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CHAPTER III

THE GREAT ASCENT

THE engineer who had taken Sam Haig's place at the smelter (when the lucky scheme of "mineral in place" transformed Sam into a fruit-farmer) was a happy and careless kid. "Chance it" was his motto in life.

When, next day, Mr. Marsden appeared on the engine-house platform, considering the buckets as they glided down and were tipped, he jocularly remarked: "Want a ride?" He did not think that Marsden really wanted a ride; this was only his gaiety. But when the big man glared at him and said "That's the notion!" he observed that there was little pleasantry in Marsden's eyes. The celebrated contractor was grim to the point of strained. So the youthful engineer desisted from levity and kept the tail of his eye, as they say, on the visitor, awaiting developments.

Suddenly Marsden went down frog-like on the platform and, as an empty bucket passed under him, flopped into it in the manner his examination had decided as most scientific. The young engineer