



To Have and To Hold

Mary Johnston

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Chapter

1 IN WHICH I THROW AMBS-ACE

THE work of the day being over, I sat down upon my doorstep, pipe in hand, to rest awhile in the cool of the evening. Death is not more still than is this Virginian land in the hour when the sun has sunk away, and it is black beneath the trees, and the stars brighten slowly and softly, one by one. The birds that sing all day have hushed, and the horned owls, the monster frogs, and that strange and ominous fowl (if fowl it be, and not, as some assert, a spirit damned) which we English call the whippoorwill, are yet silent. Later the wolf will howl and the panther scream, but now there is no sound. The winds are laid, and the restless leaves droop and are quiet. The low lap of the water among the reeds is like the breathing of one who sleeps in his watch beside the dead.

I marked the light die from the broad bosom of the river, leaving it a dead man's hue. Awhile ago, and for many evenings, it had been crimson,—a river of blood. A week before, a great meteor had shot through the night, blood-red and bearded, drawing a slow-fading fiery trail across the heavens; and the moon had risen that same night blood-red, and upon its disk there was drawn in shadow a thing most marvelously like a scalping knife. Wherefore, the following day being Sunday, good Mr. Stockham, our minister at Weyanoke, exhorted us to be on our guard, and in his prayer besought that no sedition or rebellion might raise its head amongst the Indian subjects of the Lord's anointed. Afterward, in the churchyard, between the services, the more timorous began to tell of divers portents which they had observed, and to recount old tales of how the savages distressed us in the Starving Time.^[1] The bolder spirits laughed them to scorn, but the women began to weep and cower, and I, though I laughed too, thought of Smith^[2], and how he ever held the savages, and more especially that Opechancanough who was now their emperor, in a most deep distrust; telling us that the red men

watched while we slept, that they might teach wiliness to a Jesuit, and how to bide its time to a cat crouched before a mousehole. I thought of the terms we now kept with these heathen; of how they came and went familiarly amongst us, spying out our weakness, and losing the salutary awe which that noblest captain had struck into their souls; of how many were employed as hunters to bring down deer for lazy masters; of how, breaking the law, and that not secretly, we gave them knives and arms, a soldier's bread, in exchange for pelts and pearls; of how their emperor was forever sending us smooth messages; of how their lips smiled and their eyes frowned. That afternoon, as I rode home through the lengthening shadows, a hunter, red-brown and naked, rose from behind a fallen tree that sprawled across my path, and made offer to bring me my meat from the moon of corn to the moon of stags in exchange for a gun. There was scant love between the savages and myself,—it was answer enough when I told him my name. I left the dark figure standing, still as a carved stone, in the heavy shadow of the trees, and, spurring my horse (sent me from home, the year before, by my cousin Percy), was soon at my house,—a poor and rude one, but pleasantly set upon a slope of green turf, and girt with maize and the broad leaves of the tobacco. When I had had my supper, I called from their hut the two Paspahagh lads bought by me from their tribe the Michaelmas^[3] before, and soundly flogged them both, having in my mind a saying of my ancient captain's, namely, "He who strikes first oft-times strikes last."

Upon the afternoon of which I now speak, in the midsummer of the year of grace 1621, as I sat upon my doorstep, my long pipe between my teeth and my eyes upon the pallid stream below, my thoughts were busy with these matters,—so busy that I did not see a horse and rider emerge from the dimness of the forest into the cleared space before my palisade,

[4] nor knew, until his voice came up the bank, that my good friend, Master John Rolfe,[5] was without and would speak to me.

I went down to the gate, and, unbarring it, gave him my hand and led the horse within the inclosure.

"Thou careful man!" he said, with a laugh, as he dismounted. "Who else, think you, in this or any other hundred, now bars his gate when the sun goes down?"

"It is my sunset gun," I answered briefly, fastening his horse as I spoke.

He put his arm about my shoulder, for we were old friends, and together we went up the green bank to the house, and, when I had brought him a pipe, sat down side by side upon the doorstep.

"Of what were you dreaming?" he asked presently, when we had made for ourselves a great cloud of smoke. "I called you twice."

"I was wishing for Dale's times and Dale's laws." [6]

He laughed, and touched my knee with his hand, white and smooth as a woman's, and with a green jewel upon the forefinger.

"Thou Mars incarnate!" he cried. "Thou first, last, and in the meantime soldier! Why, what wilt thou do when thou gettest to heaven? Make it too hot to hold thee? Or take out letters of marque [7] against the Enemy?"

"I am not there yet," I said dryly. "In the meantime I would like a commission against—your relatives."

He laughed, then sighed, and, sinking his chin into his hand and softly tapping his foot against the ground, fell into a reverie.

"I would your princess were alive," I said presently.

"So do I," he answered softly. "So do I." Locking his hands behind his head, he raised his quiet face to the evening star. "Brave and wise and gentle," he mused. "If I did not think to meet her again, beyond that star, I could not smile and speak calmly, Ralph, as I do now."

"'T is a strange thing," I said, as I refilled my pipe. "Love for your brother-in-arms, love for your commander if he be a commander worth having, love for your horse and dog, I understand. But wedded love! to tie a burden around one's neck because 't is pink and white, or clear bronze, and shaped with elegance! Faugh!"

"Yet I came with half a mind to persuade thee to that very burden!" he cried, with another laugh.

"Thanks for thy pains," I said, blowing blue rings into the air.

