

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