

RICHARD OF JAMESTOWN

RICHARD OF JAMESTOWN

A Story of the Virginia Colony

BY

JAMES OTIS

with illustrations



YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

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FOREWARD

The purpose of this series of stories is to show the children, and even those who have already taken up the study of history, the *home life* of the colonists with whom they meet in their books. To this end every effort has been made to avoid anything savoring of romance, and to deal only with facts, so far as it is possible, while describing the daily life of those people who conquered the wilderness whether for conscience sake or for gain.

That the stories may appeal more directly to the children, they are told from the viewpoint of a child, and purport to have been related by a child. Should any criticism be made regarding the seeming neglect to mention important historical facts, the answer would be that these books are not sent out as histories,—although it is believed that they will awaken a desire to learn more of the building of the nation,—and only such incidents as would be particularly noted by a child are used.

Surely it is entertaining as well as instructive for young people to read of the toil and privations in the homes of those who came into a new world to build up a country for themselves, and such homely facts are not to be found in the real histories of our land.

JAMES OTIS.

Richard of Jamestown

WHO I AM



Wes, my name is Richard Mutton. Sounds rather queer, doesn't it? The lads in London town used to vex me sorely by calling, "Baa, baa, black sheep," whenever I passed them, and yet he who will may find the name Richard Mutton written in the list of those who were sent to Virginia, in the new world, by the London Company, on the nineteenth day of December, in the year of Our Lord, 1606.

Whosoever may chance to read what I am here setting down, will, perhaps, ask how it happened that a lad only ten years of age was allowed to sail for that new world in company with such a band of adventurous men as headed the enterprise.

Therefore it is that I must tell a certain portion of the story of my life, for the better understanding of how I came to be in this fair, wild, savage-beset land of Virginia.

Yet I was not the only boy who sailed in the *Susan Constant*, as you may see by turning to the list of names, which is under the care, even to this day, of the London Company, for there you will find written in clerkly hand the names, Samuel Collier, Nathaniel Peacock, James Brumfield, and Richard Mutton.

Nathaniel Peacock has declared more than once that my name comes last in the company at the very end of all, because I was not a full-grown mutton; but only large enough to be called a sheep's tail, and therefore should be hung on behind, as is shown by the list.

LEFT ALONE IN THE WORLD

The reason of my being in this country of Virginia at so young an age, is directly concerned with that brave soldier and wondrous adventurer, Captain John Smith, of whom I make no doubt the people in this new world, when the land has been covered with towns and villages, will come to know right well, for of a truth he is a wonderful man.

In the sixth month of Grace, 1606, I was living as best I might in that great city of London, which is as much a wilderness of houses, as this country is a wilderness of trees.

My father was a soldier of fortune, which means that he stood ready to do battle in behalf of

whatsoever nation he believed was in the right, or, perhaps, on the side of those people who would pay him the most money for risking his life.

He had fought with the Dutch soldiers under command of one Captain Miles Standish, an Englishman of renown among men of arms, and had been killed.

My mother died less than a week before the news was brought that my father had been shot to death. Not then fully understanding how great a disaster it is to a young lad when he loses father or mother, and how yet more sad is his lot when he has lost both parents, I made shift to live as best I might with a sore heart; but yet not so sore as if I had known the full extent of the misfortune which had overtaken me.

AN IDLE BOY

At first it was an easy matter for me to get food at the home of this lad, or of that, among my acquaintances, sleeping wherever night overtook me; but, finally, when mayhap three months had gone by, my welcome was worn threadbare, and I was told by more than one, that a hulking lad of ten years should have more pride than to beg his way from door to door.

It is with shame I here set down the fact, that many weeks passed before I came to understand, in ever so slight a degree, what a milksop I must be, thus eating the bread of idleness when I should have won the right, by labor, to a livelihood in this world.



This last thought had just begun to take root in my heart when Nathaniel Peacock, whose mother had been a good friend of mine during a certain time after I was made an orphan, and I, heard that a remarkably brave soldier was in the city of London, making ready to go into the new world, with the intent to build there a town for the king.

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH COMES TO LONDON

This man was no other than Captain John Smith, who, although at this time not above six and twenty years of age, had already served in the French, in the Dutch, and in the Transylvanian armies, where he had met and overcome many dangers.