"I have ridden to-day from Jamestown," he went on. "I was the only man, i' faith, that cared to leave its gates; and I met the world—the bachelor world—flocking to them. Not a mile of the way but I

encountered Tom, Dick, and Harry, dressed in their Sunday bravery and making full tilt for the city. And the boats upon the river! I have seen the Thames less crowded."

"There was more passing than usual," I said; "but I was busy in the fields, and did not attend. What's the lodestar?"

"The star that draws us all,—some to ruin, some to bliss ineffable, woman."

"Humph! The maids have come, then?"

He nodded. "There's a goodly ship down there, with a goodly lading."

"Videlicet, some fourscore waiting damsels and milkmaids, warranted honest by my Lord Warwick," I muttered.

"This business hath been of Edwyn Sandys' management, as you very well know," he rejoined, with some heat. "His word is good: therefore I hold them chaste. That they are fair I can testify, having seen them leave the ship."

"Fair and chaste," I said, "but meanly born."

"I grant you that," he answered. "But after all, what of it? Beggars must not be choosers. The land is new and must be peopled, nor will those who come after us look too curiously into the lineage of those to whom a nation owes its birth. What we in these plantations need is a loosening of the bonds which tie us to home, to England, and a tightening of those which bind us to this land in which we have cast our lot. We put our hand to the plough, but we turn our heads and look to our Egypt and its fleshpots. 'T is children and wife—be that wife princess or peasant—that make home of a desert, that bind a man with chains of gold to the country where they abide. Wherefore, when at midday I met good Master Wickham rowing down from Henricus to Jamestown, to offer his aid to Master Bucke in his press of business to-morrow, I gave the good man Godspeed, and thought his a fruitful errand and one pleasing to the Lord."

"Amen," I yawned. "I love the land, and call it home. My withers are unprung."

He rose to his feet, and began to pace the greensward before the door. My eyes followed his trim figure, richly though sombrely clad, then fell with a sudden dissatisfaction upon my own stained and frayed apparel.

"Ralph," he said presently, coming to a stand before me, "have you ever an hundred and twenty pounds of tobacco in hand? If not, I"—

"I have the weed," I replied. "What then?"

"Then at dawn drop down with the tide to the city, and secure for thyself one of these same errant damsels."

I stared at him, and then broke into laughter, in which, after a space and unwillingly, he himself joined. When at length I wiped the water from my eyes it was quite dark, the whippoorwills had begun to call, and Rolfe must needs hasten on. I went with him down to the gate.

"Take my advice,—it is that of your friend," he said, as he swung himself into the saddle. He gathered up the reins and struck spurs into his horse, then turned to call back to me: "Sleep upon my words, Ralph, and the next time I come I look to see a farthingale^[8] behind thee!"

"Thou art as like to see one upon me," I answered.

Nevertheless, when he had gone, and I climbed the bank and reentered the house, it was with a strange pang at the cheerlessness of my hearth, and an angry and unreasoning impatience at the lack of welcoming face or voice. In God's name, who was there to welcome me? None but my hounds, and the flying squirrel I had caught and tamed. Groping my way to the corner, I took from my store two torches, lit them, and stuck them into the holes pierced in the mantel shelf; then stood beneath the clear flame, and looked with a sudden sick distaste upon the disorder which the light betrayed. The fire was dead, and ashes and embers were scattered upon the hearth; fragments of my last meal littered the table, and upon the unwashed floor lay the bones I had thrown my dogs. Dirt and confusion reigned; only upon my armor, my sword and gun, my hunting knife and dagger, there was no spot or stain. I turned to gaze upon them where they hung against the wall, and in my soul I hated the piping times of peace, and longed for the camp fire and the call to arms.

With an impatient sigh, I swept the litter from the table, and, taking from the shelf that held my meagre library a bundle of Master Shakespeare's plays (gathered for me by Rolfe when he was last in London), I began to read; but my thoughts wandered, and the tale seemed dull and oft told. I tossed it aside, and, taking dice from my pocket, began to throw. As I cast the bits of bone, idly, and scarce caring to observe what numbers came uppermost, I had a vision of the forester's hut at home, where, when I was a boy, in the days before I ran away to the wars in the Low Countries, I had spent many a happy hour. Again I saw the bright light of the fire reflected in each well-scrubbed crock and pannikin; again I heard the cheerful hum of the wheel; again the face of the forester's daughter smiled upon me. The old gray manor house, where my mother, a stately dame, sat ever at her tapestry, and an imperious elder brother strode to and fro among his hounds, seemed

less of home to me than did that tiny, friendly hut. To-morrow would be my thirty-sixth birthday. All the numbers that I cast were high. "If I throw ambs-ace," I said, with a smile for my own caprice, "curse me if I do not take Rolfe's advice!"

I shook the box and clapped it down upon the table, then lifted it, and stared with a lengthening face at what it had hidden; which done, I diced no more, but put out my lights and went soberly to bed.

