

possibly go on in this condition, your Excellency, nor can I dream of allowing my unlucky accident to delay this worshipful company in their ascent of the mountains. I will therefore take my servant and ride slowly back to the cabin which we left this afternoon. Doubtless the worthy pioneer will give me shelter until my foot is healed, and I will rejoin your Excellency upon your return through the valley."

As he spoke, for the greater ease of the injured member, he leaned against a towering rock. He was a handsome youth, with a trick of keeping an unmoved countenance under even such a fire of laughter and exclamation as greeted his announcement.

"And for this you would lose the passing of the Appalachian Mountains!" cried Spotswood. "Why, man! from those heights we may almost see Lake Erie; may find out how near we are to the French, how easily the mountains may be traversed, what promise of success should his Majesty determine to plant settlements beyond them or to hold the mountain passes! There is service to be done and honor to be gained, and you would lag behind because of a wrenched ankle! Zoons, sir! at Blenheim I charged a whole regiment of Frenchmen, with a wound in my breast into which you might have thrust your hand!"

The younger man shrugged his shoulders. "Beggars may not be choosers," he said coolly. "The sunlight is fast fading, and if we would be out of this gorge before nightfall we must make no further tarrying. I have your Excellency's permission to depart?"

One of the gentlemen made a low-voiced but audible remark to his neighbor, and another hummed a line from a love song. The horses moved impatiently