He had been robbed and beaten and thrown into the sea because of not believing in the religion

of the men who attacked him; he had been a slave among the Turks; he had fought, one after another, three of the bravest in the Turkish army, and had cut off the head of each in turn.

Can it be wondered at that Nathaniel Peacock and I were filled to overflowing with admiration for this wonderful soldier, or that we desired above all things to see him?

We loitered about the streets of London town from daylight until night had come again, hoping to feast our eyes upon this same John Smith, who was to us one of the wonders of the world, because in so short a time he had made his name as a soldier famous in all countries, and yet we saw him not.



We had searched London town over and over for mayhap a full month, doing nothing else save hunt for the man whose life had been so filled with adventure, and each time we returned home, Mistress Peacock reproached me with being an idle good for nothing, and Nathaniel but little better.

I believe it was her harsh words which caused to spring up in my heart a desire to venture into the new world, where it was said gold could be found in abundance, and even the smallest lad might pick up whatsoever of wealth he desired, if so be his heart was strong enough to brave the journey across the great ocean.

The more I thought of what could be found in that land, which was called Virginia, the stronger grew my desire, until the time came when it was a fixed purpose in my mind, and not until then did I breathe to Nathaniel a word of that which had been growing within me.

He took fire straightway I spoke of what it might be possible for us lads to do, and declared that whether his mother were willing or no, he would brave all the dangers of that terrible journey overseas, if so be we found an opportunity.

To him it seemed a simple matter that, having once found a ship which was to sail for the far-off land, we might hide ourselves within her, having gathered sufficient of food to keep us alive during the journey. But how this last might be done, his plans had not been made.

MEETING CAPTAIN SMITH

Lest I should set down too many words, and therefore bring upon myself the charge of being one

who can work with his tongue better than with his hands, I will pass over all that which Nathaniel and I did during the long time we roamed the streets in the hope of coming face to face with Captain Smith.

It is enough if I set it down at once that we finally succeeded in our purpose, having come upon him one certain morning on Cheapside, when there was a fight on among some apprentices, and the way so blocked that neither he nor any other could pass through the street, until the quarrelsome fellows were done playing upon each other's heads with sticks and stones.

It seemed much as if fortune had at last consented to smile upon us, for we were standing directly in front of the great man.

I know not how it chanced that I, a lad whose apparel was far from being either cleanly or whole, should have dared to raise my voice in speech with one who was said to have talked even with a king. Yet so I did, coming without many words to that matter which had been growing these many days in my mind, and mayhap it was the very suddenness of the words that caught his fancy.



“Nathaniel Peacock and I are minded to go with you into that new world, Captain John Smith, if so be you permit us,” I said, “and there we will serve you with honesty and industry.”

CAPTAIN SMITH SPEAKS TO ME

There was a smile come upon his face as I spoke, and he looked down upon Nathaniel and me, who were wedged among that throng which watched the apprentices quarrel, until we were like to be squeezed flat, and said in what I took to be a friendly tone:

“So, my master, you would journey into Virginia with the hope of making yourself rich, and you not out from under your mother’s apron as yet?”

“I have no mother to wear an apron, Captain Smith, nor father to say I may go there or shall come here; but yet would serve you as keenly as might any man, save mayhap my strength, which will increase, be not so great as would be found in those older.”

Whether this valiant soldier was pleased with my words, or if in good truth boys were needed in the enterprise, I cannot say; but certain it is he spoke me fairly, writing down upon a piece of paper, which he tore from his tablets, the name of the street in

which he had lodgings, and asking, as he handed it to me, if I could read.

Now it was that I gave silent thanks, because of what had seemed to me a hardship when my mother forced me to spend so many hours each day in learning to use a quill, until I was able to write a clerkly hand.

It seemed to please this great soldier that I could do what few of the lads in that day had been taught to master, and, without further ado, he said to me boldly:

“You shall journey into Virginia with me, an’ it please you, lad. What is more, I will take upon myself the charge of outfitting you, and time shall tell whether you have enough of manliness in you to repay me the cost.”

Then it was that Nathaniel raised his voice; but the captain gave him no satisfaction, declaring it was the duty of a true lad to stand by his mother, and that he would lend his aid to none who had a home, and in it those who cared for him.