Chapter

2 IN WHICH I MEET MASTER JEREMY SPARROW

MINE are not dicers' oaths. The stars were yet shining when I left the house, and, after a word with my man Diccon, at the servants' huts, strode down the bank and through the gate of the palisade to the wharf, where I loosed my boat, put up her sail, and turned her head down the broad stream. The wind was fresh and favorable, and we went swiftly down the river through the silver mist toward the sunrise. The sky grew pale pink to the zenith; then the sun rose and drank up the mist. The river sparkled and shone; from the fresh green banks came the smell of the woods and the song of birds; above rose the sky, bright blue, with a few fleecy clouds drifting across it. I thought of the day, thirteen years before, when for the first time white men sailed up this same river, and of how noble its width, how enchanting its shores, how gay and sweet their blooms and odors, how vast their trees, how strange the painted savages, had seemed to us, storm-tossed adventurers, who thought we had found a very paradise, the Fortunate Isles at least. How quickly were we undeceived! As I lay back in the stern with half-shut eyes and tiller idle in my hand, our many tribulations and our few joys passed in review before me. Indian attacks; dissension and strife amongst our rulers; true men persecuted, false knaves elevated; the weary search for gold and the South Sea; the horror of the pestilence and the blacker horror of the Starving Time; the arrival of the *Patience* and *Deliverance*, whereat we wept like children; that most joyful Sunday morning when we followed my Lord de la Warre to church; the coming of Dale with that stern but wholesome martial code which was no stranger to me who had fought

under Maurice of Nassau; the good times that followed, when bowl-playing gallants were put down, cities founded, forts built, and the gospel preached; the marriage of Rolfe and his dusky princess; Argall's expedition,^[10] in which I played a part, and Argall's iniquitous rule; the return of Yeardley as Sir George, and the priceless gift he brought us,—all this and much else, old friends, old enemies, old toils and strifes and pleasures, ran, bitter-sweet, through my memory, as the wind and flood bore me on. Of what was before me I did not choose to think, sufficient unto the hour being the evil thereof.

The river seemed deserted: no horsemen spurred along the bridle path on the shore; the boats were few and far between, and held only servants or Indians or very old men. It was as Rolfe had said, and the free and able-bodied of the plantations had put out, posthaste, for matrimony. Chaplain's Choice appeared unpeopled; Piersey's Hundred slept in the sunshine, its wharf deserted, and but few, slow-moving figures in the tobacco fields; even the Indian villages looked scant of all but squaws and children, for the braves were gone to see the palefaces buy their wives. Below Paspahugh a cockleshell of a boat carrying a great white sail overtook me, and I was hailed by young Hamor.

"The maids are come!" he cried. "Hurrah!" and stood up to wave his hat.

"Humph!" I said. "I guess thy destination by thy hose. Are they not 'those that were thy peach-colored ones'?"

"Oons! yes!" he answered, looking down with complacency upon his tarnished finery. "Wedding garments, Captain Percy, wedding garments!"

I laughed. "Thou art a tardy bridegroom. I thought that the bachelors of this quarter of the globe slept last night in Jamestown."

His face fell. "I know it," he said ruefully; "but my doublet had more rents than slashes in it, and Martin Tailor kept it until cockcrow. That fellow rolls in tobacco; he hath grown rich off our impoverished wardrobes since the ship down yonder passed the capes. After all," he brightened, "the bargaining takes not place until toward midday, after solemn service and thanksgiving. There's time enough!" He waved me a farewell, as his great sail and narrow craft carried him past me.

I looked at the sun, which truly was not very high, with a secret disquietude; for I had had a scurvy hope that after all I should be too late, and so the noose which I felt tightening about my neck might unknot itself. Wind and tide were against me, and an hour later saw me nearing the peninsula and marveling at the shipping which crowded its

waters. It was as if every sloop, barge, canoe, and dugout between Point Comfort and Henricus were anchored off its shores, while above them towered the masts of the Marmaduke and Furtherance, then in port, and of the tall ship which had brought in those doves for sale. The river with its dancing freight, the blue heavens and bright sunshine, the green trees waving in the wind, the stir and bustle in the street and market place thronged with gayly dressed gallants, made a fair and pleasant scene. As I drove my boat in between the sloop of the commander of Shirley Hundred and the canoe of the Nansemond werowance, the two bells then newly hung in the church began to peal and the drum to beat. Stepping ashore, I had a rear view only of the folk who had clustered along the banks and in the street, their faces and footsteps being with one accord directed toward the market place. I went with the throng, jostled alike by velvet and dowlas, by youths with their estates upon their backs and naked fantastically painted savages, and trampling the tobacco with which the greedy citizens had planted the very street. In the square I brought up before the Governor's house, and found myself cheek by jowl with Master Pory, our Secretary, and Speaker of the Assembly.

"Ha, Ralph Percy!" he cried, wagging his gray head, "we two be the only sane younkens in the plantations! All the others are horn-mad!"

"I have caught the infection," I said, "and am one of the bedlamites."^[11]

He stared, then broke into a roar of laughter. "Art in earnest?" he asked, holding his fat sides. "Is Saul among the prophets?"

"Yes," I answered. "I diced last night,—yea or no; and the 'yea'—plague on 't—had it."

He broke into another roar. "And thou callest that bridal attire, man! Why, our cow-keeper goes in flaming silk to-day!"

I looked down upon my suit of buff, which had in truth seen some service, and at my great boots, which I had not thought to clean since I mired in a swamp, coming from Henricus the week before; then shrugged my shoulders.

"You will go begging," he continued, wiping his eyes. "Not a one of them will so much as look at you."

"Then will they miss seeing a man, and not a popinjay,"^[12] I retorted. "I shall not break my heart."

