first trial had come on the instant the spitting, raging panthers of foam struck the bow of her canoe. The waters were so low that this course, which she had made once before with her friend Tekewani the Blackfeet chief, had perils not met on that desperate journey. Her canoe struck a rock slantwise, shuddered and swung round, but by a dexterous stroke she freed the frail craft. It righted and plunged forward again into fresh death-traps.

It was these new dangers which had made Tekewani try to warn her from the shore—he and the dozen braves with him: but it was characteristic of his race that, after the first warning, when she must play out the game to the bitter end, he made no further attempt to stop her. The Indians ran down the river-bank, however, with eyes intent on her headlong progress, grunting approval as she plunged safely from danger to danger.

Osterhaut and Jowett became silent, too, and, like the Indians, ran as fast as they could, over fences, through the trees, stumbling and occasionally cursing, but watching with fascinated eyes this adventuress of the North, taking chances which not one coureur-de-bois or river- driver in a thousand would take, with a five thousand-dollar prize as the lure. Why should she do it?

"Women folks are sick darn fools when they git goin'," gasped Osterhaut as he ran. "They don't care a split pea what happens when they've got the pip. Look at her—my hair's bleachin'."

"She's got the pip all right," stuttered Jowett as he plunged along; "but she's foreign, and they've all got the pip, foreign men and women both— but the women go crazy."

"She keeps pretty cool for a crazy loon, that girl. If I owned her, I'd—"

Jowett interrupted impatiently. "You'd do what old man Druse does—you'd let her be, Osterhaut. What's the good of havin' your own way with one that's the apple of your eye, if it turns her agin you? You want her to kiss you on the high cheek-bone, but if you go to play the cat-o'-nine- tails round her, the high cheek-bone gets froze. Gol blast it, look at her, son! What are the wild waves saying? They're sayin', 'This is a surprise, Miss Druse. Not quite ready for ye, Miss Druse.' My, ain't she got the luck of the old devil!"

It seemed so. More than once the canoe half jammed between the rocks, and the stern lifted up by the force of the wild current, but again the paddle made swift play, and again the cockle-shell swung

clear. But now Fleda Druse was no longer on her feet. She knelt, her strong, slim brown arms bared to the shoulder, her hair blown about her forehead, her daring eyes flashing to left and right, memory of her course at work under such a strain as few can endure without chaos of mind in the end. A hundred times since the day she had run these Rapids with Tekewani, she had gone over the course in her mind, asleep and awake, forcing her brain to see again every yard of that watery way; because she knew that the day must come when she would make the journey alone. Why she would make it she did not know; she only knew that she would do it some day; and the day had come. For long it had been an obsession with her—as though some spirit whispered in her ear—"Do you hear the bells ringing at Carillon? Do you hear the river singing towards Carillon? Do you see the wild birds flying towards Carillon? Do you hear the Rapids calling—the Rapids of Carillon?"

Night and day since she had braved death with Tekewani, giving him a gun, a meerschaum pipe, and ten pounds of beautiful brown "plug" tobacco as a token of her gratitude—night and day she had heard this spirit murmuring in her ear, and always the refrain was, "Down the stream to Carillon! Shoot the Rapids of Carillon!"

Why? How should she know? Wherefore should she know? This was of the things beyond the why of the human mind. Sometimes all our lives, if we keep our souls young, and see the world as we first saw it with eyes and heart unsoiled, we hear the murmuring of the Other Self, that Self from which we separated when we entered this mortal sphere, but which followed us, invisible yet whispering inspiration to us. But sometimes we only hear It, our own soul's oracle, while yet our years are few, and we have not passed that frontier between innocence and experience, reality and pretence. Pretence it is which drives the Other Self away with wailing on its lips. Then we hear It cry in the night when, because of the trouble of life, we cannot sleep; or at the play when we are caught away from ourselves into another air than ours; when music pours around us like a soft wind from a garden of pomegranates; or when a child asks a question which brings us back to the land where everything is so true that it can be shouted from the tree-tops.

Why was Fleda Druse tempting death in the Carillon Rapids?

She had heard a whisper as she wandered among the pine-trees there at Manitou, and it said simply the one word, "Now!" She knew that she must do it; she had driven her canoe out into the resistless current to ride the Rapids of Carillon. Her Other Self had whispered to her.

Yonder, thousands of miles away in Syria, there were the Hills of Lebanon; and there was one phrase which made every Syrian heart beat faster, if he were on the march. It was, "The Druses are up!" When that wild tribe took to the saddle to war upon the Caravans and against authority, from Lebanon to Palmyra, from Jerusalem to Damascus men looked anxiously about them and rode hard to refuge.

And here also in the Far North where the River Sagalac ran a wild race to Carillon, leaving behind the new towns of Lebanon and Manitou, "the Druses were up."

The daughter of Gabriel Druse, the giant, was riding the Rapids of the Sagalac. The suspense to her and to those who watched her course—to Tekewani and his braves, to Osterhaut and Jowett—could not be long. It was a matter of minutes only, in which every second was a miracle and might be a catastrophe.

From rock to rock, from wild white water to wild white water she sped, now tossing to death as it seemed, now shooting on safely to the next test of skill and courage—on, on, till at last there was only one passage to make before the canoe would plunge into the smooth water running with great swiftness till it almost reached Carillon.

Suddenly, as she neared the last dangerous point, round which she must swing between jagged and unseen barriers of rock, her sight became for an instant dimmed, as though a cloud passed over her eyes. She had never fainted in her life, but it seemed to her now that she was hovering on unconsciousness. Commending the will and energy left, she fought the weakness down. It was as though she forced a way through tossing, buffeting shadows; as though she was shaking off from her shoulders shadowy hands which sought to detain her; as though smothering things kept choking back her breath, and darkness like clouds of wool gathered about her face. She was fighting for her life, and for years it seemed to be; though indeed it was only seconds before her will reasserted itself, and light broke again upon her way. Even on the verge of the last ambushed passage her senses came back; but they came with a stark realization of the peril ahead: it looked out of her eyes as a face shows itself at the window of a burning building.

Memory shook itself free. It pierced the tumult of waters, found the ambushed rocks, and guided the

lithe brown arms and hands, so that the swift paddle drove the canoe straight onward, as a fish drives itself through a flume of dragon's teeth beneath the flood. The canoe quivered for an instant at the last cataract, then responding to Memory and Will, sped through the hidden chasm, tossed by spray and water, and swept into the swift current of smooth water below.

Fleda Druse had run the Rapids of Carillon. She could hear the bells ringing for evening service in the Catholic Church of Carillon, and bells-soft, booming bells-were ringing in her own brain. Like muffled silver these brain-bells were, and she was as one who enters into a deep forest, and hears far away in the boscage the mystic summons of forest deities. Voices from the banks of the river behind called to her— hilarious, approving, agitated voices of her Indian friends, and of Osterhaut and Jowett, those wild spectators of her adventure: but they were not wholly real. Only those soft, booming bells in her brain were real.

Shooting the Rapids of Carillon was the bridge by which she passed from the world she had left to this other. Her girlhood was ended—wondering, hovering, unrealizing girlhood. This adventure was the outward sign, the rite in the Lodge of Life which passed her from one degree of being to another.

She was safe; but now as her canoe shot onward to the town of Carillon, her senses again grew faint. Again she felt the buffeting mist, again her face was muffled in smothering folds; again great hands reached out towards her; again her eyes were drawn into a stupefying darkness; but now there was no will to fight, no energy to resist. The paddle lay inert in her fingers, her head drooped. She slowly raised her head once, twice, as though the call of the exhausted will was heard, but suddenly it fell heavily upon her breast. For a moment so, and then as the canoe shot forward on a fresh current, the lithe body sank backwards in the canoe, and lay face upward to the evening sky.

The canoe sped on, but presently it swung round and lay athwart the current, dipping and rolling.

From the banks on either side, the Indians of the Manitou Reservation and the two men from Lebanon called out and hastened on, for they saw that the girl had collapsed, and they knew only too well that her danger was not yet past. The canoe might strike against the piers of the bridge at Carillon and overturn, or it might be carried to the second cataract below the town. They were too far away to save her, but they kept shouting as they ran.

None responded to their call, but that defiance of the last cataract of the Rapids of Carillon had been seen by one who, below an eddy on the Lebanon side of the river, was steadily stringing upon maple-twigs black bass and long-nosed pike. As he sat in the shade of the trees, he had seen the plunge of the canoe into the chasm, and had held his breath in wonder and admiration. Even at that distance he knew who it was. He had seen Fleda only a few times before, for she was little abroad; but when he had seen her he had asked himself what such a face and form were doing in the Far North. It belonged to Andalusia, to the Carpathians, to Syrian villages.

"The pluck of the very devil!" he had exclaimed, as Fleda's canoe swept into the smooth current, free of the dragon's teeth; and as he had something of the devil in himself, she seemed much nearer to him than the hundreds of yards of water intervening. Presently, however, he saw her droop and sink away out of sight.

For an instant he did not realize what had happened, and then, with angry self-reproach, he flung the oars into the rowlocks of his skiff and drove down and athwart the stream with long, powerful strokes.

"That's like a woman!" he said to himself as he bent to the oars, and now and then turned his head to make sure that the canoe was still safe. "Do the trick better than a man, and then collapse like a rabbit."

He was Max Ingolby, the financier, contractor, manager of great interests, disturber of the peace of slow minds, who had come to Lebanon with the avowed object of amalgamating three railways, of making the place the swivel of all the trade and interests of the Western North; but also with the declared intention of uniting Lebanon and Manitou in one municipality, one centre of commercial and industrial power.

Men said he had bitten off more than he could chew, but he had replied that his teeth were good, and he would masticate the meal or know the reason why. He was only thirty-three, but his will was like nothing the West had seen as yet. It was sublime in its confidence, it was free from conceit, and it knew not the word despair, though once or twice it had known defeat.

Men cheered him from the shore as his skiff leaped through the water. "It's that blessed Ingolby," said Jowett, who had tried to "do" the financier in a horsedeal, and had been done instead, and was now a devout admirer and adherent of the Master Man. "I saw him driving down there this morning from Lebanon. He's been fishing at Seely's Eddy."

"When Ingolby goes fishing, there's trouble goin' on somewhere and he's stalkin' it," rejoined Osterhaut. "But, by gol, he's goin' to do this trump trick first; he's goin' to overhaul her before she gits to the bridge. Look at him swing! Hell, ain't it pretty! There you go, old Ingolby. You're right on it, even when you're fishing."

On the other-the Manitou-shore Tekewani and his braves were less talkative, but they were more concerned in the incident than Osterhaut and Jowett. They knew little or nothing of Ingolby the hustler, but they knew more of Fleda Druse and her father than all the people of Lebanon and Manitou put together. Fleda had won old Tekewani's heart when she had asked him to take her down the Rapids, for the days of adventure for him and his tribe were over. The adventure shared with this girl had brought back to the chief the old days when Indian women tanned bearskins and deerskins day in, day out, and made pemmican of the buffalo-meat; when the years were filled with hunting and war and migrant journeyings to fresh game-grounds and pastures new.

Danger faced was the one thing which could restore Tekewani's self-respect, after he had been checked and rebuked before his tribe by the Indian Commissioner for being drunk. Danger faced had restored it, and Fleda Druse had brought the danger to him as a gift.

If the canoe should crash against the piers of the bridge, if it should drift to the cataract below, if anything should happen to this white girl whom he worshipped in his heathen way, nothing could preserve his self- respect; he would pour ashes on his head and firewater down his throat.

Suddenly he and his braves stood still. They watched as one would watch an enemy a hundred times stronger than one's self. The white man's skiff was near the derelict canoe; the bridge was near also. Carillon now lined the bank of the river with its people. They ran upon the bridge, but not so fast as to reach the place where, in the nick of time, Ingolby got possession of the rolling canoe; where Fleda Druse lay waiting like a princess to be waked by the kiss of destiny.

Only five hundred yards below the bridge was the second cataract, and she would never have waked if she had been carried into it.

To Ingolby she was as beautiful as a human being could be as she lay with white face upturned, the paddle still in her hand.

"Drowning isn't good enough for her," he said, as he fastened her canoe to his skiff.

"It's been a full day's work," he added; and even in this human crisis he thought of the fish he had caught, of "the big trouble," he had been thinking out as Osterhaut had said, as well as of the girl that he was saving.

"I always have luck when I go fishing," he added presently. "I can take her back to Lebanon," he continued with a quickening look. "She'll be all right in a jiffy. I've got room for her in my buggy—and room for her in any place that belongs to me," he hastened to reflect with a curious, bashful smile.

"It's like a thing in a book," he murmured, as he neared the waiting people on the banks of Carillon, and the ringing of the vesper bells came out to him on the evening air.

"Is she dead?" some one whispered, as eager hands reached out to secure his skiff to the bank.

"As dead as I am," he answered with a laugh, and drew Fleda's canoe up alongside his skiff.

He had a strange sensation of new life, as, with delicacy and gentleness, he lifted her up in his strong arms and stepped ashore.

CHAPTER II

THE WHISPER FROM BEYOND

Ingolby had a will of his own, but it had never been really tried against a woman's will. It was, however, tried sorely when Fleda came to consciousness again in his arms and realized that a man's face was nearer to hers than any man's had ever been except that of her own father. Her eyes opened slowly, and for the instant she did not understand, but when she did, the blood stole swiftly back to her

neck and face and forehead, and she started in dismay.

"Put me down," she whispered faintly.

"I'm taking you to my buggy," he replied. "I'll drive you back to Lebanon." He spoke as calmly as he could, for there was a strange fluttering of his nerves, and the crowd was pressing him.

"Put me down at once," she said peremptorily. She trembled on her feet, and swayed, and would have fallen but that Ingolby and a woman in black, who had pushed her way through the crowd with white, anxious face, caught her.

"Give her air, and stand back!" called the sharp voice of the constable of Carillon, and he heaved the people back with his powerful shoulders.

A space was cleared round the place where Fleda sat with her head against the shoulder of the stately woman in black who had come to her assistance. A dipper of water was brought, and when she had drunk it she raised her head slowly and her eyes sought those of Ingolby.

"One cannot pay for such things," she said to him, meeting his look firmly and steeling herself to thank him. Though deeply grateful, it was a trial beyond telling to be obliged to owe the debt of a life to any one, and in particular to a man of the sort to whom material gifts could not be given.

