

Seeds of Pine

paint, will edit the scene as in the older and more settled districts of the north.

At every station, land seekers get out and disappear into the trees as if the country ate them up, and, indeed, I am not so sure but it does.

A baby gets off too—a new baby that has come from the city hospital is being brought home. You would fancy a baby was a miracle the way the men look at it and ask questions. Her name is Annette. She was born on duck-day. Her father works in a saw-mill. We crowd to the window to watch him meet Annette, for we would see the gladness on his face. He is an admirably strong man, with the hard sinews of a wolf. He has surely "gone through the mill" to some effect. I think he likes Annette, but he looks most at the small mother and he has the mate tone in his voice.

The women ask me concerning my husband, and I say, "Oh yes! I have a husband up here, somewhere—a big, fair man—I wonder if you have seen him."

They are discreetly silent, but I can see they are hoping I'll "catch him." This is not a case of duplicity on my part but rather of kindness. It is one's stoutest duty to convey colour and snippets of gossip to women, who, for the long winter months to come, are to remain in these wilds. You must understand that gossip is not wicked up North. Besides, this word actually means "a sponsor at baptism"—an office recognized by all the world as one of unimpeachable respectability.

At Wabamun there is a great sweep of forest, but, a year ago, a great fire raged here and large