A cheer arose from the crowd, followed by a crashing peal of the bells and a louder roll of the drum. The doors of the houses around and to right and left of the square swung open, and the company which had been quartered overnight upon the citizens began to emerge. By twos and threes, some with hurried steps and downcast eyes, others more slowly and with free glances at the staring men, they gathered to the centre of the square, where, in surplice and band, there awaited them

godly Master Bucke and Master Wickham of Henricus. I stared with the rest, though I did not add my voice to theirs.

Before the arrival of yesterday's ship there had been in this natural Eden (leaving the savages out of the reckoning) several thousand Adams, and but some threescore Eves. And for the most part, the Eves were either portly and bustling or withered and shrewish housewives, of age and experience to defy the serpent. These were different. Ninety slender figures decked in all the bravery they could assume; ninety comely faces, pink and white, or clear brown with the rich blood showing through; ninety pair of eyes, laughing and alluring, or downcast with long fringes sweeping rounded cheeks; ninety pair of ripe red lips,—the crowd shouted itself hoarse and would not be restrained, brushing aside like straws the staves of the marshal and his men, and surging in upon the line of adventurous damsels. I saw young men, panting, seize hand or arm and strive to pull toward them some reluctant fair; others snatched kisses, or fell on their knees and began speeches out of Euphues; others commenced an inventory of their possessions,—acres, tobacco, servants, household plenishing. All was hubbub, protestation, frightened cries, and hysterical laughter. The officers ran to and fro, threatening and commanding; Master Pory alternately cried "Shame!" and laughed his loudest; and I plucked away a jackanapes^[13] of sixteen who had his hand upon a girl's ruff, and shook him until the breath was well-nigh out of him. The clamor did but increase.

"Way for the Governor!" cried the marshal. "Shame on you, my masters! Way for his Honor and the worshipful Council!"

The three wooden steps leading down from the door of the Governor's house suddenly blossomed into crimson and gold, as his Honor with the attendant Councilors emerged from the hall and stood staring at the mob below.

The Governor's honest moon face was quite pale with passion. "What a devil is this?" he cried wrathfully. "Did you never see a woman before? Where's the marshal? I'll imprison the last one of you for rioters!"

Upon the platform of the pillory, which stood in the centre of the market place, suddenly appeared a man of a gigantic frame, with a

strong face deeply lined and a great shock of grizzled hair,—a strange thing, for he was not old. I knew him to be one Master Jeremy Sparrow, a minister brought by the Southampton a month before, and as yet without a charge, but at that time I had not spoken with him. Without word of warning he thundered into a psalm of thanksgiving, singing it at the top of a powerful and yet sweet and tender voice, and with a fervor and exaltation that caught the heart of the riotous crowd. The two ministers in the throng beneath took up the strain; Master Pory added a husky tenor, eloquent of much sack; presently we were all singing. The audacious suitors, charmed into rationality, fell back, and the broken line re-formed. The Governor and the Council descended, and with pomp and solemnity took their places between the maids and the two ministers who were to head the column. The psalm ended, the drum beat a thundering roll, and the procession moved forward in the direction of the church.

Master Pory having left me, to take his place among his brethren of the Council, and the mob of those who had come to purchase and of the curious idle having streamed away at the heels of the marshal and his officers, I found myself alone in the square, save for the singer, who now descended from the pillory and came up to me.

"Captain Ralph Percy, if I mistake not?" he said, in a voice as deep and rich as the bass of an organ.

"The same," I answered. "And you are Master Jeremy Sparrow?"

"Yea, a silly preacher,—the poorest, meekest, and lowliest of the Lord's servitors."

His deep voice, magnificent frame, and bold and free address so gave the lie to the humility of his words that I had much ado to keep from laughing. He saw, and his face, which was of a cast most martial, flashed into a smile, like sunshine on a scarred cliff.

"You laugh in your sleeve," he said good-humoredly, "and yet I am but what I profess to be. In spirit I am a very Job, though nature hath fit to dress me as a Samson. I assure you, I am worse misfitted than is Master Yardstick yonder in those Falstaffian hose. But, good sir, will you not go to church?"

"If the church were Paul's, I might," I answered. "As it is, we could not get within fifty feet of the door."

"Of the great door, ay, but the ministers may pass through the side door. If you please, I will take you in with me. The pretty fools yonder march slowly; if we turn down this lane, we will outstrip them quite."

"Agreed," I said, and we turned into a lane thick planted with tobacco, made a detour of the Governor's house, and outflanked the procession, arriving at the small door before it had entered the churchyard. Here we found the sexton mounting guard.

"I am Master Sparrow, the minister that came in the Southampton," my new acquaintance explained. "I am to sit in the choir. Let us pass,

good fellow."

The sexton squared himself before the narrow opening, and swelled with importance.

"You, reverend sir, I will admit, such being my duty. But this gentleman is no preacher; I may not allow him to pass."

"You mistake, friend," said my companion gravely. "This gentleman, my worthy colleague, has but just come from the island of St. Brandon, where he preaches on the witches' Sabbath: hence the disorder of his apparel. His admittance be on my head: wherefore let us by."

"None to enter at the west door save Councilors, commander, and ministers. Any attempting to force an entrance to be arrested and laid by the heels if they be of the generality, or, if they be of quality, to be duly fined and debarred from the purchase of any maid whatsoever," chanted the sexton.

"Then, in God's name, let's on!" I exclaimed "Here, try this!" and I drew from my purse, which was something of the leanest, a shilling.

"Try this," quoth Master Jeremy Sparrow, and knocked the sexton down.

