

# THE DIAMOND RIVER

BY DAVID MURRAY

## CHAPTER I.

He was waiting to meet his sweetheart, and the place appointed for their tryst was the red-painted letter box at the edge of the common. The time of the year was early October. It was 9 o'clock in the evening. A thick curtain of mist lay on the common, and a full moon was lifting, very large and red, over the edge of the distant trees. Everything was so quiet just there that the clatter of a suburban car two hundred yards away was clearly audible. If you looked to the south you might fancy yourself right in the heart of the country. If you looked north, you saw a long, respectable suburban street, inhabited by householders, but just then as quiet as the grave, except for the strumming of a solitary piano. East and west the prospect, so far as it could be discerned through the evening darkness and mist, was a jumble of finished and unfinished buildings. In some the household lights burned comfortably, and others were as yet unroofed and unglazed, and open to all the airs of heaven.

The young man who awaited his sweetheart had been at the place appointed for a matter of some ten minutes, when he heard the sound of a faint, hoarse cough, followed by something like a groan. He was momentarily startled, but, hearing nothing further after a minute's intent listening, he fell back into the train of thought from which he had been aroused, and absently set an unglazed hand upon the top of the letter box. He found it all wet and sticky, and his first idea was that the post had been newly painted, but, moving toward a lamp which was close by, he discovered, with a shock of horror and surprise, that his fingers were stained with blood.

He seemed just at that instant to feel rather than to hear that something stirred within a yard or two of him in the shallow, turf-lined ditch which at that point separated the common from the road. His blood crisped, and a curious sensation stirred at the roots of his hair. He was not at all a coward, but he was accustomed to a quiet humdrum in his life, and the sudden conviction that some horrible thing had happened set his heart fluttering and started a strong pulsation in his temples. Then he heard a measured footstep slowly tramping the concrete pavement of the suburban road, and there within thirty yards of him was the lantern of a watchman. He made a dash for the man with a cry of "Officer!" and an instant later he was before the policeman, holding his stained hand in the rays of the lantern.

"Look here," he said, "that's blood. There's a lot of it on the top of the letter box just there. I touched it by chance, and just as I found out what it was I heard somebody groan. There's been an accident, or an assault, or something. Come and look."

The officer raised his bull's-eye to the young man's face, took a good look at him, and without a word moved in the direction indicated. He turned his light upon the letter box. There was a considerable quantity of half-congealed blood upon it, and some had trickled to the gravel at its foot.

"Hush!" said the young man. "That's the sound I heard before."

The officer, still without a word, walked stooping by the side of the shallow ditch, waving his lantern and peering here and there. A dozen paces beyond the lamp post he paused.

"This," he said, "looks like a bad job. Lead a hand here, will you?"

He hitched the bull's-eye to his belt, and stooped to a prostrate figure in the hollow. It lay in a helpless posture, the head higher than the feet, one heel just resting on the lower rail of a dilapidated fragment of an old fence. The young man lent his aid, and between them they lifted the figure by the shoulders and placed it in a natural position. The coat was wet and sticky, and the hands which had touched it showed too clearly what made it so.

"This man's been set upon," said the officer. "And," he added, kneeling to inspect the victim's head and face more closely, "he's got a pretty doing." He pounded a long and piercing call upon his whistle. "There's a doctor fifty yards that way," he said, pointing.

The young man went off at a run, and the policeman awaited his return, sounding his call from time to time. Nobody seemed to notice for a while, but in the space of a few minutes the messenger was back again, a stout and middle-aged medico puffing in his train. He and the policeman knew each other.

"I'm afraid this is a bad job, Mr. Lawrence," said the officer.

"I'm afraid it's as bad as it can be," the doctor answered, after a long examination, aided by the bull's-eye lantern. "Yes, there's not a doubt about it; the poor fellow's done for. You'd better get a stretcher and have the body conveyed to the morgue."

Two policemen hastened up from different points. One was dispatched at once. The four men lingered, talking in low tones. The young man showed the doctor how he had discovered the first sign of the crime. The policemen searched the gravel pathway for signs of footprints, but found nothing. A quarter of an hour went by, and then the stretcher came. The body was set upon it, decently covered, and wheeled away, the doctor and the young man accompanying. In the suburban main street the cortege picked up a small following, but this was shut out at the doors of the morgue, where an inspector was already in waiting with a subordinate.