I could have talked with this brave soldier until the night had come, and would never have wearied of asking concerning what might be found in that new world of Virginia; but it so chanced that when the business was thus far advanced, the apprentices were done with striving to break each other’s heads, and Captain Smith, bidding me come to his house next morning, went his way.

THE PLANS OF THE LONDON COMPANY

Then it was that Nathaniel declared he also would go on the voyage to Virginia, whether it pleased Captain Smith or no, and I, who should have set my face against his running away from home, spoke no word to oppose him, because it would please me to have him as comrade.



After this I went more than once to the house where Captain Smith lodged, and learned very much concerning what it was proposed to do toward building a town in the new world.

Both Nathaniel and I had believed it was the king who counted to send all these people over-seas; but I learned from my new master that a company of London merchants was in charge of the enterprise, these merchants believing much profit might come to them in the way of getting gold.

The whole business was to be under the control of Captain Bartholomew Gosnold, who, it was said, had already made one voyage to the new world, and had brought back word that it was a goodly place in which to settle and to build up

towns. The one chosen to act as admiral of the fleet, for there were to be three ships instead of one, as I had fancied, was Captain Christopher Newport, a man who had no little fame as a seaman.

In due time, as the preparations for the voyage were being forwarded, I was sent by my master into lodgings at Blackwall, just below London town, for the fleet lay nearby, and because it was understood by those in charge of the adventure that I was in Captain Smith's service, no hindrance was made to my going on board the vessels.

THE VESSELS OF THE FLEET

These were three in number, as I have already said: the *Susan Constant*, a ship of near to one hundred tons in size; the *Goodspeed*, of forty tons, and the *Discovery*, which was a pinnace of only twenty tons.



The "Susan Constant"

And now, lest some who read what I have set down may not be acquainted with the words used by seamen, let me explain that the measurement of a vessel by tons, means that she will fill so much space in the water. Now, in measuring a vessel, a ton is reckoned as forty cubic feet of space, therefore when I say the *Susan Constant* was one hundred tons in size, it is the same as if I had set down that she would carry four thousand cubic feet of cargo.



The "Goodspeed"

That he who reads may know what I mean by a pinnace, as differing from a ship, I can best make it plain by saying that such a craft is an open boat, wherein may be used sails or oars, and, as in the case of the *Discovery*, may have a deck over a certain portion of her length. That our pinnace was a vessel able to withstand such waves as would be met with in the ocean, can be believed when you remember that she was one half the size of the *Goodspeed*, which we counted a ship.



The "Discovery"

HOW I EARNED MY PASSAGE

Captain Smith, my master, found plenty of work for me during the weeks before the fleet sailed. He had many matters to be set down in writing, and because of my mother's care in teaching me to use the quill, I was able, or so it seemed to me, to be of no little aid to him in those busy days, when it was as if he must do two or three things at the same time in order to bring his business to an end.



I learned during that time to care very dearly for this valiant soldier, who could, when the fit was on him, be as tender and kind as a girl, and again, when he was crossed, as stern a man as one might find in all London town.

Because of my labors, and it pleased me greatly that I could do somewhat toward forwarding the adventure, I had no time in which to search for my friend, Nathaniel Peacock, although I did not cease to hope that he would try to find me.

I had parted with him in the city, and he knew right well where I was going; yet, so far as I could learn, he had never come to Blackwall.

I had no doubt but that I could find him in the city, and it was in my mind, at the first opportunity, to seek him out, if for no other reason than that we might part as comrades should, for he had been a true friend to me when my heart was sore; but from the moment the sailors began to put the cargo on board the *Susan Constant* and the *Goodspeed*, I had no chance to wander around Blackwall, let alone journeying to London.

WHEN THE FLEET SET SAIL

Then came the twentieth of December, when we were to set sail, and great was the rejoicing among the people, who believed that we would soon

build up a city in the new world, which would be of great wealth and advantage to those in England.

I heard it said, although I myself was not on shore to see what was done, that in all the churches prayers were made for our safe journeying, and there was much marching to and fro of soldiers, as if some great merrymaking were afoot.