"Such things are paid for just by accepting them," he answered quickly, trying to feel that he had never held her in his arms, as she evidently desired him to feel. He had intuition, if not enough of it, for the regions where the mind of Fleda Druse dwelt.

"I couldn't very well decline, could I?" she rejoined, quick humour shooting into her eyes. "I was helpless. I never fainted before in my life."

"I am sure you will never faint again," he remarked. "We only do such things when we are very young."

She was about to reply, but paused reflectively. Her half-opened lips did not frame the words she had been impelled to speak.

Admiration was alive in his eyes. He had never seen this type of womanhood before—such energy and grace, so amply yet so lithely framed; such darkness and fairness in one living composition; such individuality, yet such intimate simplicity. Her hair was a very light brown, sweeping over a broad, low forehead, and lying, as though with a sense of modesty, on the tips of the ears, veiling them slightly. The forehead was classic in its intellectual fulness; but the skin was so fresh, even when pale as now, and with such an underglow of vitality, that the woman in her, sex and the possibilities of sex, cast a glamour over the intellect and temperament showing in every line of her contour. In contrast to the light brown of the hair was the very dark brown of the eyes and the still darker brown of the eyelashes. The face shone, the eyes burned, and the piquancy of the contrast between the soft illuminating whiteness of the skin and the flame in the eyes had fascinated many more than Ingolby.

Her figure was straight yet supple, somewhat fuller than is modern beauty, with hints of Juno-like stateliness to come; and the curves of her bust, the long lines of her limbs, were not obscured by her absolutely plain gown of soft, light-brown linen. She was tall, but not too commanding, and, as her hand was raised to fasten back a wisp of hair, there was the motion of as small a wrist and as tapering a bare arm as ever made prisoner of a man's neck.

Impulse was written in every feature, in the passionate eagerness of her body; yet the line from the forehead to the chin, and the firm shapeliness of the chin itself, gave promise of great strength of will. From the glory of the crown of hair to the curve of the high instep of a slim foot it was altogether a personality which hinted at history—at tragedy, maybe.

"She'll have a history," Madame Bulteel, who now stood beside the girl, herself a figure out of a picture by Velasquez, had said of her sadly; for she saw in Fleda's rare qualities, in her strange beauty, happenings which had nothing to do with the life she was living. So this duenna of Gabriel Druse's household, this aristocratic, silent woman was ever on the watch for some sudden revelation of a being which had not found itself, and which must find itself through perils and convulsions.

That was why, to-day, she had hesitated to leave Fleda alone and come to Carillon, to be at the bedside of a dying, friendless woman whom by chance she had come to know. In the street she had heard of what was happening on the river, and had come in time to receive Fleda from the arms of her rescuer.

"How did you get here?" Fleda asked her.

"How am I always with you when I am needed, truant?" said the other with a reproachful look. "Did you fly? You are so light, so thin, you could breathe yourself here," rejoined the girl, with a gentle, quizzical smile. "But, no," she added, "I remember, you were to be here at Carillon."

"Are you able to walk now?" asked Madame Bulteel.

"To Manitou—but of course," Fleda answered almost sharply.

After the first few minutes the crowd had fallen back. They watched her with respectful admiration from a decent distance. They had the chivalry towards woman so characteristic of the West. There was no vulgarity in their curiosity, though most of them had never seen her before. All, however, had heard of her and her father, the giant greybeard who moved and lived in an air of mystery, and apparently secret wealth, for more than once he had given large sums—large in the eyes of folks of moderate means, when charity was needed; as in the case of the floods the year before, and in the prairie-fire the year before that, when so many people were made homeless, and also when fifty men had been injured in one railway accident. On these occasions he gave disproportionately to his mode of life.

Now, when they saw that Fleda was about to move away, they drew just a little nearer, and presently one of the crowd could contain his admiration no longer. He raised a cheer.

"Three cheers for Her," he shouted, and loud hurrahs followed.

"Three cheers for Ingolby," another cried, and the noise was boisterous but not so general.

"Who shot Carillon Rapids?" another called in the formula of the West.

"She shot the Rapids," was the choral reply. "Who is she?" came the antiphon.

"Druse is her name," was the gay response. "What did she do?"

"She shot Carillon Rapids—shot 'em dead. Hooray!"

In the middle of the cheering, Osterhaut and Jowett arrived in a wagon which they had commandeered, and, about the same time, from across the bridge, came running Tekewani and his braves.

"She done it like a kingfisher," cried Osterhaut. "Manitou's got the belt."

Fleda Druse's friendly eyes were given only for one instant to Osterhaut and his friend. Her gaze became fixed on Tekewani who, silent, and with immobile face, stole towards her. In spite of the civilization which controlled him, he wore Indian moccasins and deerskin breeches, though his coat was rather like a shortened workman's blouse. He did not belong to the life about him; he was a being apart, the spirit of vanished and vanishing days.

"Tekewani—ah, Tekewani, you have come," the girl said, and her eyes smiled at him as they had not smiled at Ingolby or even at the woman in black beside her.

"How!" the chief replied, and looked at her with searching, worshipping eyes.

"Don't look at me that way, Tekewani," she said, coming close to him.
"I had to do it, and I did it."

"The teeth of rock everywhere!" he rejoined reproachfully, with a gesture of awe.

"I remembered all—all. You were my master, Tekewani."

"But only once with me it was, Summer Song," he persisted. Summer Song was his name for her.

"I saw it—saw it, every foot of the way," she insisted. "I thought hard, oh, hard as the soul thinks. And I saw it all." There was something singularly akin in the nature of the girl and the Indian. She spoke to him as she never spoke to any other.

"Too much seeing, it is death," he answered. "Men die with too much seeing. I have seen them die. To look hard through deerskin curtains, to see through the rock, to behold the water beneath the earth, and the rocks beneath the black waters, it is for man to see if he has a soul, but the seeing—behold, so those die who should live!"

"I live, Tekewani, though I saw the teeth of rocks beneath the black water," she urged gently.

"Yet the half-death came—"

"I fainted, but I was not to die—it was not my time."

He shook his head gloomily. "Once it may be, but the evil spirits tempt us to death. It matters not what comes to Tekewani; he is as the leaf that falls from the stem; but for Summer Song that has far to go, it is the madness from beyond the Hills of Life."

She took his hand. "I will not do it again, Tekewani."

"How!" he said, with hand upraised, as one who greets the great in this world.

"I don't know why I did it," she added meaningly. "It was selfish. I feel that now."

The woman in black pressed her hand timidly.

"It is so for ever with the great," Tekewani answered. "It comes, also, from beyond the Hills—the will to do it. It is the spirit that whispers over the earth out of the Other Earth. No one hears it but the great. The whisper only is for this one here and that one there who is of the Few. It whispers, and the whisper must be obeyed. So it was from the beginning."

"Yes, you understand, Tekewani," she answered softly. "I did it because something whispered from the Other Earth to me."

Her head drooped a little, her eyes had a sudden shadow.

"He will understand," answered the Indian; "your father will understand," as though reading her thoughts. He had clearly read her thought, this dispossessed, illiterate Indian chieftain. Yet, was he so illiterate? Had he not read in books which so few have learned to read? His life had been broken on the rock of civilization, but his simple soul had learned some elemental truths—not many, but the essential ones, without which there is no philosophy, no understanding. He knew Fleda Druse was thinking of her father, wondering if he would understand, half-fearing, hardly hoping, dreading the moment when she must meet him face to face. She knew she had been selfish, but would Gabriel Druse understand? She raised her eyes in gratitude to the Blackfeet chief.

"I must go home," she said.

She turned to go, but as she did so, a man came swaggering down the street, broke through the crowd, and made towards her with an arm raised, a hand waving, and a leer on his face. He was a thin, rather handsome, dissolute-looking fellow of middle height and about forty, in dandified dress. His glossy black hair fell carelessly over his smooth forehead from under a soft, wide-awake hat.

"Manitou for ever!" he cried, with a flourish of his hand. "I salute the brave. I escort the brave to the gates of Manitou. I escort the brave. I escort the brave. Salut! Salut! Salut! Well done, Beauty Beauty—Beauty—Beauty, well done again!"

He held out his hand to Fleda, but she drew back with disgust. Felix Marchand, the son of old Hector Marchand, money-lender and capitalist of Manitou, had pressed his attentions upon her during the last year since he had returned from the East, bringing dissoluteness and vulgar pride with him. Women had spoiled him, money had corrupted and degraded him.

"Come, beautiful brave, it's Salut! Salut! Salut!" he said, bending towards her familiarly.

Her face flushed with anger.

"Let me pass, monsieur," she said sharply.

"Pride of Manitou—" he apostrophized, but got no farther.

Ingolby caught him by the shoulders, wheeled him round, and then flung him at the feet of Tekewani and his braves.

At this moment Tekewani's eyes had such a fire as might burn in Wotan's smithy. He was ready enough to defy the penalty of the law for assaulting a white man, but Felix Marchand was in the dust, and that would do for the moment.

With grim face Ingolby stood over the begrimed figure. "There's the river if you want more," he said. "Tekewani knows where the water's deepest." Then he turned and followed Fleda and the woman in black. Felix Marchand's face was twisted with hate as he got slowly to his feet.

"You'll eat dust before I'm done," he called after Ingolby. Then, amid the jeers of the crowd, he went back to the tavern where he had been carousing.

CHAPTER III

CONCERNING INGOLBY AND THE TWO TOWNS

A word about Max Ingolby.

He was the second son of four sons, with a father who had been a failure; but with a mother of imagination and great natural strength of brain, yet whose life had been so harried in bringing up a family on nothing at all, that there only emerged from her possibilities a great will to do the impossible things. From her had come the spirit which would not be denied.

In his boyhood Max could not have those things which lads prize—fishing- rods, cricket-bats and sleds, and all such things; but he could take most prizes at school open to competition; he could win in the running-jump, the high-jump, and the five hundred yards' race; and he could organize a picnic, or the sports of the school or town—at no cost to himself. His finance in even this limited field had been brilliant. Other people paid, and he did the work; and he did it with such ease that the others intriguing to crowd him out, suffered failure and came to him in the end to put things right.

He became the village doctor's assistant and dispenser at seventeen and induced his master to start a drug-store. He made the drug-store a success within two years, and meanwhile he studied Latin and Greek and mathematics in every spare hour he had—getting up at five in the morning, and doing as much before breakfast as others did in a whole day. His doctor loved him and helped him; a venerable Archdeacon, an Oxford graduate, gave him many hours of coaching, and he went to the University with three scholarships. These were sufficient to carry him through in three years, and there was enough profit-sharing from the drug-business he had founded on terms to shelter his mother and his younger brothers, while he took honours at the University.

There he organized all that students organize, and was called in at last by the Bursar of his college to reorganize the commissariat, which he did with such success that the college saved five thousand dollars a year. He had genius, the college people said, and after he had taken his degree with honours in classics and mathematics they offered him a professorship at two thousand dollars a year.

He laughed ironically, but yet with satisfaction, when the professorship was offered. It was all so different from what was in his mind for the future. As he looked out of the oriel window in the sweet gothic building, to the green grass and the maples and elms which made the college grounds like an old-world park, he had a vision of himself permanently in these surroundings of refinement growing venerable with years, seeing pass under his influence thousands of young men directed, developed and inspired by him.

He had, however, shaken himself free of this modest vision. He knew that such a life would act like a narcotic to his real individuality. He thirsted for contest, for the control of brain and will; he wanted to construct; he was filled with the idea of simplifying things, of economizing strength; he saw how futile was much competition, and how the big brain could command and control with ease, wasting no force, saving labour, making the things controlled bigger and better.

So it came that his face was seen no more in the oriel window. With a mere handful of dollars, and some debts, he left the world of scholarship and superior pedagogy, and went where the head offices of railways were. Railways were the symbol of progress in his mind. The railhead was the advance post of civilization. It was like Cortez and his Conquistadores overhauling and appropriating the treasures of long generations. So where should he go if not to the Railway?

His first act, when he got to his feet inside the offices of the President of a big railway, was to show the great man how two "outside" proposed lines could be made one, and then further merged into the company controlled by the millionaire in whose office he sat. He got his chance by his very audacity—the President liked audacity. In attempting this merger, however, he had his first failure, but he showed that he could think for himself, and he was made increasingly responsible. After a few years of notable service, he was offered the task of building a branch line of railway from Lebanon and Manitou north, and northwest, and on to the Coast; and he had accepted it, at the same time planning to merge certain outside lines competing with that which he had in hand. For over four years he worked night and day, steadily advancing towards his goal, breaking down opposition, manoeuvring, conciliating, fighting.

Most men loved his whimsical turn of mind, even those who were the agents of the financial clique which had fought him in their efforts to get control of the commercial, industrial, transport and banking resources of the junction city of Lebanon. In the days when vast markets would be established for Canadian wheat in Shanghai and Tokio, then these two towns of Manitou and Lebanon on the Sagalac

would be like the swivel to the organization of trade of a continent.

Ingolby had worked with this end in view. In doing so he had tried to get what he wanted without trickery; to reach his goal by playing the game according to the rules, and this policy nonplussed his rivals and associates. They expected secret moves, and he laid his cards on the table. Sharp, quick, resolute and ruthless he was, however, if he knew that he was being tricked. Then he struck, and struck hard. The war of business was war and not "gollyfoxing," as he said. Selfish, stubborn and self-centred he was in much, but he had great joy in the natural and sincere, and he had a passionate love of Nature. To him the flat prairie was never ugly. Its very monotony had its own individuality. The Sagalac, even when muddy, had its own deep interest, and when it was full of logs drifting down to the sawmills, for which he had found the money by interesting capitalists in the East, he sniffed the stinging smell of the pines with elation. As the great saws in the mills, for which he had secured the capital, throwing off the spray of mangled wood, hummed and buzzed and sang, his mouth twisted in the droll smile it always wore when he talked with such as Jowett and Osterhaut, whose idiosyncrasies were like a meal to him; as he described it once to some of the big men from the East who had been behind his schemes, yet who cavilled at his ways. He was never diverted from his course by such men, and while he was loyal to those who had backed him, he vowed that he would be independent of these wooden souls in the end. They and the great bankers behind them were for monopoly; he was for organization and for economic prudence. So far they were necessary to all he did; but it was his intention to shake himself free of all monopoly in good time. One or two of his colleagues saw the drift of his policy and would have thrown him over if they could have replaced him by a man as capable, who would, at the time, consent to grow rich on their terms.

