

THE LADY OF THE CROSSING

autumn pine woods, the autumn peaks, the autumn orchards with the apples, as Marvell said of oranges in the Bermudas, like golden lamps in a green night, quaint oases among the fixed and eternal tumult of the mountains and their wilder foliage. The season does not signify to me, so be it I can see these old friends again: Sam Haig, and Nance his wife—with her kindly hazel eyes, her utterly unaffected charm—that wistful, joyful, sensitive little soul who would hurt no living thing; Timpkin, whose goat is to-day seldom got, and his wife, her face now blend of shrewd and tender, her hands more restful, with little wrinkles now on their backs; Franklin, who has a seedy look as of yore, until you draw near and find, as of yore, that it is his manner; Webley, superintendent of the line, and his wife, contented with him and not offended when he swears over nothings; Sing, too; Tom has gone back to Canton, but Sing says: “'Melica good enough for me. My friends all gone in China. Oh yes; no wi', no lillun.” Agnostic Sing cares not if at the end his ashes blend with dust of China or dust of “'Melica.” He realises that all the world is one small star.

Yes, I would like to see them again—those folks who have happened upon this planet in the same brief space of time as I. For this is in a way a real story, though it may read like romance.

FINIS