

# THE DIAMOND RIVER

BY DAVID MURRAY

## CHAPTER VIII.

The inquest on the body of the murdered man was held in due course, and it suited the police authorities to keep their own counsel. Mr. Joseph Taylor was not publicly supposed to be under restraint when he failed to identify the remains. The error of Mr. George Johns as to the man's personality was shown to be due to the fact that the fugitive had adopted the name of the elder Jethroe. No awkward questions were opened, and the jury were satisfied that the deceased was an absconding swindler. A verdict of "willful murder" against some person or persons unknown was returned, and there the public interest in the case came to an end. The inspector had arranged to make himself aware of Mr. Taylor's every movement, but it was not his cue to say so, and he was almost apologetic when he parted with that gentleman.

"People don't like being mixed up with these unpleasant affairs, I know," said the inspector. "That's a common experience. We see it every day. I can assure you. But then, what a greenhorn's trick it is to run away! You see, now, if our inquiries hadn't enabled us to account for all your time since you've been here, you might have drawn suspicion on yourself, Mr. Taylor, and have got into no end of trouble. Good-by, sir."

So Mr. Taylor departed, and thought himself well out of a very dangerous position, and the police shadowed him night and day. Believing that he had no further reason for evasion, he stayed on; and as any unoccupied man might do, he made casual acquaintances, who came and went. He made one acquaintance of rather more than the casual sort in the person of a simple country gentleman who came from Indiana. This gentleman had recently inherited what he described as a "tidyish bit of munny," and, being strange to the city, was very grateful to a man of the world, like Mr. Taylor, for being kind enough to shepherd him. He was not over-free with any portion of the "tidyish bit," but he paid his share, and he treated Mr. Taylor with great respect, and had the highest opinion of his knowledge of men and affairs; so that, in spite of his yoked simplicities, Mr. Taylor began to think him, within a limited measure, a rather discerning sort of fellow. They went about to the theaters in the evenings, frequently to the second best places, and when Mr. Taylor encountered an acquaintance, as he sometimes did, the gentleman from Indiana always made a point of effacing himself, unless he were actually pressed to join in the conversation.

"I never saw such a retiring chap," said Mr. Taylor on one occasion. "You seem to shrink from people. Why don't you buck up a bit more?"

"Well," said the gentleman from Indiana, who answered to the name of Fielding, "I like to be sure my company's wanted before I thrust it upon anybody."

"That's the right spirit, of course," said Mr. Taylor, "but you can carry it to excess."

But Mr. Fielding was not to be cured of his shyness, although it turned out that when there was need for it he could show as bold a front as any man. He and Mr. Taylor had been close chums for something more than a fortnight when this occasion offered itself. The two were in the promenade at a theater, and were walking from end to end in casual conversation, when Taylor suddenly checked in his speech, and his companion, glancing at him, saw a look of lowering displeasure and of something like alarm upon his face.

"Hillo!" said the gentleman from Indiana. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing," returned Taylor gruffly—"nothing at all."

"Come, now, there's something," said Fielding. "Look here, candidly my motto, Mr. Taylor. Have you got the same idea as I have, I wonder?"

"How should I know?" asked Taylor rather shiftily.

"Well, now," pursued Fielding, "it seems to me that I'm a-meeting a certain party once or twice too often."

"I don't know what you mean," said Taylor.

His face was mottled, and he looked about him with a furtive keenness.

"Well, then, I'll tell you," Fielding answered. "We're both more or less strangers here. We're both carryin' a tidyish bit o' munny about with us, an' perhaps we've flashed it about a bit too much."

"Well?" asked Taylor, with a slight unsteadiness in voice and breathing.

"Well," said Fielding, "I'll bet ten to one that chap's a sharp. I'll deal with him. He hasn't been watching us two for a week for nothing. Leave him to me, now."

"No, no!" cried Taylor, "don't make a row in a public place like this. You're quite right, I dare say—in fact, I'm sure you're right. But forewarned's forearmed, you know. We can take care of ourselves."

"I'm goin' to take care of 'im," said Fielding; "come along."

He made an imperative little sign to Taylor to follow, but that gentleman preferred to stray behind him slowly and to watch his companion as he walked swaggeringly toward the door. There the man from Indiana reached out a walking stick and tapped a hat at arm's length from him with much more vigor than politeness. The wearer of the hat turned with a face of wrath and amazement, which fell in a second to a ludicrous consternation.