They could not understand a man who would stand for a half-hour watching a sunset, or a morning sky dappled with all the colours that shake from a prism; they were suspicious of a business-mind which could gloat over the light falling on snow-peaked mountains, while it planned a great bridge across a gorge in the same hour; of a man who would quote a verse of poetry while a flock of wild pigeons went whirring down a pine-girt valley in the shimmer of the sun.

On the occasion when he had quoted a verse of poetry to them, one of them said to him with a sidelong glance: "You seem to be dead-struck on Nature, Ingolby."

To that, with a sly quirk of the mouth, and meaning to mystify his wooden-headed questioner still more, he answered: "Dead-struck? Dead- drunk, you mean. I'm a Nature's dipsomaniac—as you can see," he added with a sly note of irony.

Then instantly he had drawn the little circle of experts into a discussion upon technical questions of railway-building and finance, which made demands upon all their resources and knowledge. In that conference he gave especial attention to the snub-souled financier who had sneered at his love of Nature. He tied his critic up in knots of self-assertion and bad logic which presently he deftly, deliberately and skilfully untied, to the delight of all the group.

"He's got as much in his ten years in the business as we've got out of half a life-time," said the chief of his admirers. This was the President who had first welcomed him into business, and introduced him to his colleagues in enterprise.

"I shouldn't be surprised if the belt flew off the wheel some day," savagely said Ingolby's snub-souled critic, whose enmity was held in check by the fact that on Ingolby, for the moment, depended the safety of the hard cash he had invested.

But the qualities which alienated an expert here and there caught the imagination of the pioneer spirits of Lebanon. Except those who, for financial reasons, were opposed to him, and must therefore pit themselves against him, as the representatives of bigger forces behind them, he was a leader of whom Lebanon was combatively proud. At last he came to the point where his merger was practically accomplished, and a problem arising out of it had to be solved. It was a problem which taxed every quality of an able mind. The situation had at last become acute, and Time, the solvent of most complications, had not quite eased the strain. Indeed, on the day that Fleda Druse had made her journey down the Carillon Rapids, Time's influence had not availed. So he had gone fishing, with millions at stake—to the despair of those who were risking all on his skill and judgment.

But that was Ingolby. Thinking was the essence of his business, not Time. As fishing was the friend of thinking, therefore he fished in Seely's Eddy, saw Fleda Druse run the Carillon Rapids, saved her from drowning, and would have brought her in pride and peace to her own home, but that she decreed otherwise.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF JETHRO FAWE

Gabriel Druse's house stood on a little knoll on the outskirts of the town of Manitou, backed by a grove of pines. Its front windows faced the Sagalac, and the windows behind looked into cool coverts where in old days many Indian tribes had camped; where Hudson's Bay Company's men had pitched their tents to buy the red man's furs. But the red man no longer set up his tepee in these secluded groves; the wapiti and red deer had fled to the north never to return, the snarling wolf had stolen into regions more barren; the ceremonial of the ancient people no longer made weird the lonely nights; the medicine-man's incantations, the harvest- dance, the green-corn-dance, the sun-dance had gone. The braves, their women, and their tepees had been shifted to reservations where Governments solemnly tried to teach them to till the field, and grow corn, and drive the cart to market; while yet they remembered the herds of buffalo which had pounded down the prairie like storm-clouds and given their hides for the tepee; and the swift deer whose skins made the wigwam luxurious.

Originally Manitou had been the home of Icelanders, Mennonites, and Doukhobors; settlers from lands where the conditions of earlier centuries prevailed, who, simple as they were in habits and in life, were ignorant, primitive, coarse, and none too cleanly.

They had formed an unprogressive polyglot settlement, and the place assumed a still more primeval character when the Indian Reservation was formed near by. When French Canadian settlers arrived, however, the place became less discordant to the life of a new democracy, though they did little to make it modern in the sense that Lebanon, across the river, where Ingolby lived, was modern from the day the first shack was thrown up.

Manitou showed itself antagonistic to progress; it was old-fashioned, and primitively agricultural. It looked with suspicion on the factories built after Ingolby came and on the mining propositions, which circled the place with speculation. Unlike other towns of the West, it was insanitary and uneducated; it was also given to nepotism and a primitive kind of jobbery; but, on the whole, it was honest. It was a settlement twenty years before Lebanon had a house, though the latter exceeded the population of Manitou in five years, and became the home of all adventuring spirits—land agents, company promoters, mining prospectors, railway men, politicians, saloon keepers, and up to-date dissenting preachers. Manitou was, however, full of back-water people, religious fanatics, little farmers, guides, trappers, old coureurs-de-bois, Hudson's Bay Company factors and ex-factors, half-breeds; and all the rest.

The real feud between the two towns began about the time of the arrival of Gabriel Druse, his daughter, and Madame Bulteel, the woman in black, and it had grown with great rapidity and increasing intensity. Manitou condemned the sacrilegiousness of the Protestants, whose meeting-houses were used for "socials," "tea-meetings," "strawberry festivals," and entertainments of many kinds; while comic songs were sung at the table where the solemn Love Feast was held at the quarterly meetings. At last when attempts were made to elect to Parliament an Irish lawyer who added to his impecuniousness, eloquence, a half-finished University education, and an Orangeman's prejudices of the best brand of Belfast or Derry, inter-civic strife took the form of physical violence. The great bridge built by Ingolby between the two towns might have been ten thousand yards long, so deep was the estrangement between the two places. They had only one thing in common—a curious compromise—in the person of Nathan Rockwell, an agnostic doctor, who had arrived in Lebanon with a reputation for morality somewhat clouded; though, where his patients in Manitou and Lebanon were concerned, he had been the "pink of propriety."

Rockwell had arrived in Lebanon early in its career, and had remained unimportant until a railway accident occurred at Manitou and the resident doctors were driven from the field of battle, one by death, and one by illness. Then it was that the silent, smiling, dark-skinned, cool-headed and cool-handed Rockwell stepped in, and won for himself the gratitude of all—from Monseigneur Lourde, the beloved Catholic priest, to Tekewani, the chief. This accident was followed by an epidemic.

That was at the time, also, when Fleda Druse returned from Winnipeg where she had been at school for one memorable and terrible six months, pining for her father, defying rules, and crying the night through for "the open world," as she called it. So it was that, to her father's dismay and joy in one, she had fled from school, leaving all her things behind her; and had reached home with only the clothes on her back and a few cents in her pocket.

Instantly on her return she had gone among the stricken people as fearlessly as Rockwell had done, but chiefly among the women and children; and it was said that the herbal medicine she administered

was marvellous in its effect—so much so that Rockwell asked for the prescription, which she declined to give.

Thus it was that the French Canadian mothers with daughters of their own, bright-eyed brunettes, ready for the man-market, regarded with toleration the girl who took their children away for picnics down the river or into the woods, and brought them back safe and sound at the end of the day. Not that they failed to be shocked sometimes, when, on her wild Indian pony, Fleda swept through Manitou like a wind and out into the prairie, riding, as it were, to the end of the world. Try as they would, these grateful mothers of Manitou, they could not get as near to Fleda Druse as their children did, and they were vast distances from her father.

"There, there, look at him," said old Madame Thibadeau to her neighbour Christine Brisson—"look at him with his great grey-beard, and his eyes like black fires, and that head of hair like a bundle of burnt flax! He comes from the place no man ever saw, that's sure."

"Ah, surelee, men don't grow so tall in any Christian country," announced Christine Brisson, her head nodding sagely. "I've seen the pictures in the books, and there's nobody so tall and that looks like him—not anywhere since Adam."

"Nom de pipe, sometimes-trulee, sometimes, I look up there at where he lives, and I think I see a thousand men on horses ride out of the woods behind his house and down here to gobble us all up. That's the way I feel. It's fancy, but I can't help that." Dame Thibadeau rested her hands—on her huge stomach as though the idea had its origin there.

"I've seen a lot of fancies come to pass," gloomily returned her friend.
"It's a funny world. I don't know what to make of its sometimes."

"And that girl of his, the strangest creature, as proud as a peacock, but then as kind as kind to the children—of a good heart, surelee. They say she has plenty of gold rings and pearls and bracelets, and all like that. Babette Courton, she saw them when she went to sew. Why doesn't Ma'm'selle wear them?"

Christine looked wise and smoothed out her apron as though it was a parchment. "With such queer ones, who knows? But, yes, as you say, she has a kind heart. The children, well, they follow her everywhere."

"Not the children only," sagely added the other. "From Lebanon they come, the men, and plenty here, too; and there's that Felix Marchand, the worst of all in Manitou or anywhere."

"I'd look sharp if Felix Marchand followed me," remarked Christine. "There are more papooses at the Reservation since he come back, and over in Lebanon—!" She whispered darkly to her friend, and they nodded knowingly.

"If he plays pranks in Manitou he'll get his throat cut, for sure. Even with Protes'ants and Injuns it's bad enough," remarked Dame Thibadeau, panting with the thought of it.

"He doesn't even leave the Doukhobors alone. There's—" Again Christine whispered, and again that ugly look came to their faces which belongs to the thought of forbidden things.

"Felix Marchand'll have much money—bad penny as he is," continued Christine in her normal voice. "He'll have more money than he can put in all the trouser legs he has. Old Hector, his father, has enough for a gover'ment. But that M'sieu' Felix will get his throat cut if he follows Ma'm'selle Druse about too much. She hates him—I've seen when they met. Old man Druse'll make trouble. He don't look as he does for nothing."

"Ah, that's so. One day, we shall see what we shall see," murmured
Christine, and waved a hand to a friend in the street.

This conversation happened on the evening of the day that Fleda Druse shot the Carillon Rapids alone. An hour after the two gossips had had their say Gabriel Druse paced up and down the veranda of his house, stopping now and then to view the tumbling, hurrying Sagalac, or to dwell upon the sunset which crimsoned and bronzed the western sky. His walk had an air of impatience; he seemed disturbed of mind and restless of body.

He gave an impression of great force. He would have been picked out of a multitude, not alone because of his remarkable height, but because he had an air of command and the aloofness which shows a man sufficient unto himself.

As he stood gazing reflectively into the sunset, a strange, plaintive, birdlike note pierced the still

evening air. His head lifted quickly, yet he did not look in the direction of the sound, which came from the woods behind the house. He did not stir, and his eyes half-closed, as though he hesitated what to do. The call was not that of a bird familiar to the Western world. It had a melancholy softness like that of the bell-bird of the Australian bush. Yet, in the insistence of the note, it was, too, a challenge or a summons.

Three times during the past week he had heard it—once as he went by the market-place of Manitou; once as he returned in the dusk from Tekewani's Reservation, and once at dawn from the woods behind the house. His present restlessness and suppressed agitation had been the result.

It was a call he knew well. It was like a voice from a dead world. It asked, he knew, for an answering call, yet he had not given it. It was seven days since he first heard it in the market-place, and in that seven days he had realized that nothing in this world which has ever been, really ceases to be. Presently, the call was repeated. On the three former occasions there had been no repetition. The call had trembled in the air but once and had died away into unbroken silence. Now, however, it rang out with an added poignancy. It was like a bird calling to its vanished mate.

With sudden resolution Druse turned. Leaving the veranda, he walked slowly behind the house into the woods and stood still under the branches of a great cedar. Raising his head, a strange, solemn note came from his lips; but the voice died away in a sharp broken sound which was more human than birdlike, which had the shrill insistence of authority. The call to him had been almost ventriloquial in its nature. His lips had not moved at all.

There was silence for a moment after he had called into the void, as it were, and then there appeared suddenly from behind a clump of juniper, a young man of dark face and upright bearing. He made a slow obeisance with a gesture suggestive of the Oriental world, yet not like the usual gesture of the East Indian, the Turk or the Persian; it was composite of all.

He could not have been more than twenty-five years of age. He was so sparely made, and his face being clean-shaven, he looked even younger. His clothes were the clothes of the Western man; and yet there was a manner of wearing them, there were touches which were evidence to the watchful observer that he was of other spheres. His wide, felt, Western hat had a droop on one side and a broken treatment of the crown, which of itself was enough to show him a stranger to the prairie, while his brown velveteen jacket, held by its two lowest buttons, was reminiscent of an un-English life. His eyes alone would have announced him as of some foreign race, though he was like none of the foreigners who had been the pioneers of Manitou. Unlike as he and Gabriel Druse were in height, build, and movement, still there was something akin in them both.

After a short silence evidently disconcerting to him, "Blessing and hail, my Ry," he said in a low tone. He spoke in a strange language and with a voice rougher than his looks would have suggested.

The old man made a haughty gesture of impatience. "What do you want with me, my Romany 'chal'?" he asked sharply.—[A glossary of Romany words will be found at the end of the book.]

The young man replied hastily. He seemed to speak by rote. His manner was too eager to suit the impressiveness of his words. "The sheep are without a shepherd," he said. "The young men marry among the Gorgios, or they are lost in the cities and return no more to the tents and the fields and the road. There is disorder in all the world among the Romanys. The ancient ways are forgotten. Our people gather and settle upon the land and live as the Gorgios live. They forget the way beneath the trees, they lose their skill in horses. If the fountain is choked, how shall the water run?"

A cold sneer came to the face of Gabriel Druse. "The way beneath the trees!" he growled. "The way of the open road is enough. The way beneath the trees is the way of the thief, and the skill of the horse is the skill to cheat."

"There is no other way. It has been the way of the Romany since the time of Timur Beg and centuries beyond Timur, so it is told. One man and all men must do as the tribe has done since the beginning."

The old man pulled at his beard angrily. "You do not talk like a Romany, but like a Gorgio of the schools."

The young man's manner became more confident as he replied. "Thinking on what was to come to me, I read in the books as the Gorgio reads. I sat in my tent and worked with a pen; I saw in the printed sheets what the world was doing every day. This I did because of what was to come."

"And have you read of me in the printed sheets? Did they tell you where I was to be found?" Gabriel Druse's eyes were angry, his manner was authoritative.

The young man stretched out his hands eloquently. "Hail and blessing, my Ry, was there need of printed pages to tell me that? Is not everything known of the Ry to the Romany people without the written or printed thing? How does the wind go? How does the star sweep across the sky? Does not the whisper pass as the lightning flashes? Have you forgotten all, my Ry? Is there a Romany camp at Scutari? Shall it not know what is the news of the Bailies of Scotland and the Caravans by the Tagus? It is known always where my lord is. All the Romanys everywhere know it, and many hundreds have come hither from overseas. They are east, they are south, they are west."

