

The night slowly yielded, as it always does, to happy daylight. Never was I so happy to see it come. The dark, strange shapes slowly became bushes, or the trunks of trees covered with vines, or they disappeared altogether—mere night shadows. All manner of birds awoke and greeted the day with their particular songs. The sun warmed and dried the ground which yielded a sweet, wild scent.

The Lieutenant himself came to fetch us from our post, saying to me that we were less than a day's march from the land of the Saponi, and there we might expect to bargain for fresh victuals and peaceful relations. So, after breakfasting on more dried beef, we continued our march along King James River, going further into the interior of this strange land.

The men had begun to grumble about the value of our undertaking and openly doubting that any of us would return alive. Lieutenant Webster did his best to appease them but, as the day wore on, their complaints grew stronger. The Lieutenant ordered a halt. He reckoned that we were well out of the land of the Monacans, and ordered camp to be made on a height next to the river.

There were many hours of daylight left, and he ordered our best marksmen, of which I was not one, to go into the woods and kill the fattest deer they could find.

The Lieutenant himself went in search for whatever fruits the land would provide. He soon returned with his hat and shirt full of berries which looked similar to English strawberries but with a sweeter, juicier taste. We heard a musket report not too far off and, in less than half an hour the marksmen returned, bearing a large male deer strung on a carrying pole.

Every man in the camp, including myself, was most happy over the prospect of fresh meat. We set about dressing the deer and constructing several roasting pits. In a short while we had the best cuts of the venison sizzling over glowing wood coals. The unusable parts of the animal we buried away from our campsite. To clean ourselves of the blood and animal fat, we bathed and frolicked, like schoolboys, in the running cool waters of the river.

When the meat was done, we sat around the fire, naked as Indians except for a loincloth which the Lieutenant demanded that we wear. We feasted on well cooked meat until we could not force another mouthful down. We then lay by the fires, gorged as the most gluttonous of Romans, and instantly fell asleep. I hardly gave a thought to whatever Indians might be lurking about.