We left the fellow sprawling in the doorway, sputtering threats to the air without, but with one covetous hand clutching at the shilling which I threw behind me, and entered the church, which we found yet empty, though through the open great door we heard the drum beat loudly and a deepening sound of footsteps.

"I have choice of position," I said. "Yonder window seems a good station. You remain here in the choir?"

"Ay," he answered, with a sigh; "the dignity of my calling must be upheld: wherefore I sit in high places, rubbing elbows with gold lace, when of the very truth the humility of my spirit is such that I would feel more at home in the servants' seats or among the negars that we bought last year."

Had we not been in church I would have laughed, though indeed I saw that he devoutly believed his own words. He took his seat in the largest and finest of the chairs behind the great velvet one reserved for the Governor, while I went and leaned against my window, and we stared at each other across the flower-decked building in profound silence, until, with one great final crash, the bells ceased, the drum stopped beating, and the procession entered.

Chapter

3 IN WHICH I MARRY IN HASTE

THE long service of praise and thanksgiving was well-nigh over when I first saw her.

She sat some ten feet from me, in the corner, and so in the shadow of a tall pew. Beyond her was a row of milkmaid beauties, red of cheek, free of eye, deep-bosomed, and beribboned like Maypoles. I looked again, and saw—and see—a rose amongst blowzed poppies and peonies, a pearl amidst glass beads, a Perdita in a ring of rustics, a nonparella of all grace and beauty! As I gazed with all my eyes, I found more than grace and beauty in that wonderful face,—found pride, wit, fire, determination, finally shame and anger. For, feeling my eyes upon her, she looked up and met what she must have thought the impudent stare of an appraiser. Her face, which had been without color, pale and clear like the sky about the evening star, went crimson in a moment. She bit her lip and shot at me one withering glance, then dropped her eyelids and hid the lightning. When I looked at her again, covertly, and from under my hand raised as though to push back my hair, she was pale once more, and her dark eyes were fixed upon the water and the green trees without the window.

The congregation rose, and she stood up with the other maids. Her dress of dark woolen, severe and unadorned, her close ruff and prim white coif, would have cried "Puritan," had ever Puritan looked like this woman, upon whom the poor apparel had the seeming of purple and ermine.

Anon came the benediction. Governor, Councilors, commanders, and ministers left the choir and paced solemnly down the aisle; the maids closed in behind; and we who had lined the walls, shifting from one heel to the other for a long two hours, brought up the rear, and so passed from the church to a fair green meadow adjacent thereto. Here the company disbanded; the wearers of gold lace betaking themselves to seats erected in the shadow of a mighty oak, and the ministers, of whom there were four, bestowing themselves within pulpits of turf. For one altar and one clergyman could not hope to dispatch that day's business.

As for the maids, for a minute or more they made one cluster; then, shyly or with laughter, they drifted apart like the petals of a wind-blown rose, and silk doublet and hose gave chase. Five minutes saw the goodly company of damsels errant and would-be bridegrooms scattered far and near over the smiling meadow. For the most part they went man and maid, but the fairer of the feminine cohort had rings of clamorous

suitors from whom to choose. As for me, I walked alone; for if by chance I neared a maid, she looked (womanlike) at my apparel first, and never reached my face, but squarely turned her back. So disengaged, I felt like a guest at a mask, and in some measure enjoyed the show, though with an uneasy consciousness that I was pledged to become, sooner or later, a part of the spectacle. I saw a shepherdess fresh from Arcadia wave back a dozen importunate gallants, then throw a knot of blue ribbon into their midst, laugh with glee at the scramble that ensued, and finally march off with the wearer of the favor. I saw a neighbor of mine, tall Jack Pride, who lived twelve miles above me, blush and stammer, and bow again and again to a milliner's apprentice of a girl, not five feet high and all eyes, who dropped a curtsy at each bow. When I had passed them fifty yards or more, and looked back, they were still bobbing and bowing. And I heard a dialogue between Phyllis and Corydon. Says Phyllis, "Any poultry?"

Corydon. "A matter of twalve hens and twa cocks."

Phyllis. "A cow?"

Corydon. "Twa."

Phyllis. "How much tobacco?"

Corydon. "Three acres, hinny, though I dinna drink the weed mysel'. I'm a Stewart, woman, an' the King's puir cousin."

Phyllis. "What household plenishing?"

Corydon. "Ane large bed, ane flock bed, ane trundle bed, ane chest, ane trunk, ane leather cairpet, sax cawfskin chairs an' twa-three rush, five pair o' sheets an' auchteen dowlas napkins, sax alchemy spunes"—

Phyllis. "I'll take you."

At the far end of the meadow, near to the fort, I met young Hamor, alone, flushed, and hurrying back to the more populous part of the field.

"Not yet mated?" I asked. "Where are the maids' eyes?"

"By—!" he answered, with an angry laugh. "If they're all like the sample I've just left, I'll buy me a squaw from the Paspaheghs!"

I smiled. "So your wooing has not prospered?"

His vanity took fire. "I have not wooed in earnest," he said carelessly, and hitched forward his cloak of sky-blue tuftaffeta with an air. "I sheered off quickly enough, I warrant you, when I found the nature of the commodity I had to deal with."

"Ah!" I said. "When I left the crowd they were going very fast. You had best hurry, if you wish to secure a bargain."

"I'm off," he answered; then, jerking his thumb over his shoulder, "If you keep on to the river and that clump of cedars, you will find Termagaunt^[14] in ruff and farthingale."