He made gesture towards these three points of the compass. A dark frown came upon the old man's forehead. "I ordered that none should seek to follow, that I be left in peace till my pilgrimage was done. Even as the first pilgrims of our people in the days of Timur Beg in India, so I have come forth from among you all till the time be fulfilled."

There was a crafty look in the old man's eyes as he spoke, and ages of dubious reasoning and purpose showed in their velvet depths.

"No one has sought me but you in all these years," he continued. "Who are you that you should come? I did not call, and there was my command that none should call to me."

A bolder look grew in the other's face. His carriage gained in ease. "There is trouble everywhere—in Italy, in Spain, in France, in England, in Russia, in mother India"—he made a gesture of salutation and bowed low—"and our rites and mysteries are like water spilt upon the ground. If the hand be cut off, how shall the body move? That is how it is. You are vanished, my lord, and the body dies."

The old man plucked his beard again fiercely and his words came with guttural force. "That is fool's talk. In the past I was never everywhere at once. When I was in Russia, I was not in Greece; when I was in England, I was not in Portugal. I was always 'vanished' from one place to another, yet the body lived."

"But your word was passed along the roads everywhere, my Ry. Your tongue was not still from sunrise to the end of the day. Your call was heard always, now here, now there, and the Romanys were one; they held together."

The old man's face darkened still more and his eyes flashed fire. "These are lies you are telling, and they will choke you, my Romany 'chal'. Am I deceived, I who have known more liars than any man under the sky? Am I to be fooled, who have seen so many fools in their folly? There is roguery in you, or I have never seen roguery."

"I am a true Romany, my Ry," the other answered with an air of courage and a little defiance also.

"You are a rogue and a liar, that is sure. These wailings are your own. The Romany goes on his way as he has gone these hundreds of years. If I am silent, my people will wait until I speak again; if they see me not they will wait till I enter their camps once more. Why are you here? Speak, rogue and liar." The wrathful old man, sure in his reading of the youth, towered above him commandingly. It almost seemed as though he would do him bodily harm, so threatening was his attitude, but the young Romany raised his head, and with a note of triumph said:

"I have come for my own, as it is my right."

"What is your own?"

"What has been yours until now, my Ry."

A grey look stole slowly up the strong face of the exiled leader, for his mind suddenly read the truth behind the young man's confident words.

"What is mine is always mine," he answered roughly. "Speak! What is it
I have that you come for?"

The young man braced himself and put a hand upon his lips. "I come for your daughter, my Ry." The old man suddenly regained his composure, and authority spoke in his bearing and his words. "What have you to do with my daughter?"

"She was married to me when I was seven years of age, as my Ry knows. I am the son of Lemuel Fawe—Jethro Fawe is my name. For three thousand pounds it was so arranged. On his death-bed three thousand pounds did my father give to you for this betrothal. I was but a child, yet I remembered, and my kinsmen remembered, for it is their honour also. I am the son of Lemuel Fawe, the husband of Fleda, daughter of Gabriel Druse, King and Duke and Earl of all the Romanys; and I come for my own."

Something very like a sigh of relief came from Gabriel Druse's lips, but the anger in his face did not pass, and a rigid pride made the distance between them endless. He looked like a patriarch giving judgment as he raised his hand and pointed with a menacing finger at Jethro Fawe, his Romany subject —and, according to the laws of the Romany tribes, his son- in-law. It did not matter that the girl—but three years of age when it happened—had no memory of the day when the chiefs and great people assembled outside the tent of Lemuel Fawe when he lay dying, and, by the simple act of stepping over a branch of hazel, the two children were married: if Romany law and custom were to abide, then the two now were man and wife. Did not Lemuel Fawe, the old-time rival of Gabriel Druse for the kinship of the Romanys, the claimant whose family had been rulers of the Romanys for generations before the Druses gained ascendancy—did not Fawe, dying, seek to secure for his son by marriage what he had failed to get for himself by other means?

All these things had at one time been part of Gabriel Druse's covenant of life, until one year in England, when Fleda, at twelve years of age, was taken ill and would have died, but that a great lady descended upon their camp, took the girl to her own house, and there nursed and tended her, giving her the best medical aid the world could produce, so that the girl lived, and with her passionate nature loved the Lady Barrowdale as she might have loved her own mother, had that mother lived and she had ever known her. And when the Lady Barrowdale sickened and died of the same sickness which had nearly been her own death, the promise she made then overrode all other covenants made for her. She had promised the great lady who had given her own widowed, childless life for her own, that she would not remain a Gipsy, that she would not marry a Gipsy, but that if ever she gave herself to any man it would be to a Gorgio, a European, who travelled oftenest "the open road" leading to his own door. The years which had passed since those tragic days in Gloucestershire had seen the shadows of that dark episode pass, but the pledge had remained; and Gabriel Druse had kept his word to the dead, because of the vow made to the woman who had given her life for the life of a Romany lass.

The Romany tribes of all the nations did not know why their Ry had hidden himself in the New World; they did not know that the girl had for ever forsworn their race, and would never become head of all the Romanys, solving the problem of the rival dynasties by linking her life with that of Jethro Fawe. But Jethro Fawe had come to claim his own.

Now Gabriel Druse's eyes followed his own menacing finger with sharp insistence. In the past such a look had been in his eyes when he had sentenced men to death. They had not died by the gallows or the sword or the bullet, but they had died as commanded, and none had questioned his decree. None asked where or how the thing was done when a fire sprang up in a field, or a quarry, or on a lonely heath or hill-top, and on the pyre were all the belongings of the condemned, being resolved into dust as their owner had been made earth again.

"Son of Lemuel Fawe," the old man said, his voice rough with authority, "but that you are of the Blood, you should die now for this disobedience. When the time is fulfilled, I will return. Until then, my daughter and I are as those who have no people. Begone! Nothing that is here belongs to you. Begone, and come no more!"

"I have come for my own—for my Romany 'chi', and I will not go without her. I am blood of the Blood, and she is mine."

"You have not seen her," said the old man craftily, and fighting hard against the wrath consuming him, though he liked the young man's spirit. "She has changed. She is no longer Romany."

"I have seen her, and her beauty is like the rose and the palm."

"When have you seen her since the day before the tent of Lemuel Fawe now seventeen years ago?" There was an uneasy note in the commanding tone.

"I have seen her three times of late, and the last time I saw her was an hour or so since, when she rode the Rapids of Carillon."

The old man started, his lips parted, but for a moment he did not speak. At last words came. "The Rapids—speak. What have you heard, Jethro, son of Lemuel?"

"I did not hear, I saw her shoot the Rapids. I ran to follow. At
Carillon I saw her arrive. She was in the arms of a Gorgio of Lebanon—
Ingolby is his name."

A malediction burst from Gabriel Druse's lips, words sharp and terrible in their intensity. For the first time since they had met the young man blanched. The savage was alive in the giant.

"Speak. Tell all," Druse said, with hands clenching.

Swiftly the young man told all he had seen, and described how he had run all the way—four miles—from Carillon, arriving before Fleda and her Indian escort.

He had hardly finished his tale, shrinking, as he told it, from the fierceness of his chief, when a voice called from the direction of the house.

"Father—father," it cried.

A change passed over the old man's face. It cleared as the face of the sun clears when a cloud drives past and is gone. The transformation was startling. Without further glance at his companion, he moved swiftly towards the house. Once more Fleda's voice called, and before he could answer they were face to face.

She stood radiant and elate, and seemed not apprehensive of disfavour or reproach. Behind her was Tekewani and his braves.

"You have heard?" she asked reading her father's face.

"I have heard. Have you no heart?" he answered. "If the Rapids had drowned you!"

She came close to him and ran her fingers through his beard tenderly.
"I was not born to be drowned," she said softly.

Now that she was a long distance from Ingolby, the fact that a man had held her in his arms left no shadow on her face. Ingolby was now only part of her triumph of the Rapids. She tossed a hand affectionately towards Tekewani and his braves.

"How!" said Gabriel Druse, and made a gesture of salutation to the
Indian chief.

"How!" answered Tekewani, and raised his arm high in response. An instant afterwards Tekewani and his followers were gone their ways.

Suddenly Fleda's eyes rested on the young Romany who was now standing at a little distance away. Apprehension came to her face. She felt her heart stand still and her hands grow cold, she knew not why. But she saw that the man was a Romany.

Her father turned sharply. A storm gathered in his face once more, and a murderous look came into his eyes.

"Who is he?" Fleda asked, scarce above a whisper, and she noted the insistent, amorous look of the stranger.

"He says he is your husband," answered her father harshly.

CHAPTER V

"BY THE RIVER STARZKE . . . IT WAS SO DONE"

There was absolute silence for a moment. The two men fixed their gaze upon the girl. The fear which had first come to her face passed suddenly, and a will, new-born and fearless, possessed it. Yesterday this will had been only a trembling, undisciplined force, but since then she had been passed through the tests which her own soul, or Destiny, had set for her, and she had emerged a woman, confident and understanding, if tremulous. In days gone by her adventurous, lonely spirit had driven her to the prairies, savagely riding her Indian pony through the streets of Manitou and out on the North Trail, or south through coulees, or westward into the great woods, looking for what: she never found.

Her spirit was no longer the vague thing driving here and there with pleasant torture. It had found freedom and light; what the Romany folk call its own 'tan', its home, though it be but home of each day's trek. That wild spirit was now a force which understood itself in a new if uncompleted way. It was a sword free from its scabbard.

The adventure of the Carillon Rapids had been a kind of deliverance of an unborn thing which, desiring the overworld, had found it. A few hours ago the face of Ingolby, as she waked to

consciousness in his arms, had taught her something suddenly; and the face of Felix Marchand had taught her even more. Something new and strange had happened to her, and her father's uncouth but piercing mind saw the change in her. Her quick, fluttering moods, her careless, undirected energy, her wistful waywardness, had of late troubled and vexed him, called on capacities in him which he did not possess; but now he was suddenly aware that she had emerged from passionate inconsistencies and in some good sense had found herself.

Like a wind she had swept out of childhood into a woman's world where the eyes saw things unseen before, a world how many thousand leagues in the future; and here in a flash, also, she was swept like a wind back again to a time before there was even conscious childhood—a dim, distant time when she lived and ate and slept for ever in the field or the vale, in the quarry, beside the hedge, or on the edge of harvest-fields; when she was carried in strong arms, or sat in the shelter of a man's breast as a horse cantered down a glade, under an ardent sky, amid blooms never seen since then. She was whisked back into that distant, unreal world by the figure of a young Romany standing beside a spruce-tree, and by her father's voice which uttered the startling words: "He says he is your husband!"

Indignation and a bitter pride looked out of her eyes, as she heard the preposterous claim—as though she were some wild dweller of the jungle being called by her savage mate back to the lair she had forsaken.

"Since when were you my husband?" she asked Jethro Fawe composedly.

Her quiet scorn brought a quiver to his spirit; for he was of a people to whom anger and passion were part of every relationship of life, its stimulus and its recreation, its expression of the individual.

His eyelids trembled, but he drew himself together. "Seventeen years ago by the River Starzke in the Roumelian country, it was so done," he replied stubbornly. "You were sealed to me, as my Ry here knows, and as you will remember, if you fix your mind upon it. It was beyond the city of Starzke three leagues, under the brown scarp of the Dragbad Hills. It was in the morning when the sun was by a quarter of its course. It happened before my father's tent, the tent of Lemuel Fawe. There you and I were sealed before our Romany folk. For three thousand pounds which my father gave to your father, you—"

With a swift gesture she stopped him. Walking close up to him, she looked him full in the eyes. There was a contemptuous pride in her face which forced him to lower his eyelids sulkily.

He would have understood a torrent of words—to him that would have regulated the true value of the situation; but this disdainful composure embarrassed him. He had come prepared for trouble and difficulty, but he had rather more determination than most of his class and people, and his spirit of adventure was high. Now that he had seen the girl who was his own according to Romany law, he felt he had been a hundred times justified in demanding her from her father, according to the pledge and bond of so many years ago. He had nothing to lose but his life, and he had risked that before. This old man, the head of the Romany folk, had the bulk of the fortune which had been his own father's and he had the logic of lucre which is the most convincing of all logic. Yet with the girl holding his eyes commandingly, he was conscious that he was asking more than a Romany lass to share his 'tan', to go wandering from Romany people to Romany people, king and queen of them all when Gabriel Druse had passed away. Fleda Druse would be a queen of queens, but there was that queenliness in her now which was not Romany—something which was Gorgio, which was caste, which made a shivering distance between them.

As he had spoken, she saw it all as he described it. Vaguely, cloudily, the scene passed before her. Now and again in the passing years had filmy impressions floated before her mind of a swift-flowing river and high crags, and wooded hills and tents and horsemen and shouting, and a lad that held her hand, and banners waved over their heads, and galloping and shouting, and then a sudden quiet, and many men and women gathered about a tent, and a wailing thereafter. After which, in her faint remembrance, there seemed to fall a mist, and a space of blankness, and then a starting up from a bed, and looking out of the doors of a tent, where many people gathered about a great fire, whose flames licked the heavens, and seemed to devour a Romany tent standing alone with a Romany wagon full of its household things.

As Jethro Fawe had spoken, the misty, elusive visions had become living memories, and she knew that he had spoken the truth, and that these fleeting things were pictures of her sealing to Jethro Fawe and the death of Lemuel Fawe, and the burning of all that belonged to him in that last ritual of Romany farewell to the dead.

She knew now that she had been bargained for like any slave—for three thousand pounds. How far away it all seemed, how barbaric and revolting! Yet here it all was rolling up like a flood to her feet, to

bear her away into a past with its sordidness and vagabondage, however gilded and graded above the lowest vagabondage.