"I want you," said Fielding. "Come this way." He took the man by the arm and led him unresistingly toward

Taylor. "D'ye know this gentleman?" he asked.

The man said "No." He looked crestfallen and ashamed. He said "No" again when he was bullyingly asked if he knew Fielding.

"Ye'll know us both in future," said the man from Indiana. "And I shall know you, I'll mark you, too. If I catch you sneaking after me again. Hook it, now! Hook it; your game's over." The man made a move to go. "It'll take a smarter chap than you to play that job," said the triumphant Fielding. "Send a cleverer hand next time."

Not a word had the detected person to say for himself. He went, and seemed genuinely glad to go.

"Eh?" said Fielding, squaring his shoulders. "It didn't take long to fix his flint, did it?"

Mr. Taylor could barely make shift to say, "Thank you." It had been growing in his mind for a day or two past to think that he was being followed by the man whom his comrade had just so effectively got rid of, and it comforted him to believe that no authorized police spy would have permitted himself to be swagged over by a rustic outsider, as this fellow had been. But he was naturally a nervous man, and the unexplained way in which he had been switched back on his journey to Cincinnati made him subject to alarms. The poor man's conscience was clear enough of offense. He had done nothing but deliver a message with which he had been entrusted. He had been promised a handsome reward if he succeeded, by the emphatic presentation of that message, in bringing certain people together. In a manner entirely mysterious to him, his errand had been associated with bloodshed, a thing of which he had a natural horror. But innocent as he was, he was easily alarmed, and, but for his Indiana friend's unexpected protection, he would have begun to think very seriously of cutting short his holiday and taking the quickest way home.

They supped together and went to their hotel together, and Mr. Taylor retiring to bed rather early, his comrade quietly strolled across to Central station, where the inspector on duty hailed him familiarly as "Jim" and asked him if things were livening up at all.

"Fairish," said the man from Indiana. "I'd like a private five minutes with you."

The inspector, assenting, led the way to a grumpy official little apartment.

"That cove you lent me," said Mr. Fielding, "has got about as much sense as a carthorse. My man spotted him, and I had to pretend to take him for a sharp and pick a quarrel with him for following us about."

"Oh!" said the inspector, "he's been here. Says he was over-anxious. I dressed him down, of course; but he'll do in time. He's new, you know."

"Well, I hope he's properly ashamed of himself," the other answered. "I don't want him any more. Let me have a man as knows his business next time. But what I'm here about is this—this man Taylor seems to have had a fair scare already. There's three men after him."

"Oh," said the inspector. "What for?"

"For news. They're badly in want of the whereabouts of Jethroe senior. Taylor came home aboard same ship with him. Taylor took that threatening message to him, and only found the old man's nephew. Now, that chap Edgecome took old Jethroe's name, and was like him to look at. Edgecome was done for in mistake for Jethroe. That's how you read it, ain't it?"

"That's how I read it," said the inspector.

"Up to now that's my opinion also. Now, if we're both right, there's a pretty square likelihood of the men who are after Jethroe being the men who laid out Edgecome."

"Yes," said the inspector, carefully cleaning his nails with the end of a broken lucifer match; "I should take that for a moral."

"Well, we're on their trail, and they're trying to get on Jethroe's. So am I. I don't care who gets there first."

"You know 'em?" asked the inspector.

"I've had a word with all of 'em," said Mr. Fielding, with a quiet smile.

## CHAPTER IX.

Jethroe the elder, in a wild storm of wind and rain, was being driven in a dog cart along a country road. He was heavily clad against the weather, and was in need of all his wrappings, for the storm blew up bitterly from the lake. He had been silent for an hour, and his driver had been just as taciturn. The wheels alternately droned and splashed on rock or through mire, and the horse in the shafts slogged along with an occasional shake of the head, as if in protest against the stinging rain.

"Much farther?" Jethroe asked at last.

"Yonder," said the driver, pointing forward with his whip.

Jethroe made out a group of houses in a hollow, all shrouded with the rain, and a minute later the wheels were rattling noisily over a cobbled pavement. The driver pulled up in front of an inn, which, though of modest dimensions, had an air of cleanliness and comfort, and Jethroe, dismounting cumbrously, shouldered a big brown canvas traveling bag and entered at the door.

