

CHAPTER XXX

And Last



I was with a full heart that I sat down, oblivious of all other occupants of the car. I sat dazed, the rattle of the wheels in my ears, and the occasional swishing sound without, when we rattled across some trestle bridge above a foaming creek hastening down out of the hills. Sunset came, glowing red on the tops of the trees on either hand. The Pintsch lamps were lit, and glimmered dim in that glow of the sunset that filled the coaches. It was not yet quite dark when we left Republic Creek, the gate city of the mountains, behind. The sunset suddenly appeared to wheel in the sky, and piled itself up again to the right of the track. We were looping and twining down out of the hills. I went out onto the rear platform for a last look at them. Already the plains were rolling away from us on either side, billowy, wind-swept, sweet-scented in the dusk. Behind was the long darkness, north and south, of the mountains. I gazed upon it till the glow faded, and the sinister, serrated ridge was only a long, thin line of black on the verge of the prairie.