Here at Manitou she had tasted a free life which was not vagabondage, the passion of the open road which was not an elaborate and furtive evasion of the law and a defiance of social ostracism. Here she and her father moved in an atmosphere of esteem touched by mystery, but not by suspicion; here civilization in its most elastic organization and flexible conventions, had laid its hold upon her, had done in this expansive, loosely knitted social system what could never have been accomplished in a great city—in London, Vienna, Rome, or New York. She had had here the old free life of the road, so full of the scent of deep woods—the song of rivers, the carol of birds, the murmuring of trees, the mysterious and devout whisperings of the night, the happy communings of stray peoples meeting and passing, the gaiety and gossip of the market-place, the sound of church bells across a valley, the storms and wild lightnings and rushing torrents, the cries of frightened beasts, the wash and rush of rain, the sharp pain of frost, and the agonies of some lost traveller rescued from the wide inclemency, the soft starlight after, the balm of the purged air, and "rosy-fingered morn" blinking blithely at the world. The old life of the open road she had had here without anything of its shame, its stigma, and its separateness, its discordance with the stationary forces of law and organized community.

Wild moments there had been of late years when she longed for the faces of Romany folk gathered about the fire, while some Romany 'pral' drew all hearts with the violin or the dulcimer. When Ambrose or Gilderoy or Christo responded to the pleadings of some sentimental lass, and sang to the harpist's strings:

> "Cold blows the wind over my true love,
> Cold blow the drops of rain;
> I never, never had but one sweetheart;
> In the green wood he was slain,"

and to cries of "Again! 'Ay bor'! again!" the blackeyed lover, hypnotizing himself into an ecstasy, poured out race and passion and war with the law, in the true Gipsy rant which is sung from Transylvania to Yetholm or Carnarvon or Vancouver:

> "Time was I went to my true love,
> Time was she came to me—"

The sharp passion which moved her now as she stood before Jethro Fawe would not have been so acute yesterday; but to-day—she had lain in a Gorgio's arms to-day; and though he was nothing to her, he was still a Gorgio of Gorgios; and this man before her—her husband—was at best but a man of the hedges and the byre and the clay-pit, the quarry and the wood; a nomad with no home, nothing that belonged to what she was now a part of—organized, collective existence, the life of the house-dweller, not the life of the 'tan', the 'koppa', and the 'vellgouris'—the tent, the blanket, and the fair.

"I was never bought, and I was never sold," she said to Jethro Fawe at last "not for three thousand pounds, not in three thousand years. Look at me well, and see whether you think it was so, or ever could be so. Look at me well, Jethro Fawe."

"You are mine—it was so done seventeen years ago," he answered, defiantly and tenaciously.

"I was three years old, seventeen years ago," she returned quietly, but her eyes forced his to look at her, when they turned away as though their light hurt him.

"It is no matter," he rejoined. "It is the way of our people. It has been so, and it will be so while there is a Romany tent standing or moving on."

In his rage Gabriel Druse could keep silence no longer.

"Rogue, what have you to say of such things?" he growled. "I am the head of all. I pass the word, and things are so and so. By long and by last, if I pass the word that you shall sleep the sleep, it will be so, my Romany 'chal'."

His daughter stretched out her hand to stop further speech from her father—"Hush!" she said maliciously, "he has come a long way for naught. It will be longer going back. Let him have his say. It is his capital. He has only breath and beauty."

Jethro shrank from the sharp irony of her tongue as he would not have shrunk before her father's violence. Biting rejection was in her tones. He knew dimly that the thing he shrank from belonged to nothing Romany in her, but to that scornful pride of the Gorgios which had kept the Romany outside the social pale.

"Only breath and beauty!" she had said, and that she could laugh at his handsomeness was certain proof that it was not wilfulness which rejected his claims. Now there was rage in his heart greater than had been in that of Gabriel Druse.

"I have come a long way for a good thing," he said with head thrown back, "and if 'breath and beauty' is all I bring, yet that is because what my father had in his purse has made my 'Ry' rich"—he flung a hand out towards Gabriel Druse—"and because I keep to the open road as my father did, true to my Romany blood. The wind and the sun and the fatness of the field have made me what I am, and never in my life had I an ache or a pain. You have the breath and the beauty, too, but you have the gold also; and what you are and what you have is mine by the Romany law, and it will come to me, by long and by last."

Fleda turned quietly to her father. "If it is true concerning the three thousand pounds, give it to him and let him go. It will buy him what he would never get by what he is."

The old man flashed a look of anger upon her. "He came empty, he shall go empty. Against my commands, his insolence has brought him here. And let him keep his eyes skinned, or he shall have no breath with which to return. I am Gabriel Druse, lord over all the Romany people in all the world from Teheran to San Diego, and across the seas and back again; and my will shall be done."

He paused, reflecting for a moment, though his fingers opened and shut in anger. "This much I will do," he added. "When I return to my people I will deal with this matter in the place where Lemuel Fawe died. By the place called Starzke, I will come to reckoning, and then and then only."

"When?" asked the young man eagerly.

Gabriel Druse's eyes flashed. "When I return as I will to return." Then suddenly he added: "This much I will say, it shall be before—"

The girl stopped him. "It shall be when it shall be. Am I a chattel to be bartered by any will except my own? I will have naught to do with any Romany law. Not by Starzke shall the matter be dealt with, but here by the River Sagalac. This Romany has no claim upon me. My will is my own; I myself and no other shall choose my husband, and he will never be a Romany."

The young man's eyes suddenly took on a dreaming, subtle look, submerging the sulkiness which had filled him. Twice he essayed to speak, but faltered. At last, with an air, he said:

"For seventeen years I have kept the faith. I was sealed to you, and I hold by the sealing. Wherever you went, it was known to me. In my thoughts I followed. I read the Gorgio books; I made ready for this day. I saw you as you were that day by Starzke, like the young bird in the nest; and the thought of it was with me always. I knew that when I saw you again the brown eyes would be browner, the words at the lips would be sweeter—and so it is. All is as I dreamed for these long years. I was ever faithful. By night and day I saw you as you were when Romany law made you mine for ever. I looked forward to the day when I would take you to my 'tan', and there we two would—"

A flush sprang suddenly to Fleda Druse's face, then slowly faded, leaving it pale and indignant. Sharply she interrupted him.

"They should have called you Ananias," she said scornfully. "My father has called you a rogue, and now I know you are one. I have not heard, but I know—I know that you have had a hundred loves, and been true to none. The red scarfs you have given to the Romany and the Gorgio fly- aways would make a tent for all the Fawes in all the world."

At first he flung up his head in astonishment at her words, then, as she proceeded, a flush swept across his face and his eyes filled up again with sullenness. She had read the real truth concerning him. He had gone too far. He had been convincing while he had said what was true, but her instinct had suddenly told her what he was. Her perception had pierced to the core of his life—a vagabondage, a little more gilded than was common among his fellows, made possible by his position as the successor to her father, and by the money of Lemuel Fawe which he had dissipated.

He had come when all his gold was gone to do the one bold thing which might at once restore his fortunes. He had brains, and he knew now that his adventure was in grave peril.

He laughed in his anger. "Is only the Gorgio to embrace the Romany lass? One fondled mine to-day in his arms down there at Carillon. That's the way it goes! The old song tells the end of it:

> "'But the Gorgio lies 'neath the beech-wood tree;
> He'll broach my tan no more;

And my love she sleeps afar from me,
But near to the churchyard door.

'Time was I went to my true love,
Time was she came to me—'"

He got no farther. Gabriel Druse was on him, gripping his arms so tight to his body that his swift motion to draw a weapon was frustrated. The old man put out all his strength, a strength which in his younger days was greater than any two men in any Romany camp, and the "breath and beauty" of Jethro Fawe grew less and less. His face became purple and distorted, his body convulsed, then limp, and presently he lay on the ground with a knee on his chest and fierce, bony hands at his throat.

"Don't kill him—father, don't!" cried the girl, laying restraining hands on the old man's shoulders. He withdrew his hands and released the body from his knee. Jethro Fawe lay still.

"Is he dead?" she whispered, awestricken. "Dead?" The old man felt the breast of the unconscious man. He smiled grimly. "He is lucky not to be dead."

"What shall we do?" the girl asked again with a white face.

The old man stooped and lifted the unconscious form in his arms as though it was that of a child. "Where are you going?" she asked anxiously, as he moved away.

"To the hut in the juniper wood," he answered. She watched till he had disappeared with his limp burden into the depths of the trees. Then she turned and went slowly towards the house.

CHAPTER VI

THE UNGUARDED FIRES

The public knew well that Ingolby had solved his biggest business problem, because three offices of three railways—one big and two small— suddenly became merged under his control. At which there was rejoicing at Lebanon, followed by dismay and indignation at Manitou, for one of the smaller merged railways had its offices there, and it was now removed to Lebanon; while several of the staff, having proved cantankerous, were promptly retired. As they were French Canadians, their retirement became a public matter in Manitou and begot fresh quarrel between the rival towns.

Ingolby had made a tactical mistake in at once removing the office of the merged railway from Manitou, and he saw it quickly. It was not possible to put the matter right at once, however.

There had already been collision between his own railway-men and the rivermen from Manitou, whom Felix Marchand had bribed to cause trouble: two Manitou men had been seriously hurt, and feeling ran high. Ingolby's eyes opened wide when he saw Marchand's ugly game. He loathed the dissolute fellow, but he realized now that his foe was a factor to be reckoned with, for Marchand had plenty of money as well as a bad nature. He saw he was in for a big fight with Manitou, and he had to think it out.

So this time he went pigeon-shooting.

He got his pigeons, and the slaughter did him good. As though in keeping with the situation, he shot on both sides of the Sagalac with great good luck, and in the late afternoon sent his Indian lad on ahead to Lebanon with the day's spoil, while he loitered through the woods, a gun slung in the hollow of his arm. He had walked many miles, but there was still a spring to his step and he hummed an air with his shoulders thrown back and his hat on the back of his head. He had had his shooting, he had done his thinking, and he was pleased with himself. He had shaped his homeward course so that it would bring him near to Gabriel Druse's house.

He had seen Fleda only twice since the episode at Carillon, and met her only once, and that was but for a moment at a Fete for the hospital at Manitou, and with other people present—people who lay in wait for crumbs of gossip.

Since the running of the Rapids, Fleda had filled a larger place in the eyes of Manitou and Lebanon. She had appealed to the Western mind: she had done a brave physical thing. Wherever she went she

was made conscious of a new attitude towards herself, a more understanding feeling. At the Fete when she and Ingolby met face to face, people had immediately drawn round them curious and excited. These could not understand why the two talked so little, and had such an every-day manner with each other. Only old Mother Thibadeau, who had a heart that sees, caught a look in Fleda's eyes, a warm deepening of colour, a sudden embarrassment, which she knew how to interpret.

"See now, monseigneur," she said to Monseigneur Lourde, nodding towards Fleda and Ingolby, "there would be work here soon for you or Father Bidette if they were not two heretics."

"Is she a heretic, then, madame?" asked the old white-headed priest, his eyes quizzically following Fleda.

She is not a Catholic, and she must be a heretic, that's certain," was the reply.

"I'm not so sure," mused the priest. Smiling, he raised his hat as he caught Fleda's eyes. He made as if to go towards her, but something in her look held him back. He realized that Fleda did not wish to speak with him, and that she was even hurrying away from her father, who lumbered through the crowd as though unconscious of them all.

Presently Monseigneur Lourde saw Fleda leave the Fete and take the road towards home. There was a sense of excitement in her motions, and he also had seen that tremulous, embarrassed look in her eyes. It puzzled him. He did not connect it wholly with Ingolby as Madame Thibadeau had done. He had lived so long among primitive people that he was more accustomed to study faces than find the truth from words, and he had always been conscious that this girl, educated and even intellectual, was at heart as primitive as the wildest daughter of the tepees of the North. There was also in her something of that mystery which belongs to the universal itinerary—that cosmopolitan something which is the native human.

"She has far to go," the priest said to himself as he turned to greet Ingolby with a smile, bright and shy, but gravely reproachful, too.

This happened on the day before the collision between the railway-men and the river-drivers, and the old priest already knew what trouble was afoot.

There was little Felix Marchand did which was hidden from him. He made his way to Ingolby to warn him.

As Ingolby now walked in the woods towards Gabriel Druse's house, he recalled one striking phrase used by the aged priest in reference to the closing of the railway offices.

"When you strike your camp, put out the fires," was the aphorism.

Ingolby stopped humming to himself as the words came to his memory again. Bending his head in thought for a moment, he stood still, cogitating.

"The dear old fellow was right," he said presently aloud with uplifted head. "I struck camp, but I didn't put out the fires. There's a lot of that in life."

That is what had happened also to Gabriel Druse and his daughter. They had struck camp, but had not put out the camp-fires. That which had been done by the River Starzke came again in its appointed time. The untended, unguarded fire may spread devastation and ruin, following with angry freedom the marching feet of those who builded it.

"Yes, you've got to put out your fires when you quit the bivouac," continued Ingolby aloud, as he gazed ahead of him through the opening greenery, beyond which lay Gabriel Druse's home. Where he was the woods were thick, and here and there on either side it was almost impenetrable. Few people ever came through this wood. It belonged in greater part to Gabriel Druse, and in lesser part to the Hudson's Bay Company and the Government; and as the land was not valuable till it was cleared, and there was plenty of prairie land to be had, from which neither stick nor stump must be removed, these woods were very lonely. Occasionally a trapper or a sportsman wandered through them, but just here where Ingolby was none ever loitered. It was too thick for game, there was no roadway leading anywhere, but only an overgrown path, used in the old days by Indians. It was this path which Ingolby trod with eager steps.

Presently, as he stood still at sight of a ground-hog making for its hiding-place, he saw a shadow fall across the light breaking through the trees some distance in front of him. It was Fleda. She had not seen him, and she came hurrying towards where he was with head bent, a brightly-ribboned hat

swinging in her fingers. She seemed part of the woods, its wild simplicity, its depth, its colour-already Autumn was crimsoning the leaves, touching them with amber tints, making the woodland warm and kind. She wore a dress of golden brown which matched her hair, and at her throat was a black velvet ribbon with a brooch of antique paste which flashed the light like diamonds, but more softly.

Suddenly, as she came on, she stopped and raised her head in a listening attitude, her eyes opening wide as if listening, too—it was as though she heard with them as well; alive to catch sounds which evaded capture. She was like some creature of an ancient wood with its own secret and immemorial history which the world could never know. There was that in her face which did not belong to civilization or to that fighting world of which Ingolby was so eager a factor. All the generations of the wood and road, the combe and the river, the quarry and the secluded boscage were in her look. There was that about her which was at once elusive and primevally real.

She was not of those who would be lost in the dust of futility. Whatever she was, she was an independent atom in the mass of the world's breeding. Perhaps it was consciousness of the dynamic quality in the girl, her nearness to naked nature, which made Madame Bulteel say that she would "have a history."

