

White and shaking, he would not meet my eyes, but beckoned the werowance to him, and began to whisper vehemently; pointing now to the man upon the floor, now to the town, now to the forest. The Indian listened, nodded, and glided back to his fellows.

"The white men upon the Powhatan are many," he said in his own tongue, "but they build not their wigwams upon the banks of the Pamunkey.¹ The singing birds of the Pamunkey tell no tales. The pine splinters will burn as brightly there, and the white men will smell them not. We will build a fire at Uttamusac, between the red hills, before the temple and the graves of the kings." There was a murmur of assent from his braves.

Uttamussac! They would probably make a two days' journey of it. We had that long, then, to live.

Captors and captives, we presently left the hut. On the threshold I looked back, past the poltroon whom I had flung into the river one midsummer day, to that prone and bleeding figure. As I looked, it groaned and moved. The Indians behind me forced me on; a moment, and we were out beneath the stars. They shone so very brightly; there was one — large, steadfast, golden — just over the dark town behind us, over the Governor's house. Did she sleep or did she wake? Sleeping or waking, I prayed God to keep her safe and give her comfort. The stars now shone through naked branches, black tree trunks hemmed us round, and under our feet was the dreary rustling of dead leaves. The leafless trees gave way to pines and cedars, and the closely woven, scented roof hid the heavens, and made a darkness of the world beneath.

¹ The modern York.

CHAPTER XXX

IN WHICH WE START UPON A JOURNEY

WHEN the dawn broke, it found us traveling through a narrow valley, beside a stream of some width. Upon its banks grew trees of extraordinary height and girth; cypress and oak and walnut, they towered into the air, their topmost branches stark and black against the roseate heavens. Below that iron tracery glowed the firebrands of the maples, and here and there a willow leaned a pale green cloud above the stream. Mist closed the distances; we could hear, but not see, the deer where they stood to drink in the shallow places, or couched in the gray and dreamlike recesses of the forest.

Spectral, unreal, and hollow seems the world at dawn. Then, if ever, the heart sickens and the will flags, and life becomes a pageant that hath ceased to entertain. As I moved through the mist and the silence, and felt the tug of the thong that bound me to the wrist of the savage who stalked before me, I cared not how soon they made an end, seeing how stale and unprofitable were all things under the sun.

Diccon, walking behind me, stumbled over a root and fell upon his knees, dragging down with him the Indian to whom he was tied. In a sudden access of fury, aggravated by the jeers with which his fellows greeted his mishap, the savage turned upon his prisoner and would have stuck a knife into him, bound

and helpless as he was, had not the werowance interfered. The momentary altercation over, and the knife restored to its owner's belt, the Indians relapsed into their usual menacing silence, and the sullen march was resumed. Presently the stream made a sharp bend across our path, and we forded it as best we might. It ran dark and swift, and the water was of icy coldness. Beyond, the woods had been burnt, the trees rising from the red ground like charred and blackened stakes, with the ghostlike mist between. We left this dismal tract behind, and entered a wood of mighty oaks, standing well apart, and with the earth below carpeted with moss and early wild flowers. The sun rose, the mist vanished, and there set in the March day of keen wind and brilliant sunshine.

Farther on, an Indian bent his bow against a bear shambling across a little sunny glade. The arrow did its errand, and where the creature fell, there we sat down and feasted beside a fire kindled by rubbing two sticks together. According to their wont the Indians ate ravenously, and when the meal was ended began to smoke, each warrior first throwing into the air, as thankoffering to Kiwassa, a pinch of tobacco. They all stared at the fire around which we sat, and the silence was unbroken. One by one, as the pipes were smoked, they laid themselves down upon the brown leaves and went to sleep, only our two guardians and a third Indian over against us remaining wide-eyed and watchful.

There was no hope of escape, and we entertained no thought of it. Diccon sat, biting his nails, staring into the fire, and I stretched myself out, and burying my head in my arms tried to sleep, but could not.

With the midday we were afoot again, and we went

steadily on through the bright afternoon. We met with no harsh treatment other than our bonds. Instead, when our captors spoke to us, it was with words of amity and smiling lips. Who accounteth for Indian fashions? It is a way they have, to flatter and caress the wretch for whom have been provided the torments of the damned. If, when at sunset we halted for supper and gathered around the fire, the werowance began to tell of a foray I had led against the Paspaheghs years before, and if he and his warriors, for all the world like generous foes, loudly applauded some daring that had accompanied that raid, none the less did the red stake wait for us; none the less would they strive, as for heaven, to wring from us groans and cries.

The sun sank, and the darkness entered the forest. In the distance we heard the wolves, so the fire was kept up through the night. Diccon and I were tied to trees, and all the savages save one lay down and slept. I worked awhile at my bonds; but an Indian had tied them, and after a time I desisted from the useless labor. We two could have no speech together; the fire was between us, and we saw each other but dimly through the flame and wreathing smoke,—as each might see the other to-morrow. What Diccon's thoughts were I know not; mine were not of the morrow.

