

CHAPTER XXVII

THE WORLD FOR SALE

As though by magic, like the pictures of a dream, out of the horizon, in caravans, by train, on horseback, the Romany people gathered to the obsequies of their chief and king. For months, hundreds of them had not been very far away. Unobtrusive, silent, they had waited, watched, till the Ry of Rys should come back home again. Home to them was the open road where Romanys trailed or camped the world over.

A clot of blood in the heart had been the verdict of the doctors; and Lebanon and Manitou had watched the Ry of Rys carried by his own people to the open prairie near to Tekewani's reservation. There, in the hours between the midnight and the dawn, all Gabriel Druse's personal belongings—the clothes, the chair in which he sat, the table at which he ate, the bed in which he slept, were brought forth and made into a pyre, as was the Romany way. Nothing personal of his chattels remained behind. The walking-stick which lay beside him in the moment of his death was the last thing placed upon the pyre. Then came the match, and the flames made ashes of all those things which once he called his own. Standing apart, Tekewani and his braves watched the ceremonial of fire with a sympathy born of primitive custom. It was all in tune with the traditions of their race.