If she got twisted as she came wayfaring, if her mind became possessed of a false passion or purpose which she thought a true one, then tragedy would await her. Yet in this quiet wood so near to the centuries that were before Adam was, she looked like a spirit of comedy listening till the Spirit of the Wood should break the silence.

Ingolby felt his blood beat faster. He had a feeling that he was looking at a wood-nymph who might flash out of his vision as a mere fantasy of the mind. There shot through him the strangest feeling that if she were his, he would be linked with something alien to the world of which he was.

Yet, recalling the day at Carillon when her cheek lay on his shoulder and her warm breast was pressed unresistingly against him, as he lifted her from his boat, he knew that he would have to make the hardest fight of his life if he meant not to have more of her than this brief acquaintance, so touched by sensation and romance. He was, maybe, somewhat sensational; his career had, even in its present restricted compass, been spectacular; but romance, with its reveries and its moonshinings, its impulses and its blind adventures, had not been any part of his existence.

Hers were not the first red lips which, voluntarily or involuntarily, had invited him; nor hers the first eyes which had sparkled to his glances; and this triumphant Titian head of hers was not the only one he had seen.

When he had taken her hand at the Hospital Fete, her fingers, long and warm and fine, had folded round his own with a singular confidence, an involuntary enclosing friendliness; and now as he watched her listening —did she hear something?—he saw her hand stretch out as though commanding silence, the "hush!" of an alluring gesture.

This assuredly was not the girl who had run the Carillon Rapids, for that adventuress was full of a vital force like a man's, and this girl had the evanishing charm of a dryad.

Suddenly a change passed over her. She was as one who had listened and had caught the note of song for which she waited; but her face clouded, and the rapt look gave way to an immediate distress. The fantasy of the wood-nymph underwent translation in Ingolby's mind; she was now like a mortal, who, having been transformed, at immortal dictate was returning to mortal state again.

To heighten the illusion, he thought he heard faint singing in the depths of the wood. He put his hands to his ears for a moment, and took them away again to make sure that it was really singing and not his imagination; and when he saw Fleda's face again, there was fresh evidence that his senses had not deceived him. After all, it was not strange that some one should be singing in that deepest wood beyond.

Now Fleda moved forward towards where he stood, quickening her footsteps as though remembering something she must do. He stepped out into the path and came to meet her. She heard his footsteps, saw him, and stood still abruptly.

She did not make a sound, but a hand went to her bosom quickly, as though to quiet her heart or to steady herself. He had broken suddenly upon her intent thoughts, he had startled her as she had been seldom startled, for all her childhood training had been towards self-possession before surprise and danger.

"This is not your side of the Sagalac," she said with a half-smile, regaining composure.

"That is in dispute," he answered gaily. "I want to belong to both sides of the Sagalac, I want both sides to belong to each other so that either side shall not be my side or your side, or—"

"Or Monsieur Felix Marchand's side," she interrupted meaningly.

"Oh, he's on the outside!" snapped the fighter, with a hardening mouth.

She did not reply at once, but put her hat on, and tied the ribbons loosely under her chin, looking thoughtfully into the distance.

"Is that the Western slang for saying he belongs nowhere?" she asked.

"Nowhere here," he answered with a grim twist to the corner of his mouth, his eyes half-closing with sulky meaning. "Won't you sit down?" he added quickly, in a more sprightly tone, for he saw she was about to move on. He motioned towards a log lying beside the path and kicked some branches out of the way.

After slight hesitation she sat down, burying her shoes in the fallen leaves.

"You don't like Felix Marchand?" she remarked presently.

"No. Do you?"

She met his eyes squarely—so squarely that his own rather lost their courage, and he blinked more quickly than is needed with a healthy eye. He had been audacious, but he had not surprised the garrison.

"I have no deep reason for liking or disliking him, and you have," she answered firmly; yet her colour rose slightly, and he thought he had never seen skin that looked so like velvet-creamy, pink velvet.

"You seemed to think differently at Carillon not long ago," he returned.

"That was an accident," she answered calmly. "He was drunk, and that is for forgetting—always."

"Always! Have you seen many men drunk?" he asked quickly. He did not mean to be quizzical, but his voice sounded so, and she detected it.

"Yes, many," she answered with a little ring of defiance in her tone— "many, often."

"Where?" he queried recklessly.

"In Lebanon," she retorted. "In Lebanon—your side."

How different she seemed from a few moments ago when she stood listening like a nymph for the song of the Spirit of the Wood! Now she was gay, buoyant, with a chamois-like alertness and a beaming vigour.

"Now I know what 'blind drunk' means," he replied musingly. "In Manitou when men get drunk, the people get astigmatism and can't see the tangledfooted stagger."

"It means that the pines of Manitou are straighter than the cedars of Lebanon," she remarked.

"And the pines of Manitou have needles," he rejoined, meaning to give her the victory.

"Is my tongue as sharp as that?" she asked, amusement in her eyes.

"So sharp I can feel the point when I can't see it," he retorted.

"I'm glad of that," she replied with an affectation of conceit. "Of course if you live in Lebanon you need surgery to make you feel a point."

"I give in—you have me," he remarked.

"You give in to Manitou?" she asked provokingly. "Certainly not—only to you. I said, 'You have me.'"

"Ah, you give in to that which won't hurt you—"

"Wouldn't you hurt me?" he asked in a softening tone.

"You only play with words," she answered with sudden gravity. "Hurt you? I owe you what I can not pay back. I owe you my life; but as nothing can be given in exchange for a life, I cannot pay you."

"But like may be given for like," he rejoined in a tone suddenly full of meaning.

"Again you are playing with words—and with me," she answered brusquely, and a little light of anger dawned in her eyes. Did he think that he could say a thing of that sort to her—when he pleased? Did he think that because he had done her a great service, he could say casually what belonged only to the sacred moments of existence? She looked at him with rising indignation, but there suddenly came to her the conviction that he had not spoken with affronting gallantry, but that for him the moment had a gravity not to be marred by the place or the circumstance.

"I beg your pardon if I spoke hastily," he answered presently. "Yet there's many a true word spoken in jest."

There was a moment's silence. She realized that he was drawn to her, and that the attraction was not alone due to his having saved her at Carillon; that he was not taking advantage of the thing which must ever be a bond between them, whatever came of life. When she had seen him at the Hospital Fete, a feeling had rushed over her that he had got nearer to her than any man had ever done. Then—even then, she felt the thing which all lovers, actual, or in the making, feel—that they must do something for the being who to them is more than all else and all others. She was not in love with Ingolby. How could she be in love with this man she had seen but a few times—this Gorgio. Why was it that even as they talked together now, she felt the real, true distance between them—of race, of origin, of history, of life, of circumstance? The hut in the wood where Gabriel Druse had carried Jethro Fawe was not three hundred yards away.

She sighed, stirred, and a wild look came in her eyes—a look of rebellion or of protest. Presently she recovered herself. She was a creature of sudden moods.

"What is it you want to do with Manitou and Lebanon?" she asked after a pause in which the thoughts of both had travelled far.

"You really wish to know—you don't know?" he asked with sudden intensity.

She regarded him frankly, smiled, then she laughed outright, showing her teeth very white and regular and handsome. The boyish eagerness of his look, the whimsical twist of his mouth, which always showed when he was keenly roused—as though everything that really meant anything was part of a comet-like comedy—had caused her merriment. All the hidden things in his face seemed to open out into a swift shrewdness and dry candour when he was in his mood of "laying all the cards upon the table."

"I don't know," she answered quietly. "I have heard things, but I should like to learn the truth from you. What are your plans?"

Her eyes were burning with inquiry. She was suddenly brought to the gateways of a new world. Plans —what had she or her people to do with plans! What Romany ever constructed anything? What did the building of a city or a country mean to a Romany 'chal' or a Romany 'chi', they who lived from field to field, from common to moor, from barn to city wall. A Romany tent or a Romany camp, with its families, was the whole territory of their enterprise, designs and patriotism. They saw the thousand places where cities could be made, and built their fires on the sites of them, and camped a day, and were gone, leaving them waiting and barren as before. They travelled through the new lands in America from the fringe of the Arctic to Patagonia, but they raised no roof-tree; they tilled no acre, opened no market, set up no tabernacle: they had neither home nor country.

Fleda was the heir of all this, the product of generations of such vagabondage. Had the last few years given her the civic sense, the home sense? From the influence of the Englishwoman, who had made her forsake the Romany life, had there come habits of mind in tune with the women of the Sagalac, who were helping to build so much more than their homes? Since the incident of the Carillon Rapids she had changed, but what the change meant was yet in her unopened Book of Revelations. Yet something stirred in her which she had never felt before. She had come of a race of wayfarers, but the spirit of the builders touched her now.

"What are my plans?" Ingolby drew along breath of satisfaction. "Well, just here where we are will be seen a great thing. There's the Yukon and all its gold; there's the Peace River country and all its unploughed wheat-fields; there's the whole valley of the Sagalac, which alone can maintain twenty millions of people; there's the East and the British people overseas who must have bread; there's China and Japan going to give up rice, and eat the wheaten loaf; there's the U. S. A. with its hundred millions of people—it'll be that in a few years—and its exhausted wheat-fields; and here, right here, is the bread-basket for all the hungry peoples; and Manitou and Lebanon are the centre of it. They will be the distributing centre. I want to see the base laid right. I'm not going to stay here till it all happens, but I

want to plan it all so that it will happen, then I'll go on and do a bigger thing somewhere else. These two towns have got to come together; they must play one big game. I want to lay the wires for it. That's why I've got capitalists to start paper-works, engineering works, a foundry, and a sash-door-and- blind factory—just the beginning. That's why I've put two factories on one side of the river and two on the other."

"Was it really you who started those factories?" she asked incredulously.

"Of course! It was part of my plans. I wasn't foolish enough to build and run them myself. I looked for the right people that had the money and the brains, and I let them sweat—let them sweat it out. I'm not a manufacturer; I'm an inventor and a builder. I built the bridge over the river; and—"

She nodded. "Yes, the bridge is good; but they say you are a schemer," she added suggestively.

"Certainly. But if I have schemes which'll do good, I ought to be supported. I don't mind what they call me, so long as they don't call me too late for dinner."

They both laughed. It was seldom he talked like this, and never had he talked to such a listener before. "The merging of the three railways was a good scheme, and I was the schemer," he continued. "It might mean monopoly, but it won't work out that way. It will simply concentrate energy and: save elbow-grease. It will set free capital and capacity for other things."

"They say there will be fewer men at work, not only in the offices but on the whole railway system, and they don't like that in Manitou—ah, no, they don't!" she urged.

"They're right in a sense," he answered. "But the men will be employed at other things, which won't represent waste and capital overlapping. Overlapping capital hits everybody in the end. But who says all that? Who raises the cry of 'wolf' in Manitou?"

"A good many people say it now," she answered, "but I think Felix Marchand said it first. He is against you, and he is dangerous."

He shrugged a shoulder. "Oh, if any fool said it, it would be the same!" he answered. "That's a fire easily lighted; though it sometimes burns long and hard." He frowned, and a fighting look came into his face.

"Then you know all that is working against you in Manitou—working harder than ever before?"

"I think I do, but I probably don't know all. Have you any special news about it?"

"Felix Marchand is spending money among the men. They are going on strike on your railways and in the mills."

"What mills—in Manitou?" he asked abruptly. "In both towns."

He laughed harshly. "That's a tall order," he said sharply. "Both towns—I don't think so, not yet."

"A sympathetic strike is what he calls it," she rejoined.

"Yes, a row over some imagined grievance on the railway, and all the men in all the factories to strike —that's the new game of the modern labour agitator! Marchand has been travelling in France," he added disdainfully, "but he has brought his goods to the wrong shop. What do the priests—what does Monseigneur Lourde say to it all?"

"I am not a Catholic," she replied gravely. "I've heard, though, that Monseigneur is trying to stop the trouble. But—" She paused.

"Yes—but?" he asked. "What were you going to say?"

"But there are many roughs in Manitou, and Felix Marchand makes friends with them. I don't think the priests will be able to help much in the end, and if it is to be Manitou against Lebanon, you can't expect a great deal."

"I never expect more than I get—generally less," he answered grimly; and he moved the gun about on his knees restlessly, fingering the lock and the trigger softly.

"I am sure Felix Marchand means you harm," she persisted.

"Personal harm?"

"Yes."

He laughed sarcastically again. "We are not in Bulgaria or Sicily," he rejoined, his jaw hardening; "and I can take care of myself. What makes you say he means personal harm? Have you heard anything?"

"No, nothing, but I feel it is so. That day at the Hospital Fete he looked at you in a way that told me. I think such instincts are given to some people and some races. You read books—I read people. I wanted to warn you, and I do so. This has been lucky in a way, this meeting. Please don't treat what I've said lightly. Your plans are in danger and you also." Was the psychic and fortune-telling instinct of the Romany alive in her and working involuntarily, doing that faithfully which her people did so faithlessly? The darkness which comes from intense feeling had gathered underneath her eyes, and gave them a look of pensiveness not in keeping with the glow of her perfect health, the velvet of her cheek.

"Would you mind telling me where you got your information?" he asked presently.

"My father heard here and there, and I, also, and some I got from old Madame Thibadeau, who is a friend of mine. I talk with her more than with any one else in Manitou. First she taught me how to crochet, but she teaches me many other things, too."

"I know the old girl by sight. She is a character. She would know a lot, that woman."

He paused, seemed about to speak, hesitated, then after a moment hastily said: "A minute ago you spoke of having the instinct of your race, or something like that. What is your race? Is it Irish, or—do you mind my asking? Your English is perfect, but there is something—something—"

She turned away her head, a flush spreading over her face. She was unprepared for the question. No one had ever asked it directly of her since they had come to Manitou. Whatever speculation there had been, she had never been obliged to tell any one of what race she was. She spoke English with no perceptible accent, as she spoke Spanish, Italian, French, Hungarian and Greek; and there was nothing in her speech marking her as different from the ordinary Western woman. Certainly she would have been considered pure English among the polyglot population of Manitou.

What must she say? What was it her duty to say? She was living the life of a British woman, she was as much a Gorgio in her daily existence as this man be side her. Manitou was as much home—nay, it was a thousand times more home—than the shifting habitat of the days when they wandered from the Caspians to John o' Groat's.