"When you've had the horse seen to," he said, turning as he reached shelter, "come in and get some dinner."

The man nodded with an answering grunt of acceptance, and, turning his horse through a gateway, disappeared.

"House!" Jethroe shouted—"house!"

The rain dripping from his mackintosh had begun to make a pool about his feet, when at his third call a red faced man opened the door and peered at him.

"Wasn't expecting nobody to-day," he said cheerily. "I'd fell asleep afore the fire. I'll take your bag, sir."

"Let me have a private room," said Jethroe, "and light a fire. See what I can have to eat. And—tell me—how far is it from here to Dr. Monbodo's house?"

"A matter of a mile," said the landlord; "but, as it happens, the doctor's in the kitchen at this minute."

"This way?" asked Jethroe, pointing to the doorway from which the landlord had emerged.

At the man's answering nod he cast off his dripping mackintosh, tossed it on a chair in the hall and entered the room. A great fire glowed on the hearth. A shabby, ponderous man, with loose lips and a blotchy face, and a nose of ruby and amethyst and carbuncle, was sipping at a glass with a relishing look, holding the heavy tumbler carelessly in both hands. He looked casually at the newcomer and went on sipping.

"How d'ye do, Monbodo?" asked Jethroe.

The bibulous doctor stared.

"Excuse me," he said, with a pompous, husky rumble in his voice, "I think you have the advantage of me, sir."

He fumbled short-sightedly about the table and found a pair of spectacles, and, setting these aside that danger signal of a nose he carried, stared anew, with winking, watery eyes.

"Come, now," said Jethroe, "you haven't forgotten me?"

"I don't remember to have had the pleasure of meeting you," the doctor answered.

"Come, now," said Jethroe; "it is a longish time back, but you haven't forgotten your old companion in Brazil."

"Bra—Brazil?" said Dr. Monbodo.

His flaming complexion paled and his big under lip began to shiver like a shaken jelly.

"Exactly," answered Jethroe, cheerily. "I've traveled on purpose to meet you, doctor! Ah! here is the landlord. Bitter day, isn't it? Storm outside. Snug little country inn; roaring fire; kettle singing on the hearth. Quite Dickensy, isn't it, Monbodo? You and I are going to make an evening of it. How about dinner, landlord?"

"Loin o' pork?" said the landlord, inquiringly, and, meeting with a nod of approval, went on:

"Apple tart, bit o' cheese an' salary."

"Excellent!" Jethroe answered boisterously. "Couldn't do better—eh, doctor? Let me know when that fire has burned up, landlord!" cried Jethroe. "I want a quiet chat with my old friend here."

"I've lit it already," said the landlord. "Shall we see about the dinner now?"

"At once, please."

The driver of the dog cart came stamping in at this juncture. Jethroe sat idly gazing at the fire, smiling now and then, as if his own thoughts tickled him. The doctor sipped and shot wondering glances at him. The fire rustled, the wind roared in the chimney, an eight-day clock ticked, and not a word was spoken for half an hour. The landlord returned to say that the sitting room was warm and comfortable, and Jethroe, with a sudden return to his boisterous mood, marshaled Monbodo into it.

"Now, doctor," he said, as soon as the two were alone again, "haven't you made me out yet?"

"I—I don't recall you, sir."

"My name is, for the present, Jones. Remember that, will you? So long as I stay here—Jones. But—he drew a card case from his pocket, and took a card from it—that is the name by which you used to know me."

Monbodo took the card with a shaky hand and glanced at it. His fiery face paled again, and his under lip again began to tremble.

"I remember now," he said, handing back the card and fumbling for a handkerchief—"I remember now."

"Of course you do," said Jethroe quietly. "Now listen to me, Monbodo. I am here to put a bit of business in your way. But, tell me, how is business?"

"Bad," said Monbodo. "The district is healthy, and I am not what I was—not what I was."

"I bring you luck," said Jethroe. "Now listen." He had spoken in a carefully modulated voice from the moment at which the landlord had closed the door behind him, but now he sank his utterances to a mere murmur, and dropped his speech word by word into his companion's ear. "It suits me for the present to disappear—you understand?—to drop right out of life, to have it universally believed that I am dead."