There had been no rain for a long time, and the multitude of leaves underfoot were crisp and dry. The wind was loud in them and in the swaying trees. Off in the forest was a bog, and the will-o'-the-wisps danced over it,—pale, cold flames, moving aimlessly here and there like ghosts of those lost in the woods. Toward the middle of the night some heavy animal

crashed through a thicket to the left of us, and tore away into the darkness over the loud-rustling leaves; and later on wolves' eyes gleamed from out the ring of darkness beyond the firelight. Far on in the night the wind fell and the moon rose, changing the forest into some dim, exquisite, far-off land, seen only in dreams. The Indians awoke silently and all at once, as at an appointed hour. They spoke for a while among themselves; then we were loosed from the trees, and the walk toward death began anew.

On this march the werowance himself stalked beside me, the moonlight whitening his dark limbs and relentless face. He spoke no word, nor did I deign to question or reason or entreat. Alike in the darkness of the deep woods, and in the silver of the glades, and in the long twilight stretches of sassafras and sighing grass, there was for me but one vision. Slender and still and white, she moved before me, with her wide dark eyes upon my face. *Jocelyn! Jocelyn!*

At sunrise the mist lifted from a low hill before us, and showed an Indian boy, painted white, poised upon the summit, like a spirit about to take its flight. He prayed to the One over All, and his voice came down to us pure and earnest. At sight of us he bounded down the hillside like a ball, and would have rushed away into the forest had not a Paspahugh starting out of line seized him and set him in our midst, where he stood, cool and undismayed, a warrior in miniature. He was of the Pamunkeys, and his tribe and the Paspahughs were at peace; therefore, when he saw the totem burnt upon the breast of the werowance, he became loquacious enough, and offered to go before us to his village, upon the banks of a stream, some bowshots away. He went, and the Paspahughs

rested under the trees until the old men of the village came forth to lead them through the brown fields and past the ring of leafless mulberries to the strangers' lodge. Here on the green turf mats were laid for the visitors, and water was brought for their hands. Later on, the women spread a great breakfast of fish and turkey and venison, maize bread, tuckahoe and pohickory. When it was eaten, the Paspahughs ranged themselves in a semicircle upon the grass, the Pamunkeys faced them, and each warrior and old man drew out his pipe and tobacco pouch. They smoked gravely, in a silence broken only by an occasional slow and stately question or compliment. The blue incense from the pipes mingled with the sunshine falling freely through the bare branches; the stream which ran by the lodge rippled and shone, and the wind rose and fell in the pines upon its farther bank.

Diccon and I had been freed for the time from our bonds, and placed in the centre of this ring, and when the Indians raised their eyes from the ground it was to gaze steadfastly at us. I knew their ways, and how they valued pride, indifference, and a bravado disregard of the worst an enemy could do. They should not find the white man less proud than the savage.

They gave us readily enough the pipes I asked for. Diccon lit one and I the other, and sitting side by side we smoked in a contentment as absolute as the Indians' own. With his eyes upon the werowance, Diccon told an old story of a piece of Paspahugh villainy and of the payment which the English exacted, and I laughed as at the most amusing thing in the world. The story ended, we smoked with serenity for a while; then I drew my dice from my pocket, and, beginning to throw, we were at once as much absorbed in the

game as if there were no other stake in the world beside the remnant of gold that I piled between us. The strange people in whose power we found ourselves looked on with grim approval, as at brave men who could laugh in Death's face.

The sun was high in the heavens when we bade the Pamunkeys farewell. The cleared ground, the mulberry trees, and the grass beneath, the few rude lodges with the curling smoke above them, the warriors and women and brown naked children, — all vanished, and the forest closed around us. A high wind was blowing, and the branches far above beat at one another furiously, while the pendent, leafless vines swayed against us, and the dead leaves went past in the whirlwind. A monstrous flight of pigeons crossed the heavens, flying from west to east, and darkening the land beneath like a transient cloud. We came to a plain covered with very tall trees that had one and all been ringed by the Indians. Long dead, and partially stripped of the bark, with their branches, great and small, squandered upon the ground, they stood, gaunt and silver gray, ready for their fall. As we passed, the wind brought two crashing to the earth. In the centre of the plain something — deer or wolf or bear or man — lay dead, for to that point the buzzards were sweeping from every quarter of the blue. Beyond was a pine wood, silent and dim, with a high green roof and a smooth and scented floor. We walked through it for an hour, and it led us to the Pamunkey. A tiny village, counting no more than a dozen warriors, stood among the pines that ran to the water's edge, and tied to the trees that shadowed the slow-moving flood were its canoes. When the people came forth to meet us, the Paspaheghs bought from them,

for a string of roanoke, two of these boats; and we made no tarrying, but, embarking at once, rowed up river toward Uttamussac and its three temples.