For years all traces of the past had been removed as completely as though the tide had washed over them; for years it had been so, until the fateful day when she ran the Carillon Rapids. That day saw her whole horizon alter; that day saw this man beside her enter on the stage of her life. And on that very day, also, came Jethro Fawe out of the Past and demanded her return.

That had been a day of Destiny. The old, panting, unrealized, tempestuous longing was gone. She was as one who saw danger and faced it, who had a fight to make and would make it.

What would happen if she told this man that she was a Gipsy—the daughter of a Gipsy ruler, which was no more than being head of a clan of the world's transients, the leader of the world's nomads. Money—her father had that, at least—much money; got in ways that could not bear the light at times, yet, as the world counts things, not dishonestly; for more than one great minister in a notable country in Europe had commissioned him, more than one ruler and crowned head had used him when "there was trouble in the Balkans," or the "sick man of Europe" was worse, or the Russian Bear came prowling. His service had ever been secret service, when he lived the life of the caravan and the open highway. He had no stable place among the men of all nations, and yet secret rites and mysteries and a language which was known from Bokhara to Wandsworth, and from Waikiki to Valparaiso, gave him dignity of a kind, clothed him with importance.

Yet she wanted to tell this man beside her the whole truth, and see what he would do. Would he turn his face away in disgust? What had she a right to tell? She knew well that her father would wish her to keep to that secrecy which so far had sheltered them—at least until Jethro Fawe's coming.

At last she turned and looked him in the eyes, the flush gone from her face.

"I'm not Irish—do I look Irish?" she asked quietly, though her heart was beating unevenly.

"You look more Irish than anything else, except, maybe, Slav or Hungarian—or Gipsy," he said admiringly and unwittingly.

"I have Gipsy blood in me," she answered slowly, "but no Irish or

Hungarian blood."

"Gipsy—is that so?" he said spontaneously, as she watched him so intently that the pulses throbbed at her temples.

A short time ago Fleda might have announced her origin defiantly, now her courage failed her. She did not wish him to be prejudiced against her.

"Well, well," he added, "I only just guessed at it, because there's something unusual and strong in you, not because your eyes are so dark and your hair so brown."

"Not because of my 'wild beauty'—I thought you were going to say that," she added ironically and a little defiantly. "I got some verses by post the other day from one of your friends in Lebanon—a stock-rider I think he was, and they said I had a 'wild beauty' and a 'savage sweetness.'"

He laughed, yet he suddenly saw her sensitive vigilance, and by instinct he felt that she was watching for some sign of shock or disdain on his part; yet in truth he cared no more whether she had Gipsy blood in her than he would have done if she had said she was a daughter of the Czar.

"Men do write that kind of thing," he added cheerfully, "but it's quite harmless. There was a disease at college we called adjectivitis. Your poet friend had it. He could have left out the 'wild' and 'savage' and he'd have been pleasant, and truthful too—no, I apologize."

He had seen her face darken under the compliment, and he hastened to put it right.

"I loved a Gipsy once," he added whimsically to divert attention from his mistake, and with so genuine a sympathy in his voice that she was disarmed. "I was ten and she was fifty at least. Oh, a wonderful woman! I had a boy friend, a fat, happy, little joker he was; his name was Charley Long. Well, this woman was his aunt. When she moved through the town people looked twice. She was tall and splendidly made, and her manner—oh, as if she owned the place. She did own a lot—she had more money than any one else thereabouts, anyhow. It was the tallest kind of a holiday when Charley and I walked out to the big white house-golly, but it was white—to visit her! We didn't eat much the day before we went to see her; and we didn't eat much the day after, either. She used to feed us—I wish I could eat like that now! I can see her brown eyes following us about, full of fire, but soft and kind, too. She had a great temper, they said, but everybody liked her, and some loved her. She'd had one girl, but she died of consumption, got camping out in bad weather. Aunt Cynthy—that was what we called her, her name being Cynthia—never got over her girl's death. She blamed herself for it. She had had those fits of going back to the open-for weeks at a time. The girl oughtn't to have been taken to camp out. She was never strong, and it was the wrong place and the wrong time of year—all right in August and all wrong in October.

"Well, always after her girl's death Aunt Cynthy was as I knew her, being good to us youngsters as no one else ever was, or could be. Her tea-table was a sight; and the rest of the meals were banquets. The first time I ever ate hedgehog was at her place. A little while ago, just before you came, I thought of her. A hedgehog crossed the path here, and it brought those days back to me—Charley Long and Aunt Cynthy and all. Yes, the first time I ever ate hedgehog; was in Aunt Cynthy's house. Hi-yi, as old Tekewani says, but it was good!"

"What is the Romany word for hedgehog?" Fleda asked in a low tone.

"Hotchewitchi," he replied instantly. "That's right, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is right," she answered, and her eyes had a far-away look, but there was a kind of trouble at her mouth.

"Do you speak Romany?" she added a little breathlessly.

"No, no. I only picked up words I heard Aunt Cynthy use now and then when she was in the mood."

"What was the history of Aunt Cynthy?"

"I only know what Charley Long told me. Aunt Cynthy was the daughter of a Gipsy—they say the only Gipsy in that part of the country at the time—who used to buy and sell horses, and travel in a big van as comfortable as a house. The old man suddenly died on the farm of Charley's uncle. In a month the uncle married the girl. She brought him thirty thousand dollars."

Fleda knew that this man who had fired her spirit for the first time had told his childhood story to show her the view he took of her origin; but she did not like him less for that, though she seemed to feel a chasm between them still. The new things moving in her were like breezes that stir the trees, not

like the wind turning the windmill which grinds the corn. She had scarcely yet begun to grind the corn of life.

She did not know where she was going, what she would find, or where the new trail would lead her. The Past dogged her footsteps, hung round her like the folds of a garment. Even as she rejected it, it asserted its power, troubled her, angered her, humiliated her, called to her.

She was glad of this meeting with Ingolby. It had helped her. She had set out to do a thing she dreaded, and it was easier now than it would have been if they had not met. She had been on her way to the Hut in the Wood, and now the dread of the visit to Jethro Fawe had diminished. The last voice she would hear before she entered Jethro Fawe's prison was that of the man who represented to her, however vaguely, the life which must be her future—the settled life, the life of Society and not of the Saracen.

After he had told his boyhood story they sat in silence for a moment or two, then she rose, and, turning to him, was about to speak. At that instant there came distinctly through the wood a faint, trilling sound. Her face paled a little, and the words died upon her lips. Ingolby, having turned his head as though to listen, did not see the change in her face, and she quickly regained her self-control.

"I heard that sound before," he said, "and I thought from your look you heard it, too. It's funny. It is singing, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's singing," she answered.

"Who is it—some of the heathen from the Reservation?"

"Yes, some of the heathen," she answered.

"Has Tekewani got a lodge about here?"

"He had one here in the old days."

"And his people go to it still-was that where you were going when I broke in on you?"

"Yes, I was going there. I am a heathen, also, you know."

"Well, I'll be a heathen, too, if you'll show me how; if you think I'd pass for one. I've done a lot of heathen things in my time."

She gave him her hand to say good-bye. "Mayn't I go with you?" he asked.

"'I must finish my journey alone,'" she answered slowly, repeating a line from the first English book she had ever read.

"That's English enough," he responded with a laugh. "Well, if I mustn't go with you I mustn't, but my respects to Robinson Crusoe." He slung the gun into the hollow of his arm. "I'd like much to go with you," he urged.

"Not to-day," she answered firmly.

Again the voice came through the woods, a little louder now.

"It sounds like a call," he remarked.

"It is a call," she answered—"the call of the heathen."

An instant after she had gone on, with a look half-smiling, half- forbidding, thrown over her shoulder at him.

"I've a notion to follow her," he said eagerly, and he took a step in her direction.

Suddenly she turned and came back to him. "Your plans are in danger— don't forget Felix Marchand," she said, and then turned from him again.

"Oh, I'll not forget," he answered, and waved his cap after her. "No, I'll not forget monsieur," he added sharply, and he stepped out with a light of battle in his eyes.

CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH THE PRISONER GOES FREE

As Fleda wound her way through the deeper wood, remembering the things which had just been said between herself and Ingolby, the colour came and went in her face. To no man had she ever talked so long and intimately, not even in the far-off days when she lived the Romany life.

Then, as daughter of the head of all the Romanys, she had her place apart; and the Romany lads had been few who had talked with her even as a child. Her father had jealously guarded her until the time when she fell under the spell and influence of Lady Barrowdale. Here, by the Sagalac, she had moved among this polyglot people with an assurance of her own separateness which was the position of every girl in the West, but developed in her own case to the nth degree.

Never before had she come so near—not to a man, but to what concerned a man; and never had a man come so near to her or what concerned her inmost life. It was not a question of opportunity or temptation—these always attend the footsteps of those who would adventure; but for long she had fenced herself round with restrictions of her own making; and the secrecy and strangeness of her father's course had made this not only possible, but in a sense imperative.

The end to that had come. Gaiety, daring, passion, elation, depression, were alive in her now, and in a sense had found an outlet in a handful of days—indeed since the day when Jethro Fawe and Max Ingolby had come into her life, each in his own way, for good or for evil. If Ingolby came for good, then Jethro Fawe came for evil. She would have revolted at the suggestion that Jethro Fawe came for good.

Yet, during the last few days, she had been drawn again and again towards the hut in the wood. It was as though a power stronger than herself had ordered her not to wander far from where the Romany claimant of herself awaited his fate. As though Jethro knew she was drawn towards him, he had sung the Gipsy songs which she and Ingolby had heard in the distance. He might have shouted for relief in the hope of attracting the attention of some passer-by, and so found release and brought confusion and perhaps punishment to Gabriel Druse; but that was not possible to him. First and last he was a Romany, good or bad; and it was his duty to obey his Ry of Rys, the only rule which the Romany acknowledged. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," he would have said, if he had ever heard the phrase; but in his stubborn way he made the meaning of the phrase the pivot of his own action. If he could but see Fleda face to face, he made no doubt that something would accrue to his advantage. He would not give up the hunt without a struggle.

Twice a day Gabriel Druse had placed food and water inside the door of the hut and locked him fast again, but had not spoken to him save once, and then but to say that his fate had not yet been determined. Jethro's reply had been that he was in no haste, that he could wait for what he came to get; that it was his own—'ay bor'! it was his own, and God or devil could not prevent the thing meant to be from the beginning of the world.

He did not hear Fleda approach the hut; he was singing to himself a song he had learned in Montenegro. There the Romany was held in high regard, because of the help his own father had given to the Montenegrin people, fighting for their independence, by admirable weapons of Gipsy workmanship, setting all the Gipsies in that part of the Balkans at work to supply them.

This was the song he sang

> "He gave his soul for a thousand days,
> The sun was his in the sky,
> His feet were on the neck of the world
> He loved his Romany chi.
>
> "He sold his soul for a thousand days,
> By her side to walk, in her arms to lie;
> His soul might burn, but her lips were his,
> And the heart of his Romany chi."

He repeated the last two lines into a rising note of exultation:

> "His soul might burn, but her lips were his,
> And the heart of his Romany chi."

The key suddenly turned in the lock, the door opened on the last words of the refrain, and, without

hesitation, Fleda stepped inside, closing the door behind her.

"'Mi Duvel', but who would think—ah, did you hear me call then?" he asked, rising from the plank couch where he had been sitting. He showed his teeth in a smile which was meant to be a welcome, but it had an involuntary malice.

"I heard you singing," she answered composedly, "but I do not come here because I'm called."

"But I do," he rejoined. "You called me from over the seas, and I came. I was in the Balkans; there was trouble—Servia, Montenegro, and Austria were rattling the fire-irons again, and there was I as my father was before me. But I heard you calling, and I came."

"You never heard me call, Jethro Fawe," she returned quietly. "My calling of you is as silent as the singing of the stars, where you are concerned. And the stars do not sing."

"But the stars do sing, and you call just the same," he responded with a twist to his moustache, and posing against the wall. "I've heard the stars sing. What's the noise they make in the heart, if it's not singing? You don't hear with the ears only. The heart hears. It's only a manner of speaking, this talk about the senses. One sense can do the same as all can do and a Romany ought to know how to use one or all. When your heart called I heard it, and across the seas I came. And by long and by last, but I was right in coming."

His impudence at once irritated her and provoked her admiration. She knew by instinct how false he was, and how a lie was as common with him as the truth; but his submission to her father, his indifference to his imprisonment, forced her interest, even as she was humiliated by the fact that he was sib to her, bound by ties of clan and blood apart from his monstrous claim of marriage. He was indeed such a man as a brainless or sensual woman could yield to with ease. He had an insinuating animal grace, that physical handsomeness which marks so many of the Tziganies who fill the red coats of a Gipsy musical sextette! He was not distinguished, yet there was an intelligence in his face, a daring at his lips and chin, which, in the discipline and conventions of organized society, would have made him superior. Now, with all his sleek handsomeness, he looked a cross between a splendid peasant and a chevalier of industry.

She compared him instinctively with Ingolby the Gorgio, as she looked at him. What was it made the difference between the two? It was the world in a man—personality, knowledge of life, the culture of the thousand things which make up civilization: it was personality got from life and power in contest with the ordered world.

Yet was this so after all? Tekewani was only an Indian brave who lived on the bounty of a government, and yet he had presence and an air of command. Tekewani had been a nomad; he had not been bound to one place, settled in one city, held subservient to one flag. But, no, she was wrong: Tekewani had been the servant and child of a system which was as fixed and historical as that of Russia or Spain. He belonged to a people who had traditions and laws of their own; organized communities moving here and there, but carrying with them their system, their laws and their national feeling.

There was the difference. This Romany was the child of irresponsibility, the being that fed upon life, that did not feed life; that left one place in the world to escape into another; that squeezed one day dry, threw it away, and then went seeking another day to bleed; for ever fleeing from yesterday, and using to-day only as a camping-ground. Suddenly, however, she came to a stop in her reflections. Her father, Gabriel Druse, was of the same race as this man, the same unorganized, irresponsible, useless race, with no weight of civic or social duty upon its shoulders—where did he stand? Was he no better than such as Jethro Fawe? Was he inferior to such as Ingolby, or even Tekewani?

She realized that in her father's face there was the look of one who had no place in the ambitious designs of men, who was not a builder, but a wayfarer. She had seen the look often of late, and had never read it until now, when Jethro Fawe stared at her with the boldness of possession, with the insolence of a soul of lust which had had its victories.