When he was gone, I stood still for a while and watched the slow sweep of a buzzard high in the blue, after which I unsheathed my

dagger, and with it tried to scrape the dried mud from my boots. Succeeding but indifferently, I put the blade up, stared again at the sky, drew a long breath, and marched upon the covert of cedars indicated by Hamor.

As I neared it, I heard at first only the wash of the river; but presently there came to my ears the sound of a man's voice, and then a woman's angry "Begone, sir!"

"Kiss and be friends," said the man.

The sound that followed being something of the loudest for even the most hearty salutation, I was not surprised, on parting the bushes, to find the man nursing his cheek, and the maid her hand.

"You shall pay well for that, you sweet vixen!" he cried, and caught her by both wrists.

She struggled fiercely, bending her head this way and that, but his hot lips had touched her face before I could come between.

When I had knocked him down he lay where he fell, dazed by the blow, and blinking up at me with his small ferret eyes. I knew him to be one Edward Sharpless, and I knew no good of him. He had been a lawyer in England. He lay on the very brink of the stream, with one arm touching the water. Flesh and blood could not resist it, so, assisted by the toe of my boot, he took a cold bath to cool his hot blood.

When he had clambered out and had gone away, cursing, I turned to face her. She stood against the trunk of a great cedar, her head thrown back, a spot of angry crimson in each cheek, one small hand clenched at her throat. I had heard her laugh as Sharpless touched the water, but now there was only defiance in her face. As we gazed at each other, a burst of laughter came to us from the meadow behind. I looked over my shoulder, and beheld young Hamor, probably disappointed of a wife,—with Giles Allen and Wynne, returning to his abandoned quarry. She saw, too, for the crimson spread and deepened and her bosom heaved. Her dark eyes, glancing here and there like those of a hunted creature, met my own.

"Madam," I said, "will you marry me?"

She looked at me strangely. "Do you live here?" she asked at last, with a disdainful wave of her hand toward the town.

"No, madam," I answered. "I live up river, in Weyanoke Hundred, some miles from here."

"Then, in God's name, let us be gone!" she cried, with sudden passion.

I bowed low, and advanced to kiss her hand.

The finger tips which she slowly and reluctantly resigned to me were icy, and the look with which she favored me was not such an one as poets feign for like occasions. I shrugged the shoulders of my spirit, but said nothing. So, hand in hand, though at arms' length, we passed from the shade of the cedars into the open meadow, where we presently met Hamor and his party. They would have barred the way, laughing and

making unsavory jests, but I drew her closer to me and laid my hand upon my sword. They stood aside, for I was the best swordsman in Virginia.

The meadow was now less thronged. The river, up and down, was white with sailboats, and across the neck of the peninsula went a line of horsemen, each with his purchase upon a pillion behind him. The Governor, the Councilors, and the commanders had betaken themselves to the Governor's house, where a great dinner was to be given. But Master Piersey, the Cape Merchant, remained to see the Company reimbursed to the last leaf, and the four ministers still found occupation, though one couple trod not upon the heels of another, as they had done an hour ago.

"I must first satisfy the treasurer," I said, coming to a halt within fifty feet of the now deserted high places.

She drew her hand from mine, and looked me up and down.

"How much is it?" she asked at last. "I will pay it."

I stared at her.

"Can't you speak?" she cried, with a stamp of her foot. "At what am I valued? Ten pounds—fifty pounds"—

"At one hundred and twenty pounds of tobacco, madam," I said dryly. "I will pay it myself. To what name upon the ship's list do you answer?"

"Patience Worth," she replied.

I left her standing there, and went upon my errand with a whirling brain. Her enrollment in that company proclaimed her meanly born, and she bore herself as of blood royal; of her own free will she had crossed an ocean to meet this day, and she held in passionate hatred this day and all that it contained; she was come to Virginia to better her condition, and the purse which she had drawn from her bosom was filled with gold pieces. To another I would have advised caution, delay, application to the Governor, inquiry; for myself I cared not to make inquiries.

The treasurer gave me my receipt, and I procured, from the crowd around him, Humfrey Kent, a good man and true, and old Belfield, the perfumer, for witnesses. With them at my heels I went back to her, and, giving her my hand, was making for the nearest minister, when a voice at a little distance hailed me, crying out, "This way, Captain Percy!"

I turned toward the voice, and beheld the great figure of Master Jeremy Sparrow sitting, cross-legged like the Grand Turk, upon a grassy hillock, and beckoning to me from that elevation.

"Our acquaintance hath been of the shortest," he said genially, when the maid, the witnesses, and I had reached the foot of the hillock, "but I have taken a liking to you and would fain do you a service. Moreover, I lack employment. The maids take me for a hedge parson, and sheer off to my brethren, who truly are of a more clerical appearance. Whereas if they could only look upon the inner man! You have been long in

choosing, but have doubtless chosen"—He glanced from me to the woman beside me, and broke off with open mouth and staring eyes. There was excuse, for her beauty was amazing. "A paragon," he ended, recovering himself.

"Marry us quickly, friend," I said. "Clouds are gathering, and we have far to go."

He came down from his mound, and we went and stood before him. I had around my neck the gold chain given me upon a certain occasion by Prince Maurice, and in lieu of other ring I now twisted off the smallest link and gave it to her.

"Your name?" asked Master Sparrow, opening his book.

"Ralph Percy, Gentleman."

"And yours?" he demanded, staring at her with a somewhat too apparent delight in her beauty.

