

THE LADY OF THE CROSSING

opened his mouth, grinned and stared. He saw something comical in the bulk of Marsden jammed in that bucket and swaying off into air.

"Look out at the trestles," he shouted, recovering from his amazement. "And say—don't look down when you get to the gulch."

Between the arriving and tipping of each of the descending buckets he watched the progress of Marsden, his grin fading, sign of anxiety taking its place; but as he saw the contractor pass the third trestle, atop of the first-rise, all steady, featly balanced, he opined: "He'll do it!" and then, looking down to the bridge, he saw another man coming along toward the engine-house, a man most businesslike. He watched him curiously from under the scoop cap that he wore raffishly on the side of his head.

The man who came posting under the bluffs, as Marsden disappeared, left the road when opposite the machine-house, crossed to it, climbed up the ladder, and—"Good-morning," he said.

"Why, it's my predecessor!" exclaimed the youth. "I didn't recognise you washed clean. I never saw you before but when you were black. How are you?"

"I'm all right," said Sam. "I want you to do me a favour."

"Yap?"

"I want to go up in one of the buckets."

"The —— you do! It seems to be catchin'! Still, where there's a bet concerned I won't stand in the way and bust the game. How many are