

THE LADY OF THE CROSSING

"It was down in time, then?"

"It was down all right—and your selection is all right. Thank you very much. I never know what to order. A pleasure trip is different from a prospecting outfit."

"It was nothing," she declared. "I was going in for our basket anyhow."

Sam gathered from this that she had seen to the provisioning on Marsden's behalf, and for a few moments was filled with excitations somewhat in the vein of those that afflict the—if not match-maker—match-suspector. Perhaps that deep card Marsden, acting upon some confounded theories of it being a cunning world instead of a hard world, pretending to be in pursuit of Mildred Henderson, would really astonish Kootenay by proposing to his neighbour's daughter! Our hero, or it should be said, this being a tale of to-day, our protagonist, was a trifle unhinged. Such a contretemps, thought he, would not be novel in the history of wooings and marriage. Deep man, Marsden! Sam blazed inwardly over his imaginings, and without any proof worthy the name of proof, he was angry with Marsden, looked upon him as a middle-aged ogre. It would be scandalous—criminal, and all the rest of it. Sam was in a bad way.

The conversation became less general. The party fell into two-somes and three-somes again. Sam was alert to notice the sneer with which Mildred Henderson glanced at Nance's flounces, and her shoes, and her hat, and then turned away, posing once more in the breeze. He peered sharply