She flushed richly and bit her lip.

He repeated the question.

She stood a minute in silence, her eyes upon the darkening sky. Then she said in a low voice, "Jocelyn Leigh."

It was not the name I had watched the Cape Merchant strike off his list. I turned upon her and made her meet my eyes. "What is your name?" I demanded. "Tell me the truth!"

"I have told it," she answered proudly. "It is Jocelyn Leigh."

I faced the minister again. "Go on," I said briefly.

"The Company commands that no constraint be put upon its poor maids. Wherefore, do you marry this man of your own free will and choice?"

"Ay," she said, "of my own free will."

Well, we were married, and Master Jeremy Sparrow wished us joy, and Kent would have kissed the bride had I not frowned him off. He and Belfield strode away, and I left her there, and went to get her bundle from the house that had sheltered her overnight. Returning, I found her seated on the turf, her chin in her hand and her dark eyes watching the distant play of lightning. Master Sparrow had left his post, and was nowhere to be seen.

I gave her my hand and led her to the shore; then loosed my boat and helped her aboard. I was pushing off when a voice hailed us from the bank, and the next instant a great bunch of red roses whirled past me and fell into her lap. "Sweets to the sweet, you know," said Master Jeremy Sparrow genially. "Goodwife Allen will never miss them."

I was in two minds whether to laugh or to swear,—for I had never given her flowers,—when she settled the question for me by raising the crimson mass and bestowing it upon the flood.

A sudden puff of wind brought the sail around, hiding his fallen countenance. The wind freshened, coming from the bay, and the boat was off like a startled deer. When I next saw him he had recovered his

equanimity, and, with a smile upon his rugged features, was waving us a farewell. I looked at the beauty opposite me, and, with a sudden movement of pity for him, mateless, stood up and waved to him vigorously in turn.

Chapter

4 IN WHICH I AM LIKE TO REPENT AT LEISURE

WHEN we had passed the mouth of the Chickahominy, I broke the silence, now prolonged beyond reason, by pointing to the village upon its bank, and telling her something of Smith's expedition up that river, ending by asking her if she feared the savages.

When at length she succeeded in abstracting her attention from the clouds, it was to answer in the negative, in a tone of the supremest indifference, after which she relapsed into her contemplation of the weather.

Further on I tried again. "That is Kent's, yonder. He brought his wife from home last year. What a hedge of sunflowers she has planted! If you love flowers, you will find those of paradise in these woods."

No answer.

Below Martin-Brandon we met a canoe full of Paspaheghs, bound upon a friendly visit to some one of the down-river tribes; for in the bottom of the boat reposed a fat buck, and at the feet of the young men lay trenchers of maize cakes and of late mulberries. I hailed them, and when we were alongside held up the brooch from my hat, then pointed to the purple fruit. The exchange was soon made; they sped away, and I placed the mulberries upon the thwart beside her.

"I am not hungry," she said coldly. "Take them away."

I bit my lip, and returned to my place at the tiller. This rose was set with thorns, and already I felt their sting. Presently she leaned back in the nest I had made for her. "I wish to sleep," she said haughtily, and, turning her face from me, pillowed her head upon her arms.

I sat, bent forward, the tiller in my hand, and stared at my wife in some consternation. This was not the tame pigeon, the rosy, humble, domestic creature who was to make me a home and rear me children. A sea bird with broad white wings swooped down upon the water, now dark and ridged, rested there a moment, then swept away into the heart of the gathering storm. She was liker such an one. Such birds were caught at times, but never tamed and never kept.

The lightning, which had played incessantly in pale flashes across the low clouds in the south, now leaped to higher peaks and became more vivid, and the muttering of the thunder changed to long, booming peals. Thirteen years before, the Virginia storms had struck us with terror. Compared with those of the Old World we had left, they were as cannon to the whistling of arrows, as breakers on an iron coast to the dull wash of level seas. Now they were nothing to me, but as the peals changed to

great crashes as of falling cities, I marveled to see my wife sleeping so quietly. The rain began to fall, slowly, in large sullen drops, and I rose to cover her with my cloak. Then I saw that the sleep was feigned, for she was gazing at the storm with wide eyes, though with no fear in their dark depths. When I moved they closed, and when I reached her the lashes still swept her cheeks, and she breathed evenly through parted lips. But, against her will, she shrank from my touch as I put the cloak about her; and when I had returned to my seat, I bent to one side and saw, as I had expected to see, that her eyes were wide open again. If she had been one whit less beautiful, I would have wished her back at Jamestown, back on the Atlantic, back at whatever outlandish place, where manners were unknown, that had owned her and cast her out. Pride and temper! I set my lips, and vowed that she should find her match.

The storm did not last. Ere we had reached Piersey's the rain had ceased and the clouds were breaking; above Chaplain's Choice hung a great rainbow; we passed Tants Weyanoke in the glory of the sunset, all shattered gold and crimson. Not a word had been spoken. I sat in a humor grim enough, and she lay there before me, wide awake, staring at the shifting banks and running water, and thinking that I thought she slept.

