in black from a background of yellow. Taken as a whole, the cover would attract attention anywhere; and, after duly admiring it, I followed a very bad practice of mine, and turned to the end of the story. The result of this investigation I have chronicled above as nearly as I can remember the text after a casual reading.

At this point the train boy made a demand for the novel or twenty-five cents, and I gave him back his book. He then relieved the old lady of her tale of horror, with which she seemed very glad to part, and affairs in the vicinity settled back into the calm which his appearance had disturbed.

If a young man is of that age when his father is still more or less responsible for his debts, and he consequently is not overburdened with the troubles of the world, he is liable to imagine petty worries of his own. Life cannot be all sunshine, even to irresponsible youth, though his clouds are often artificial. I can think of no other reason why I should have given a second thought to Idna, except that I had exhausted all other causes of sadness, including the monotony of the journey, and needed something to divert my thoughts. As I gazed out of the window, every plain or meadow seemed to have a horseman disappearing on the horizon, and every unusual house a handsome, but forsaken maiden, looking despondently from the doorway. Of course she must have been handsome—all heroines in Western stories are; and Idna was undoubtedly one of these typical women, with fascinating border unconventionality, using abbreviated words in her conversation to such an extent that one would fancy she had an impediment in her speech. Very manly she was at times, full of bravery and masculine heroics; and then again transformed into blushing womanhood and weak dependence at such times as Gid happened to be around to help her. Gid himself, of course, was all that was great, and good, and just, and wonderful. There was nothing effeminate about Gid; and though he would shoot, and swear, and drink, the instinctive nobility of his nature would show through all.

What perplexed me was that these two people should end a story by having a quarrel and a parting, when they evidently must have been so very well suited to a continual companionship. It would have been so very much better to have left them together there in that boundless prairie, where they could have lived as though they occupied the world alone, and could have been all the world to each other. What better than two sympathetic natures linked together there, where exterior influences could never come in to disturb their happiness, and where the harmony of nature, and man, and sunsets across the prairie, would be a source of never-ending delight! What could be more inconsistent than to end a long story in which the hero had undoubtedly faced all sorts of danger, and the heroine suffered untold pangs by having him ride off with all her happiness and all her sunshine dangling along after him? Poor Idna! left sadly alone in a continual rainstorm, with nothing to do in life but stand in a doorway and look out after her lost lover, who was doomed to spend the rest of his existence in riding away. No matter what the previous facts of the tale, the end seemed unjustifiable. I looked at the people about me in the car and at the panoramic view of nature outside, which the approaching twilight rendered soft and sleepy. They all seemed quiet and common enough. There was no look of lost happiness about them. No one had ever ridden away with the sunshine of the sweet-faced little woman across the way, I felt very sure, though her hero had probably not been like Gid. I longed to cross the aisle and tell her all about it, for I felt very sure she would know how to smooth everybody's troubles, even Idna's; but the brakeman came between us to light the lamps, and in losing sight of her sympathetic face, I realized how very foolish such a proceeding would be.