The shore was lined with people; booths were set up where showmen displayed for pay many curious things, and food and sweetmeats were on sale here and there, for so large a throng stood in need of refreshment as well as amusement.

It was a wondrous spectacle to see all these people nearby on the shore, knowing they had come for no other purpose than to look at us, and I took no little pride to myself because of being numbered among the adventurers, even vainly fancying that many wondered what part a boy could have in such an undertaking.

Then we set sail, I watching in vain for a glimpse of Nathaniel Peacock as the ships got under way. Finally, sadly disappointed, and with the sickness of home already in my heart, I went into the forward part of the ship, where was my sleeping place, thinking that very shortly we should be tossing and tumbling on the mighty waves of the ocean.

THE VOYAGE DELAYED

In this I was mistaken, for the wind was contrary to our purpose, and we lay in the Downs near six weeks, while Master Hunt, the preacher, who had joined the company that he might labor for the good of our souls, lay so nigh unto death in the cabin of the *Susan Constant*, that I listened during all the waking hours of the night, fearing to hear the tolling of the ship's bell, which would tell that he had gone from among the living.

It was on the second night, after we were come to anchor in the Downs awaiting a favorable wind, that I, having fallen asleep while wishing Nathaniel Peacock might have been with us, was awakened by the pressure of a cold hand upon my cheek.



I was near to crying aloud with fear, for the first thought that came was that Master Hunt had gone from this world, and was summoning me; but before the cry could escape my lips, I heard the whispered words:

“It is me, Nate Peacock!”

It can well be guessed that I was sitting bolt upright in the narrow bed, which sailors call a bunk, by the time this had been said, and in the gloom of the seamen’s living place I saw a head close to mine.

Not until I had passed my hands over the face could I believe it was indeed my comrade, and it goes without saying that straightway I insisted on knowing how he came there, when he should have been in London town.

I cannot set the story down as Nathaniel Peacock told it to me on that night, because his words were many; but the tale ran much like this:

NATHANIEL’S STORY

When Captain John Smith had promised on Cheapside that I should be one of the company of adventurers, because of such labor as it might be possible for me to perform, and had refused to listen to my comrade, Nathaniel, without acquainting me with the fact, had made up his mind that he also would go into the new world of Virginia.

Fearing lest I would believe it my duty to tell Captain Smith of his purpose, he kept far from me, doing whatsoever he might in London town to earn as much as would provide him with food during a certain time.

In this he succeeded so far as then seemed necessary, and when it was known that the fleet was nearly ready to make sail, he came to Blackwall with all his belongings tied in his doublet.



To get on board the *Susan Constant* without attracting much attention while she was being visited by so many curious people, was not a hard task for Nathaniel Peacock, and three days before the fleet was got under way, my comrade had hidden himself in the very foremost part of the ship, where were stored the ropes and chains.

There he had remained until thirst, or hunger, drove him out, on this night of which I am telling you, and he begged that I go on deck, where were the scuttle butts, to get him a pannikin of water.

For those of you who may not know what a scuttle butt is, I will explain that it is a large cask in which fresh water is kept on shipboard.

When Nathaniel's burning thirst had been soothed, he began to fear that I might give information to Captain John Smith concerning him; but after all that had been done in the way of hiding himself, and remembering his suffering, I had not the heart so to do.

During four days more he spent all the hours of sunshine, and the greater portion of the night, in my bed, closely covered so that the sailors might not see him, and then came the discovery, when he was dragged out with many a blow and harsh word to give an account of himself. I fear it would have gone harder still with Nathaniel, if I had not happened to be there at that very moment.



As it was, I went directly to Captain John Smith, my master, telling him all Nathaniel's story, and asking if the lad had not shown himself made of the proper stuff to be counted on as one of the adventurers.

Although hoping to succeed in my pleading, I was surprised when the captain gave a quick consent to number the lad among those who were to go into the new land of Virginia, and was even astonished when his name was written down among others as if he had been pledged to the voyage in due form.

But for the sickness of Master Hunt, and the fear we had lest he should die, Nathaniel and I might have made exceeding merry while we lay at anchor in the Downs, for food was plentiful; there was little of work to be done, and we lads could have passed the time skylarking with such of the sailors as were disposed to sport, except orders had been given that no undue noise be made on deck.