Monbodo drew back, and looked at him in a sort of terror; but Jethroe took him by the shoulder and returned him to his old position.

"I want you to kill me—on paper. I want a medical man's certificate of the death of Harvey Martin Jethroe. Now, name your price."

"I can't do it," said Monbodo, in a husky whisper; "it's felony."

"Well, so is bigamy, for that matter, Jethroe whispered back, "and so is forgery."

(To be continued.)

## A Bad Mistake.

Mrs. Green—Did the women's clubs have a harmonious convention?

Mrs. Brown—No. We made a mistake by having the photograph taken on the first day instead of the last. The women who didn't take well antagonized every question that came up.—Detroit Tribune.

## Sure Sign.

Tommy—I guess we got comp'ny to-day.

Bobby—How'er know?

Tommy—I listened at the door an' heard pa callin' ma 'my love.'—Cleveland Leader.

## GOOD Short Stories

In Springfield, Mass., recently, damages of one cent were awarded Bernard Finkelhof in a suit against the New York Central Railway. The plaintiff's grievances were detailed on four sheets of legal size paper. "When do I get the money?" Finkelhof inquired, interestedly.

Harvey Waters, an expert on patent cases, had occasion to write Rufus Choate on some important question, and when he received the reply was unable to read a word of it, so took the missive to Mr. Choate and asked him what he had written. Mr. Choate replied: "I never can read my writing after the ink is dry, but if you will tell me what it is about I will tell you what I have written." And he did.

The elder Dumas once was wearing the ribbon of a certain order, having recently been made a commandant, and an envious friend remarked upon it. "My dear fellow," he said, "that sordid is a wretched color! One would think it was your woeen vest that was showing!" "Oh, no, my dear D'E—" replied Dumas, with a smile, "you're mistaken. It's not a bad color; it is exactly the shade of the grapes that the fox couldn't reach."

An Iowa man, who had been accustomed to receiving railway passes and dead-head tickets at theatres, recently visited the fair at Portland. When he was confronted with a sign announcing the admission charge of fifty cents to the grounds, he was inclined to balk. "Here," he said to the friend with him, "I don't like the idea of paying fifty cents to get in there. Wait a minute and I'll hunt up Lewis and Clark, the fellows who are running the show, and see if I can't get a pass."

A long-winded member of the Massachusetts Legislature was delivering a political address in a town not far from Boston, and the village folk gathered in the town hall to hear it. He had been speaking quite a while, when finally an old Scotchman arose and walked out of the hall. At the door one of his countrymen was waiting with his back to drive the orator to the station. "Is he done yet, Sandy?" asked the Scot on the box. The old man turned about. "Aye," said he, "he's done lang ago, but he will na stop."

Mark Hanna once heard a boy in his employ say, "I wish I had Hanna's money and he was in the poorhouse." The Senator smiled grimly, and on returning to his office, sent for the boy. "So you wish you had my money and I was in the poorhouse, eh?" he said; "now, supposing you had your wish, what would you do?" The youngster, one of the ready-witted Irish variety, said with a droll grin: "Well, I guess I'd get you out of the poorhouse the first thing." This adroit answer brought the lad an increase of pay the next week.

A preacher in a small New England town received a call from a large and wealthy parish in Boston. As customary under the circumstances, the clergyman requested time for prayer and consideration, for, he said, he did not feel sure of his light. A week or two elapsed. A friend happening to meet the youngest son of the preacher—a lad of somewhat irreverent turn—asked: "Well, Sam, how's things with your father? Is he going to Boston?" "I think so," replied the youngster; "he's still praying for light, but ma's packing."

## GRAFT IN THE NAVY.

Sailors Are Starved That Officials May Fatten Their Own Purses.

Desertions from the American navy are of startling occurrence. In almost every port where our vessels touch the blue jackets are unlawfully quitting the service. Within the past two years the crews of two warships have been reported in a mutinous state and the dissatisfaction is growing. The reasons for this state of things are several, but the principal one is bad food.

"The food served on some of the ships," says a sailor, "is a disgrace to the country. Many times we are unable to eat the stuff that is served to us, and go about our work hungry, waiting until next meal time, hoping, often in vain, that the next mess may mean more appetizing rations. The rations purchased are of the cheapest and most inferior quality. I have seen canned beef actually green with rotteness served at mess. Even thehardtack is oftentimes mouldy, and liver and bacon is a dish we dread, for the liver is nearly always decayed. We call it 'petrified liver.'"