At last my own wharf rose before me through the gathering dusk, and beyond it shone out a light; for I had told Diccon to set my house in order, and to provide fire and torches, that my wife might see I wished to do her honor. I looked at that wife, and of a sudden the anger in my heart melted away. It was a wilderness vast and dreadful to which she had come. The mighty stream, the towering forests, the black skies and deafening thunder, the wild cries of bird and beast the savages, uncouth and terrible,—for a moment I saw my world as the woman at my feet must see it, strange, wild, and menacing, an evil land, the other side of the moon. A thing that I had forgotten came to my mind: how that, after our landing at Jamestown, years before, a boy whom we had with us did each night fill with cries and lamentations the hut where he lay with my cousin Percy, Gosnold, and myself, nor would cease though we tried both crying shame and a rope's end. It was not for homesickness, for he had no mother or kin or home; and at length Master Hunt brought him to confess that it was but pure panic terror of the land itself,—not of the Indians or of our hardships, both of which he faced bravely enough, but of the strange trees and the high and long roofs of vine, of the black sliding earth and the white mist, of the fireflies and the whippoorwills,—a sick fear of primeval Nature and her tragic mask.

This was a woman, young, alone, and friendless, unless I, who had sworn to cherish and protect her, should prove myself her friend. Wherefore, when, a few minutes later, I bent over her, it was with all gentleness that I touched and spoke to her.

"Our journey is over," I said. "This is home, my dear."

She let me help her to her feet, and up the wet and slippery steps to the level of the wharf. It was now quite dark, there being no moon, and thin clouds obscuring the stars. The touch of her hand, which I perforce held since I must guide her over the long, narrow, and unrailed trestle, chilled me, and her breathing was hurried, but she moved by my side through the gross darkness unfalteringly enough. Arrived at the gate of the palisade, I beat upon it with the hilt of my sword, and shouted to my men to open to us. A moment, and a dozen torches came flaring down the bank. Diccon shot back the bolts, and we entered. The men drew up and saluted; for I held my manor a camp, my servants soldiers, and myself their captain.

I have seen worse favored companies, but doubtless the woman beside me had not. Perhaps, too, the red light of the torches, now flaring brightly, now sunk before the wind, gave their countenances a more villainous cast than usual. They were not all bad. Diccon had the virtue of fidelity, if none other; there were a brace of Puritans, and a handful of honest fools, who, if they drilled badly, yet abhorred mutiny. But the half dozen I had taken off Argall's hands; the Dutchmen who might have been own brothers to those two Judases, Adam and Francis; the thief and the highwayman I had bought from the precious crew sent us by the King the year before; the negro and the Indians—small wonder that she shrank and cowered. It was but for a moment. I was yet seeking for words sufficiently reassuring when she was herself again. She did not deign to notice the men's awkward salute, and when Diccon, a handsome rogue enough, advancing to light us up the bank, brushed by her something too closely, she drew away her skirts as though he had been a lazar.^[15] At my own door I turned and spoke to the men, who had followed us up the ascent.

"This lady," I said, taking her hand as she stood beside me, "is my true and lawful wife, your mistress, to be honored and obeyed as such. Who fails in reverence to her I hold as mutinous to myself, and will deal with him accordingly. She gives you to-morrow for holiday, with double rations, and to each a measure of rum. Now thank her properly."

They cheered lustily, of course, and Diccon, stepping forward, gave us thanks in the name of them all, and wished us joy. After which, with

another cheer, they backed from out our presence, then turned and made for their quarters, while I led my wife within the house and closed the door.

Diccon was an ingenious scoundrel. I had told him to banish the dogs, to have the house cleaned and lit, and supper upon the table; but I had not ordered the floor to be strewn with rushes, the walls draped with flowering vines, a great jar filled with sunflowers, and an illumination of a dozen torches. Nevertheless, it looked well, and I highly approved the capon and maize cakes, the venison pasty and ale, with which the table was set. Through the open doors of the two other rooms were to be seen more rushes, more flowers, and more lights.

To the larger of these rooms I now led the way, deposited her bundle upon the settle, and saw that Diccon had provided fair water for her face and hands; which done, I told her that supper waited upon her convenience, and went back to the great room.

She was long in coming, so long that I grew impatient and went to call her. The door was ajar, and so I saw her, kneeling in the middle of the floor, her head thrown back, her hands raised and clasped, on her face terror and anguish of spirit written so large that I started to see it. I stared in amazement, and, had I followed my first impulse, would have gone to her, as I would have gone to any other creature in so dire distress. On second thoughts, I went noiselessly back to my station in the great room. She had not seen me, I was sure. Nor had I long to wait. Presently she appeared, and I could have doubted the testimony of my eyes, so changed were the agonized face and figure of a few moments before. Beautiful and disdainful, she moved to the table, and took the great chair drawn before it with the air of an empress mounting a throne. I contented myself with the stool.

She ate nothing, and scarcely touched the canary I poured for her. I pressed upon her wine and viands,—in vain; I strove to make conversation,—equally in vain. Finally, tired of "yes" and "no" uttered as though she were reluctantly casting pearls before swine, I desisted, and applied myself to my supper in a silence as sullen as her own. At last we rose from table, and I went to look to the fastenings of door and windows, and returning found her standing in the centre of the room, her head up and her hands clenched at her sides. I saw that we were to have it out then and there, and I was glad of it.

"You have something to say," I said. "I am quite at your command," and I went and leaned against the chimneypiece.

The low fire upon the hearth burnt lower still before she broke the silence. When she did speak it was slowly, and with a voice which was evidently controlled only by a strong effort of a strong will. She said:—

"When—yesterday, to-day, ten thousand years ago you went from this horrible forest down to that wretched village yonder, to those huts that make your London, you went to buy you a wife?"