

The Gods Give My Donkey Wings 117

in charge of the craft would put forward at the earliest moment they found a passage to be practicable. The man and the breeches could not be forthcoming a moment too soon to suit the Thorp, for the great man was timed to arrive on the next afternoon.

With the builders of the arch I made my way to the waterfall that now roared in good earnest over the boulder. And there saw I a scene which I still think of as one of the most pathetic of my long life of sight-seeing. The strong men had first attempted to break away the bank of the stream, but this they found to be quite impossible. The sides of the waterway were of solid rock, and to cut a channel through one or other of them must prove to be the work not of hours, but of many moons. So now every man had a different plan, and each was pursuing his own device. Some were preparing places for the timber levers in readiness for the arrival of the carpenters and oxen, others were prospecting the banks in the direction of the mountain, hoping to find a fissure in the rock which might be used to divert the course of the stream; and the blacksmith, his head and his great arms bare, the perspiration running down his face and falling in a stream