"This was the gentleman as summoned me to the spot, sir."

"Ah," said the inspector, "you'd better tell me what you know about it. What is your name and address, please?"

"My name," the young man answered, "is Harvey Martin Jethroe, and I live at 104 Acacia avenue."

"Occupation, if you please?"

"I am a bank manager. I have charge of the Elmwood branch of Messrs. Perrott, Perrott & Lane."

The inspector was setting this down in a thick professional pocketbook, when the doctor suddenly asked:

"What did you say your name was?"

"Harvey Martin Jethroe," the young man answered in some amazement.

The inspector's subordinate had been going through the dead man's pockets, and had just handed to the doctor a small bundle of letters held together by an elastic band. The doctor held this out toward the inspector, who gave but a single glance and started violently.

"This looks like a rum business," he said, recovering himself in an instant, and turning a look of strange significance upon the witness; "this has just come off the body. Is that what you say your name is?"

"Harvey Martin Jethroe," written in a bold and legible hand, stared him in the face from the back of the envelope the inspector held toward him.

"Why," he stammered, with a pale face, "why, I—"

His speech was frozen with sheer amazement.

"All these letters," said the inspector, who had slipped the elastic band from the bundle, and was now shuffling the letters which comprised it, "are addressed to Harvey Martin Jethroe."

"Card case, sir," said the inspector's man.

"Harvey Martin Jethroe again," said the inspector. "You haven't been giving us the dead party's name in mistake for your own, have you?"

"My name is as I tell you," the bank manager declared. "I never knew another man that held it, except my uncle; he is in South America."

"This party," said the inspector, nodding his head sideways, "seems to have moved about there a goodish bit." He shuffled the envelopes anew. "Rio Janeiro, Havana, New Orleans. Do you identify the body?"

## CHAPTER II.

Harvey Jethroe looked long and earnestly at the dead man. The doctor had already sponged the face, and the features were unobscured.

"No," the young man said at last, "I don't think this can be my uncle. I am almost sure of it."

"Not very intimate, seemingly, eh?"

"I never saw him but once! I was five or six years of age. But there was always said to be a strong family likeness between him and my father, and I see no such resemblance here."

"Now," said the inspector, "this is rather a remarkable party. I should take him to be near on six feet six. Just pass the tape along him, Munslow. What do you make it? Six feet four. Well, they do look a bit longer than they are, as a rule, when they're laid straight out like that. Any signs to go by, Mr. Jethroe—any physical deformity, any scar or mark?"

"Nothing that I know of."

"Your uncle now—was he out of the common height at all?"

"He was uncommonly tall. It was that which made me doubtful."

"What's that on your shirt cuffs?" asked the inspector. "Let's have a look at 'em, if you please."

"I helped to lift that poor fellow," said Harvey Jethroe, holding out both hands.

"Very good. Your name is Harvey Martin Jethroe, and you had an uncle of that name in South America. Did you have any correspondence with that uncle?"

"Since my father's death, and until six months ago, we wrote pretty regularly."

"On good terms with each other?"

"Until then. He was rather angry because I could not accept an offer he made me."

"Oh! What might that have been?"

"He wanted me to join him in Brazil, and offered me a partnership."

"H'm!" The inspector was very serious. "A well-to-do man, I suppose?"

"I believe he was extremely wealthy. He may have been a millionaire."

"Had you expectations from him?"

"Until I declined to join him it was always understood that I was to be his heir. He had no other relation in the world—nor had I."

"H'm!" The inspector was looking very grave indeed. He nibbled the unsharpened end of his pencil, watching the man be questioned from beneath close-bent brows. "Your only relative, and a very rich man? Wanted you to join him? Meant to leave you everything? Must have been some very strong reason why you didn't go."

"Well," said Harvey Jethroe, with a passing aspect of embarrassment, "there was an excellent reason. I am going to be married in a month or two, and my uncle was very eager to make another match for me."

"In Brazil?"

