

THE LADY OF THE CROSSING

a sense of wild everlastingness. Sam mused upon a thought that drifted into his mind, a thought of the million snows that had powdered these peaks, the uncouth gales that had charged upon them, the rains that had danced on them with none to see, storms that had flashed, lighting them up on pitchy nights with sudden blaze. The air was keen, exhilarating. The view awoke a quiet, natural ecstasy, a view over crests that in Kootenay were looked up to. There was no humidity in the air. Over all that expanse was no blur of any local rain-storm; no steam ascended to the sun from any of those unseen valleys between the ridges. The mountains all stood up in their immutable ranks under a cold blue sky that seemed higher than ever, at this high altitude, instead of more approachable.

For response to Marsden's remark that it was good up here Sam had only a preoccupied grunt; but it sufficed. It was better than any other response could have been. This wagon-road on which they walked was little used, because of the tram, though once upon a time much machinery must have been hauled upon it by teams of straining horses. It was now little more than a highway for the miners descending and ascending, once in three months or so, to and from town. As for town—town was nothing at all from here, all that was visible being a few houses at the east end and, jutting into the lake, the steam-boat jetty, of no more apparent consequence than a match that, floating by, had been caught by a projection of the