She read his look, and while one part of her shrank from him as from some noisome thing, another part of her—to her dismay and anger—understood him, and did not resent him. It was the Past dragging at her life. It was inherited predisposition, the unregulated passions of her forebears, the mating of the fields, the generated dominance of the body, which was not to be commanded into obscurity, but must taunt and tempt her while her soul sickened. She put a hand on herself. She must make this man realize once and for all that they were as far apart as Adam and Cagliostro. "I never called to you," she said at last. "I did not know of your existence, and, if I had, then I certainly shouldn't have called."

"The Gorgios have taken away your mind, or you'd understand," he replied coolly. "Your soul calls and

those that understand come. It isn't that you know who hears or who is coming—till he comes."

"A call to all creation!" she answered disdainfully. "Do you think you can impress me by saying things like that?"

"Why not? It's true. Wherever you went in all these years the memory of you kept calling me, my little 'rinkne rakli'—my pretty little girl, made mine by the River Starzke over in the Roumelian country."

"You heard what my father said—"

"I heard what the Duke Gabriel said—'Mi Duvel', I heard enough what he said, and I felt enough what he did!"

He laughed, and began to roll a cigarette mechanically, keeping his eyes fixed on her, however.

"You heard what my father said and what I said, and you will learn that it is true, if you live long enough," she added meaningly.

A look of startled perception flashed into his eyes. If I live long enough, I'll turn you, my mad wife, into my Romany queen and the blessing of my 'tan'."

"Don't mistake what I mean," she urged. "I shall never be ruler of the
Romanys. I shall never hear—"

"You'll hear the bosh played-fiddle, they call it in these heathen places—at your second wedding with Jethro Fawe," he rejoined insolently, lighting his cigarette. "Home you'll come with me soon—'ay bor'!"

"Listen to me," she answered with anger tingling in every nerve and fibre. "I come of your race, I was what you are, a child of the hedge and the wood and the road; but that is all done. Home, you say! Home— in a tent by the roadside or—"

"As your mother lived—where you were bornwell, well, but here's a Romany lass that's forgot her cradle!"

"I have forgotten nothing. I have only moved on. I have only seen that there is a better road to walk than that where people, always looking behind lest they be followed, and always looking in front to find refuge, drop the patrin in the dust or the grass or the bushes for others to follow after—always going on and on because they dare not go back."

Suddenly he threw his cigarette on the ground, and put his heel upon it in fury real or assumed. "Great Heaven and Hell," he exclaimed, "here's a Romany has sold her blood to the devil! And this is the daughter of Gabriel Druse, King and Duke of all the Romanys, him with ancestor King Panuel, Duke of Little Egypt, who had Sigismund, and Charles the Great, and all the kings for friends. By long and by last, but this is a tale to tell to the Romanys of the world!" For reply she went to the door and opened it wide. "Then go and tell it, Jethro Fawe, to all the world. Tell them I am the renegade daughter of Gabriel Druse, ruler of them all. Tell them there is no fault in him, and that he will return to his own people in his own time, but that I, Fleda Druse, will never return— never! Now, get you gone from here."

The sunlight broke through the trees, and fell in a narrow path of light upon the doorway. A little grey bird fluttered into the radiance and came tripping across the threshold; a whippoorwill called in the ashtrees; and the sweet smell of the thick woodland, of the bracken and fern, crept into the room. The balm of a perfect evening of Summer was upon the face of nature. The world seemed untroubled and serene; but in this hidden but two stormy spirits broke the peace to which the place and the time were all entitled.

After Fleda's scornful words of release and dismissal, Jethro stood for a moment confounded and dismayed. He had not reckoned with this. During their talk it had come to him how simple it would be to overpower any check to his exit, how devilishly easy to put the girl at a disadvantage; but he drove the thought from him. In the first place, he was by no means sure that escape was what he wanted—not yet, at any rate; in the second place, if Gabriel Druse passed the word along the subterranean wires of the Romany world that Jethro Fawe should vanish, he would not long cumber the ground.

Yet it was not cowardice or fear of consequences which had held him back; it was a staggering admiration for this girl who had been given to him in marriage so many years ago. He had fared far and wide in his adventures and amours when he had gold in plenty; and he had swung more than one Gorgio woman in the wild dance of sentiment, dazzling them by the splendour of his passion. The fire gleaming in his dark eyes lighted a face which would have made memorable a picture by Guido. He had fared far and wide, but he had never seen a woman who had seized his imagination as this girl was

doing; who roused in him, not the old hot desire, but the hungry will to have a 'tan' of his own, and go travelling down the world with one who alone could satisfy him for all his days.

As he sat in this improvised woodland prison he had had visions of a hundred glades and valleys through which he had passed in days gone by— in England, in Spain, in Italy, in Roumania, in Austria, in Australia, in India—where his camp-fires had burned. In his visions he had seen her—Fleda Fawe, not Fleda Druse—laying the cloth and bringing out the silver cups, or stretching the Turkey rugs upon the ground to make a couch for two bright-eyed lovers to whom the night was as the day, radiant and full of joy. He had shut his eyes and beheld hillsides where abandoned castles stood, and the fox and the squirrel and the hawk gave shade and welcome to the dusty pilgrims of the road; or, when the wild winds blew in winter, gave shelter and wood for the fire, and a sense of homeliness among the companionable trees.

He had seen himself and this beautiful Romany 'chi' at some village fair, while the lesser Romany folk told fortunes, or bought and sold horses, and the lesser still tinkered or worked in gold or brass; he had seen them both in a great wagon with bright furnishings and brass-girt harness on their horses, lording it over all, rich, dominant and admired. In his visions he had even seen a Romany babe carried in his arms to a Christian church and there baptized in grandeur as became the child of the head of the people. His imagination had also seen his own tombstone in some Christian churchyard near to the church porch, where he would not be lonely when he was dead, but could hear the gossip of the people as they went in and out of church; and on the tombstone some such inscription as he had seen once at Pforzheim—"To the high-born Lord Johann, Earl of Little Egypt, to whose soul God be gracious and merciful."

To be sure, it was a strange thing for a Romany to be buried in a Gorgio churchyard; but it was what had chanced to many great men of the Romanys, such as the high-born Lord Panuel at Steinbrock, and Peter of Kleinschild at Mantua—all of whom had great emblazoned monuments in Christian churches, just to show that in all-levelling death they condescended from high estate to mingle their ashes with the dust of the Gorgio.

He had sought out his chieftain here in the new world in a spirit of adventure, cupidity and desire. He had come like one who betrays, but he acknowledged to a higher force than his own and to superior rights when Gabriel Druse's strong arm brought him low; and, waking to life and consciousness again, he was aware that another force also had levelled him to the earth. That force was this woman's spirit which now gave him his freedom so scornfully; who bade him begone and tell their people everywhere that she was no longer a Romany, while she would go, no doubt —a thousand times without doubt unless he prevented it—to the swaggering Gorgio who had saved her on the Sagalac.

She stood waiting for him to go, as though he could not refuse his freedom. As a bone is tossed to a dog, she gave it to him.

"You have no right to set me free," he said coolly now. "I am not your prisoner. You tell me to take that word to the Romany people—that you leave them for ever. I will not do it. You are a Romany, and a Romany you must stay. You belong nowhere else. If you married a Gorgio, you would still sigh for the camp beneath the stars, for the tambourine and the dance—"

"And the fortune-telling," she interjected sharply, "and the snail-soup, and the dirty blanket under the hedge, and the constable on the road behind, always just behind, watching, waiting, and—"

"The hedge is as clean as the dirty houses where the low-class Gorgios sleep. In faith, you are a long way from the River Starzke!" he added. "But you are my mad wife, and I must wait till you've got sense again."

He sat down on the plank couch, and began to roll a cigarette once more.

"You come fitted out like a Gorgio lass now, and you look like a Gorgio countess, and you have the manners of an Archduchess; but that's nothing; it will peel off like a blister when it's pricked. Underneath is the Romany. It's there, and it will show red and angry when we've stripped off the Gorgio. It's the way with a woman, always acting, always imagining herself something else than what she is—if she's a beggar fancying herself a princess; if she's a princess fancying herself a flower-girl. 'Mi Duvel', but I know you all!"

Every word he said went home. She knew that there was truth in what he said, and that beneath all was the Romany blood; but she meant to conquer it. She had made her vow to one in England that she loved, and she would not change. Whatever happened, she had finished with Romany life, and to go back would only mean black tragedy in the end. A month ago it was a vow and an inner desire which made her determined; to-day it was the vow and a man—a Gorgio whom she had but now left in the

woods, gazing after her with the look which a woman so well interprets.

"You mean you won't go free from here? Because I was a Romany, and wish you no harm, I have come here to-day to let you go where you will—to go back to the place where the patrins show where your people travel. I set you free, and you say what you think will hurt and shame me. You have a cruel soul. You would torture any woman till she died. You shall not torture me. You are as far from me as the River Starzke. I could have let you stay here for my father to deal with, but I have set you free. I open the door for you, though you are nothing to me, and I am no more to you than one of the women you have fooled and left to eat the vile bread of the forsaken. You have been, you are a wolf—a wolf."

He got to his feet again, and the blood rushed to his face, so that it seemed almost black. A torrent of mad words gathered in his throat, but they choked him, and in the pause his will asserted itself. He became cool and deliberate.

"You are right, my girl, I have sucked the orange and thrown the skin away, and I've picked flowers and cast them by, but that was before the first day I saw you as you now are. You were standing by the Sagalac looking out to the west where the pack-trains were travelling into the sun over the mountains, and you had your hand on the neck of your pony. I was not ten feet away from you, behind a juniper-bush. I looked at you, and I wished that I had never seen a woman before and could look at the world as you did then—it was like water from a spring, that look. You are right in what you say. By long and by last I had a hard hand, and when I left what I'd struck down I never looked back. But I saw you, and I wished I had never seen a woman before. You have been here alone with me with that door shut. Have I said or done anything that a Gorgio duke wouldn't do? Ah, God's love, but you were bold to come! I married you by the River Starzke; I looked upon you as my wife; and here you were alone with me! I had my rights, and I had been trampled underfoot by your father—"

"By your Chief."

"'Ay bor', by my Chief! I had my wrongs, and I had my rights, and you were mine by Romany law. It was for me here to claim you—here where a Romany and his wife were alone together!"

His eyes were fixed searchingly on hers, as though he would read the effect of his words before he replied, and his voice had a curious, rough note, as though with difficulty he quelled the tempest within him. "I have my rights, and you had spat upon me," he said with ferocious softness.

She did not blench, but looked him steadily in the eyes.

"I knew what would be in your mind," she answered, "but that did not keep me from coming. You would not bite the hand that set you free."

"You called me a wolf a minute ago."

"But a wolf would not bite the hand that freed it from the trap. Yet if such shame could be, I still would have had no fear, for I should have shot you as wolves are shot that come too near the fold."

He looked at her piercingly, and the pupils of his eyes narrowed to a pin-point. "You would have shot me—you are armed?" he questioned.

"Am I the only woman that has armed herself against you and such as you?
Do you not see?"

"Mi Duvel, but I do see now with a thousand eyes!" he said hoarsely.

His senses were reeling. Down beneath everything had been the thought that, as he had prevailed with other women, he could prevail with her; that she would come to him in the end. He had felt, but he had declined to see, the significance of her bearing, of her dress, of her speech, of her present mode of life, of its comparative luxury, its social distinction of a kind which lifted her above even the Gorgios by whom she was surrounded. A fatuous belief in himself and in his personal powers had deluded him. He had told the truth when he said that no woman had ever appealed to him as she did; that she had blotted out all other women from the book of his adventurous and dissolute life; and he had dreamed a dream of conquest of her when Fortune should hand out to him the key of the situation. Did not the beautiful Russian countess on the Volga flee from her liege lord and share his 'tan'? When he played his fiddle to the Austrian princess, did she not give him a key to the garden where she walked of an evening? And this was a Romany lass, daughter of his Chieftain, as he was son of a great Romany chief; and what marvel could there be that she who had been made his child wife, should be conquered as others had been!

"'Mi Duvel', but I see!" he repeated in a husky fierceness. "I am your husband, but you would have

killed me if I had taken a kiss from your lips, sealed to me by all our tribes and by your father and mine."

"My lips are my own, my life is my own, and when I marry, I shall marry a man of my own choosing, and he will not be a Romany," she replied with a look of resolution which her beating heart belied. "I'm not a pedlar's basket."

"'Kek! Kek'! That's plain," he retorted. "But the 'wolf' is no lamb either! I said I would not go till your father set me free, since you had no right to do so, but a wife should save her husband, and her husband should set himself free for his wife's sake"—his voice rose in fierce irony—"and so I will now go free. But I will not take the word to the Romany people that you are no more of them. I am a true Romany. I disobeyed my 'Ry' in coming here because my wife was here, and I wanted her. I am a true Romany husband who will not betray his wife to her people; but I will have my way, and no Gorgio shall take her to his home. She belongs to my tent, and I will take her there."

Her gesture of contempt, anger and negation infuriated him. "If I do not take you to my 'tan', it will be because I'm dead," he said, and his white teeth showed fiercely.

"I have set you free. You had better go," she rejoined quietly.

Suddenly he turned at the doorway. A look of passion burned in his eyes.
His voice became soft and persuasive. "I would put the past behind me,
and be true to you, my girl," he said. "I shall be chief over all the
Romany people when Duke Gabriel dies. We are sib; give me what is mine.
I am yours—and I hold to my troth. Come, beloved, let us go together."

A sigh broke from her lips, for she saw that, bad as he was, there was a moment's truth in his words. "Go while you can," she said. "You are nothing to me."

For an instant he hesitated, then, with a muttered oath, sprang out into the bracken, and was presently lost among the trees.

For a long time she sat in the doorway, and again and again her eyes filled with tears. She felt a cloud of trouble closing in upon her. At last there was the sound of footsteps, and a moment later Gabriel Druse came through the trees towards her. His eyes were sullen and brooding.

"You have set him free?" he asked.

She nodded. "It was madness keeping him here," she said.

"It is madness letting him go," he answered morosely. "He will do harm. 'Ay bor', he will! I might have known—women are chicken-hearted. I ought to have put him out of the way, but I have no heart any more—no heart; I have the soul of a rabbit."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Saw how futile was much competition
When you strike your camp, put out the fires

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