"Yes. The lady was an only daughter of an old friend of his."

"Well, now, Mr. Jethroe, when did your uncle land in the United States?"

"I have no reason to suppose that he meant to come here at all. I do not believe that he has left Brazil."

"How do you account for this party?"—again a sideway nod of the head—

"having apparently the same name and coming from the same part of the world?"

"I can't account for it," said Harvey Jethroe; "I don't pretend to account for it. But this poor fellow is not my uncle—I am sure of that."

"You were not so sure a little while ago."

"I am quite certain now. I have heard the family likeness between my father and my uncle insisted on very often. Except in height and the color of the beard, there is no likeness between this man and my father."

"The expression of the eyes might go for a good deal," said the doctor.

"It might," said Jethroe, looking thoughtfully at the dead face again.

"Do you undertake to swear that the deceased is not your uncle?" the inspector asked. "That's the point."

"I have a very strong opinion," Jethroe answered—"I have, in fact, a moral certainty."

"You won't go further than that?"

"It would need direct evidence of the clearest kind to shake my opinion."

"Well, Mr. Jethroe, this is a very serious case, and I shall feel it my duty to detain you."

"To detain me!" cried Jethroe, in a voice of wounded anger. "On what ground?"

"Let me finish, if you please, sir. I shall feel it my duty to detain you until I have ascertained the truth as to the statements you have made about yourself."

"Oh," cried the bank manager, "that is reasonable, of course. My cashier, Mr. Murdoch, lives within five minutes' walk of us."

"We'll see the gentleman," said the inspector. "You understand, Mr. Jethroe, it's my duty to satisfy myself on these points, and I must tell you that it doesn't end there. I don't regard the case as being one for arrest at present, but if you should desire to make a sudden journey anywhere it might save disagreeable consequences if you let me know beforehand."

"I presume," said Jethroe, flushing hot from head to foot and stammering in a sudden anger, "that means you intend to have me watched?"

"So long as that is understood, sir," the inspector answered, with a manner grown all of a sudden quite suave and cordial.

"Very well," said Jethroe, angrily, "next time the police may make their discoveries for themselves. I do my duty as a humane citizen, and this is what comes of it."

The inspector beckoned to his man with a mere motion of the head and with a wave of the hand to Jethroe, and the three went out together.

## CHAPTER III.

As it turned out, there was not the slightest difficulty in establishing the bank manager's identity. Mr. Murdoch, Harvey Jethroe's cashier, was entertaining a small bachelor party, to every member of which, with one exception, the manager was known. The exception was a juiceless, withered looking man who had evidently seen much open air life in a hot climate. His beard, mustache and eyebrows were all sun-blanché.

The skin about his eyes was puckered with constant blinking against the dazzling tropical sun and sands, and the eyes themselves were strangely light in color. He was the only man of the party who wore evening dress, and a big diamond solitaire sparkled in his shirt front. Jethroe had insisted upon facing the assembly.

"That is as you like, sir," said the inspector. "I should have been content to keep the matter private."

"I see no reason for keeping the matter private," Jethroe answered, with a tone of wounded pride.

The relation of the story of the night was the cause of profound excitement, and this was increased tenfold when the sunburned man broke in with an exclamation.

"Harvey Martin Jethroe!" he cried. "Why, I traveled with him from Brazil."

There was a hubbub of questions and ejaculations, but the inspector silenced it.

"You knew Mr. Jethroe?"

"Well," said the sunburned man, "I spent the best part of three weeks at sea with him. I ought to know him."

"This gentleman," said the inspector, indicating Jethroe, "does not identify the body as that of his uncle."

"I can set your mind at rest upon that point," the stranger answered.

"Perhaps you will give yourself the trouble to accompany Mr. Jethroe and myself to the morgue?" the inspector suggested.

"Of course I will," the stranger answered. "That is my name," he added, taking a card case from his pocket and offering his card. "George Johns. I have had the honor to be known to Mr. Murdoch for many years."

The cashier confirming this at once, the inspector took a hasty leave with Jethroe and the new witness and led the way to the morgue. The body of the dead man was by this time decently composed, and when the three had entered the twilight room, and the inspector had turned up the gas, the witness at a first glance said quietly:

"That is the man."