Diccon and I were placed in the same canoe. We were not bound: what need of bonds, when we had no friend nearer than the Powhatan, and when Uttamussac was so near? After a time the paddles were put into our hands, and we were required to row while our captors rested. There was no use in sulkiness; we laughed as at some huge jest, and bent to the task with a will that sent our canoe well in advance of its mate. Diccon burst into an old song that we had sung in the Low Countries, by camp fires, on the march, before the battle. The forest echoed to the loud and warlike tune, and a multitude of birds rose startled from the trees upon the bank. The Indians frowned, and one in the boat behind called out to strike the singer upon the mouth; but the werowance shook his head. There were none upon that river who might not know that the Paspaheghs journeyed to Uttamussac with prisoners in their midst. Diccon sang on, his head thrown back, the old bold laugh in his eyes. When he came to the chorus I joined my voice to his, and the woodland rang to the song. A psalm had better befitted our lips than those rude and vaunting words, seeing that we should never sing again upon this earth; but at least we sang bravely and gayly, with minds that were reasonably quiet.

The sun dropped low in the heavens, and the trees cast shadows across the water. The Paspaheghs now began to recount the entertainment they meant to offer us in the morning. All those tortures that they were wont to practice with hellish ingenuity they told over, slowly and tauntingly, watching to see a lip whiten or

an eyelid quiver. They boasted that they would make women of us at the stake. At all events, they made not women of us beforehand. We laughed as we rowed, and Diccon whistled to the leaping fish, and the fish-hawk, and the otter lying along a fallen tree beneath the bank.

The sunset came, and the river lay beneath the colored clouds like molten gold, with the gaunt forest black upon either hand. From the lifted paddles the water showered in golden drops. The wind died away, and with it all noises, and a dank stillness settled upon the flood and upon the endless forest. We were nearing Uttamussac, and the Indians rowed quietly, with bent heads and fearful glances; for Okee brooded over this place, and he might be angry. It grew colder and stiller, but the light dwelt in the heavens, and was reflected in the bosom of the river. The trees upon the southern bank were all pines; as if they had been carved from black stone they stood rigid against the saffron sky. Presently, back from the shore, there rose before us a few small hills, treeless, but covered with some low, dark growth. The one that stood the highest bore upon its crest three black houses shaped like coffins. Behind them was the deep yellow of the sunset.

An Indian rowing in the second canoe commenced a chant or prayer to Okee. The notes were low and broken, unutterably wild and melancholy. One by one his fellows took up the strain; it swelled higher, louder, and sterner, became a deafening cry, then ceased abruptly, making the stillness that followed like death itself. Both canoes swung round from the middle stream and made for the bank. When the boats had slipped from the stripe of gold into the

inky shadow of the pines, the Paspaheghs began to divest themselves of this or that which they conceived Okee might desire to possess. One flung into the stream a handful of copper links, another the chaplet of feathers from his head, a third a bracelet of blue beads. The werowance drew out the arrows from a gaudily painted and beaded quiver, stuck them into his belt, and dropped the quiver into the water.

We landed, dragging the canoes into a covert of overhanging bushes and fastening them there; then struck through the pines toward the rising ground, and presently came to a large village, with many long huts, and a great central lodge where dwelt the emperors when they came to Uttamussac. It was vacant now, Opechancanough being no man knew where.

When the usual stately welcome had been extended to the Paspaheghs, and when they had returned as stately thanks, the werowance began a harangue for which I furnished the matter. When he ceased to speak a great acclamation and tumult arose, and I thought they would scarce wait for the morrow. But it was late, and their werowance and conjurer restrained them. In the end the men drew off, and the yelling of the children and the passionate cries of the women, importunate for vengeance, were stilled. A guard was placed around the vacant lodge, and we two Englishmen were taken within and bound down to great logs, such as the Indians use to roll against their doors when they go from home.

There was revelry in the village; for hours after the night came, everywhere were bright firelight and the rise and fall of laughter and song. The voices of the women were musical, tender, and plaintive, and yet they waited for the morrow as for a gala day.

I thought of a woman who used to sing, softly and sweetly, in the twilight at Weyanoke, in the firelight at the minister's house. At last the noises ceased, the light died away, and the village slept beneath a heaven that seemed somewhat deaf and blind.

CHAPTER XXXI

IN WHICH NANTAUQUAS COMES TO OUR RESCUE

A MAN who hath been a soldier and an adventurer into far and strange countries must needs have faced Death many times and in many guises. I had learned to know that grim countenance, and to have no great fear of it. And beneath the ugliness of the mask that now presented itself there was only Death at last. I was no babe to whimper at a sudden darkness, to cry out against a curtain that a Hand chose to drop between me and the life I had lived. Death frightened me not, but when I thought of one whom I should leave behind me I feared lest I should go mad. Had this thing come to me a year before, I could have slept the night through; now -- now --

I lay, bound to the log, before the open door of the lodge, and, looking through it, saw the pines waving in the night wind and the gleam of the river beneath the stars, and saw her as plainly as though she had stood there under the trees, in a flood of noon sunshine. Now she was the Jocelyn Percy of Weyanoke, now of the minister's house, now of a storm-tossed boat and a pirate ship, now of the gaol at Jamestown. One of my arms was free; I could take from within my doublet the little purple flower, and drop my face upon the hand that held it. The bloom was quite withered, and scalding tears would not give it life again.

The face that was now gay, now defiant, now pale