

THE LADY OF THE CROSSING

Mrs. Timpkin's remark was for her ; in such little ways do erroneous conceptions arise.

Aware that Sam now looked at her, Mildred tilted her head a shade more, and a smile—just a hint supercilious—was on her lips.

He wanted to say : " I didn't tell her. You're wrong ! " How this girl provoked him ! How painfully subtle she made him ! A man with broad-gauge instincts, she made him narrow-gauge. Once she had lured ; now she came nigh irritating. Devoutly did he wish she had no effect at all. Peters, who always had a storyette to tell, plunged into that one about the Irish landowner who ordered his man to give visitors an evasive answer if they called when he was busy. The yarn ended with an account of how, one evening, the man had been asked : " Did anyone call ? "—" Yes, yer honour."—" And what did you do ? "—" I gave them an evasive answer."—" What did you say ? "—" They asked me was your honour at home, and I asked was their grandmother a monkey." As they laughed over it Sam turned, and very deliberately met Mildred's eyes. She couldn't smile a secret half-supercilious smile now. Peters was a stranger to him. She had seen them introduced but a few minutes ago. She could not suggest, with drooping eyelids, and a certain unworthy smile, intended for him, that he had sought sympathy over the rebuff of " Not at home " from Peters ! But she was gazing with rapt expression at the sky, did not seem to see him, slowly turned her back as he looked.