"There is no chance of mistake?" asked the officer.

"I parted with him the day before yesterday," was the answer. "He had agreed to dine with me at the Northern to-morrow. We struck up a sort of friendship aboard the boat, and he barely spoke to anybody but me."

"What do you say to this, sir?" asked the inspector, turning upon Jethroe.

"What can I say?" cried Jethroe. "I saw my uncle when I was a mere child. My mother spoke constantly of the extraordinary likeness between him and my father when they were young men. Except that both were unusually tall, I see no point of resemblance."

(To be continued.)

## GOOD Short Stories

A Birmingham churchwarden was reading at a vestry meeting a list of subscriptions to the parochial funds. The list began as follows: "The vicar, a guinea; Mrs. —, half a guinea; an anonymous donor, myself, twenty-five shillings."

A Scotch minister who used similes that would bring home to the rough characters around him the truths he sought to impress was once denouncing the ingratitude of man for all the benefits conferred on him by Providence. "My friends," he said, "look at the hens when they drink. There's not one o' them but lifts its head in thankfulness, even for the water that is as common. Oh, that we were a' hens!"

John Kendrick Bangs once ran across a gift copy of one of his books in a second-hand bookshop, still having this inscription on the flyleaf: "To his friend, J— G—, with the regards and the esteem of J. K. Bangs, July, 1899." Mr. Bangs bought the copy, and sent it to his friend again with a second inscription beneath: "This book, bought in a second-hand bookshop, is re-presented to J— G— with renewed and reiterated regards and esteem by J. K. Bangs, December, 1899."

A British officer, in his expense list on government service, put down, "Porter, 2d." The war office, in a verbose and high-falutin' letter, pointed out that refreshments, while in the execution of public duty, were not chargeable to the nation. The officer replied that the item did not represent refreshments, but a fee to a carrier. The office replied: "You should have put 'Porterage.'" The officer treasured the hint. Next time he had occasion to take a hackney coach he put down in his accounts, "Cabbage, 2s."

When Mascagni last visited this country he one day chanced to hear an organ-grinder who was grinding out, in the most mechanical manner, the intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana." Mascagni impatiently grabbed the crank, and saying, "I'll show you how to play that," finished the selection in what he thought the proper manner. The organ-grinder was not much impressed until he was told the identity of his instructor. Immediately he put on his organ a placard bearing the following legend: "Pupil of Mascagni."

Grant Duff tells an amusing story apropos of Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, who, many years ago, found himself at a club in Edinburgh, where he fell into conversation about Russia with a youth who put forward some views in which he could not acquiesce.

"Oh," said this personage, "it is all very well for you to say that you do not agree with me, but I know all about it. I have just been reviewing Wallace's 'Russia.'" "And I have just been writing it," was the natural reply. The young man lived to be very famous; he was R. L. Stevenson.

The late Bishop Beckwith of Georgia was fond of his gun, and spent much of his time hunting, says Representative Adamson. One day the bishop was out with his dog and gun, and met a member of his parish, whom he reproved for his inattention to his religious duties. "You should attend church and read your Bible," said the bishop. "I do read my Bible, bishop," was the answer, "and I don't find any mention of the apostles going a-shooting." "No," replied the bishop, "the shooting was very bad in Palestine, so they went fishing instead."

## HOME LIFE OF RUSSIANS.

It Is Singularly Regular and Monotonous One, Says Writer.

The daily life of a Russian couple of the wealthier classes is singularly regular and monotonous, varying only with the changing seasons, says the New York Herald. In summer the lord of the house gets up about 7 o'clock and puts on, with the assistance of his valet de chambre, a simple costume, consisting chiefly of a faded, plentifully stained dressing gown. Having nothing in particular to do, he sits down at the open window and looks into the yard. Toward 9 o'clock tea is announced, and he goes into the dining room—a long, narrow apartment, with bare wooden floor and no furniture but a table and chairs. Here he finds his wife, with the tea urn before her. In a few minutes the younger children enter the room, kiss their papa's hand and take their places around the table. As this morning meal consists merely of bread and tea, it does not last long, and all disperse to their several occupations.