"Who is to blame for this? Why, the paymaster and the commissary stewards, of course. They are allowed a certain sum by the Navy Department for each man's rations. They buy the rations from stores at the various ports we touch at. By buying cheap and rotten stuff, they can put

a tidy sum in their pockets. It's 'graft' pure and simple, and I'm not afraid to call it by that name. They don't care a continental for the welfare of us men so long as they can put a little money in their own pockets."

Practically the same story is told by a cook's assistant in a statement to the New York Tribune. "I have served on three ships," he said, "and never yet found rations that were fit to eat. I pity the men, but what can I do? Only recently I had pork sausage given me to serve at mess, and I had to wash them in a copper, by order of the commissary steward, in order to get the green off them. The canned beef is often mouldy on the surface. I have seen cases where there were traces of maggots in it. I have served macaroni which smelled so bad that I have had to hold my nose when I placed it on the table. The men are powerless to kick. They would not be listened to. All they can do is to leave the grub and go hungry."

"And do the officers allow this state of affairs?" the reporter asked.

"The officers rarely discover how bad things are. The deck officer each day is supposed to make an inspection of the rations served, according to the navy blue book. The inspection is made as follows: The commissary steward takes the very choicest portion of the mess and carries it on a platter to the officer on deck. The officer takes it and declares that Jack Tar is indeed a lucky fellow to be so well provided for. Even if anybody dared to make a kick to him, after that, naturally he wouldn't believe him."

## MOTTE AND PANDU.

The affection of a dog for its master could hardly be exceeded by the devotion of an Indian bullock, named Motee, to Pandu, its owner. Motee was an ordinary Indian bullock, says the author of "Sport and Adventure in the Indian Jungle," about four feet high and of the whitish brown color common among the stunted cattle in native villages.

He was thoroughly trained to hunting by Pandu, and seemed to comprehend his master's wishes intuitively. A glance, and Motee would move forward or backward, as required. A motion of the finger, and he would lie down, or kick up his heels and rush about as if mad. Pandu did all his stalking with the aid of this bullock; and much of his success depended on its intelligence.

An old piece of sacking, painted with green daubs on one side to resemble shrubbery, on the other side with bars of vivid red, was thrown over Motee's back, like a horse cloth, and hanging down to the ground, effectively concealed the crouching hunter.

Did he wish to stalk antelope, then the red bars were exposed, and Motee would graze quietly in a direction oblique to, yet approaching, the herd. The bright bars would attract the curiosity of the deer, and they would approach so near as to allow of an un-falling shot from Pandu's place of concealment under the stomach of the bullock.

Was it a flock of pea fowl that was in sight, then the green side of the sacking would be turned toward the birds, and the same stealthy advance made, the pea fowl exhibiting no alarm, as the village cattle commonly range the forests in their neighborhood.

Motee evidently took a delight in hunting, as he was on the alert and frisked about immediately the old man shouldered his gun. When the game was killed—and Pandu seldom missed—the little bullock would come up for his caress. If he missed, Motee would smell the gun, as if he thought there was something wrong there.

## Black the Teeth There.

The trade of tooth-stainer, followed in eastern Asia, as an odd a calling as any. The natives prefer black teeth to the whiter kind, and the tooth-stainer, with a little box of brushes and coloring matter, calls on his customers and stains their teeth. The process is not unlike that of blacking a boot, for a fine polish is given to the teeth. The pigment is harmless.

## Plain Language for Army.

The new British Infantry drill discourages fixed forms of command, so that "Line that hedge!" would be quite proper in skirmishing. All unnecessary commands are discarded. The men "stand at ease" on completion of a movement and come to a "stop arms" on beginning one, without a order, and so forth.

## Origin of Musical Comedy.

Musical comedy was introduced into England May 23, 1656. Dignified by the name of "opera" an entertainment called "The Cruelty of Spaniards in Peru" was produced at the Cockpit theater on that day.

## Relatives.

Bess—Charlie, will you tell me what time it is? I've left my watch at my aunt's.

Charlie—Awfully sorry, but I can't. I've left mine at my uncle's.