The head of the house begins the labors of the day by resuming his seat at the open window and having his Turkish pipe filled and lighted by a boy whose special function is to keep his master's pipe in order. The housewife spends her morning in a more

active way. As soon as the breakfast table has been cleared she goes to the larder, takes stock of the provisions, arranges the meals and gives the cook the necessary materials, with detailed instructions as to how they are to be prepared. The rest of the morning she devotes to her other household duties.

Toward 1 o'clock dinner is announced. Dinner is the great event of the day. Food is abundant and of good quality; but mushrooms, onions and fat play rather too important a part in the repast, and the whole is prepared with very little attention to the recognized principles of hygiene. No sooner is the last dish been removed than a deathlike stillness falls upon the house. It is the time of the after-dinner stesta.

The young folk go into the garden and all the members of the household give way to drowsiness naturally engendered by a heavy meal on a hot summer day. Ivanovitch retires to his own room, from which the flies have been carefully expelled by his pipe bearer. His wife dozes in a big armchair in the sitting room, with a pocket handkerchief spread over her face. The servants snore in the corridor the garret or the hay shed, and even the old watch dog in the corner of the yard stretches himself out at full length on the shady side of his kennel.

In about two hours the house gradually reawakens, doors begin to creak, the names of the various servants are bawled out in all tones, from bass to falsetto, and footsteps are heard in the yard. Soon a man servant issues from the kitchen, bearing an enormous tea urn which puffs like a little steam engine. The family assembles for tea.

## MUCH CEMENT IS NOW USED.

Large Increase from 900,000 to 22,000,000 Barrels.

Development and expansion in the cement industry during the last decade have been phenomenal. In 1892 the production in this country amounted to 990,324 barrels, says the Baltimore Herald. In 1904 more than 22,000,000 barrels were produced, with an additional 3,000,000 imported. The reason for this development is that the product is immeasurably cheaper than stone, brick, wood, etc., their equal for most purposes and superior for many. The uses to which it can advantageously be applied are almost beyond conception, so that its growth during the next decade will undoubtedly be more wonderful than that of the last.

Portland cement is made from natural rock known technically as Trenton limestone, and when produced in commercial form is a fine powder, possessing the quality, when moistened with water, of binding itself and substances with which it may be mixed into a homogeneous mass, setting with remarkable quickness and drawing to a hardness greater than that of granite.

Trenton limestone is found in small deposits in many parts of the United States, but the only great deposits are those in the counties of Lehigh and Northampton, in Pennsylvania, and the adjoining counties of Warren and Hunterdon in New Jersey.

These counties supply 70 per cent of the Portland cement manufactured in this country and there is enough left in the deposit to last for centuries. The average price for cement during the last ten years has been about \$1.60 a barrel. Within the last eighteen months it has sold as high as \$2 a barrel and as low as \$1.

Portland cement, with iron or steel is used with great economy in the construction of skyscraper buildings and will doubtless be so used almost to the exclusion of stone and brick in the near future. Scarcely a modern building is now constructed or can be constructed without the use of cement.

Cement's utility in other directions is evidenced by the millions of barrels used in the construction of the New York subway and the Chicago tunnel. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company has recently contracted for 3,500,000 barrels for the Weehawken-Long Island City tunnel and engineers of the New York 1,000-ton barge canal from Buffalo to New York have specified for cement construction, estimating a saving of several millions of dollars. The cement to be used in this and the Panama Canal is almost beyond computation.

## The Madness of War.

So wars are begun by the persuasion of a few debauched, harebrained poor, dissolute, hungry captains, parasitical fawners, unquiet hotspur restless innovators, green heads, who satisfy one man's private spleen, his ambition, avarice, etc. Flos hominum proper men, well proportioned, carefully brought up, able both in body and mind, sound, led like so many beasts to the slaughter in the flower of their years, pride and full strength, without all remorse and pity, sacrificed to Pluto, killed up as so many sheep for devil's food, 40,000 at once.—Burton, "Anatomy of Melancholy."

## Change of Punctation.

Barber—Does this razor cut all right, sir?

Victim—Well, it cuts, all right. Don't it about eight times now.—Cleveland Leader.