

THE DIAMOND RIVER

BY DAVID MURRAY

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

"Indeed, sir?" said Monbodo. Then he laughed a senile laugh and winked his eyes together. "You were not the only one," he said, looking mightily foolish, but as if he thought he were looking mighty wise.

"Indeed, sir," said the stranger. "Before we have finished a conversation which promises to be interesting," said Monbodo, "you must favor me with your name."

"I beg your pardon," said the stranger, for Monbodo had chosen to be incomprehensible. The doctor repeated his request, and the stranger bowed, and said: "Smith, sir—plain Smith."

"Plainsmith?" said the doctor. "Thank you. My name's Monbodo. Tom Monbodo, medical practitioner. Everybody knows me. Look here, Plainsmith. If you knew our deceased friend intimately, you know how dead he was of a little

This was said with an infinite look of fatuous cunning. The listener's heart fairly rocked within him, and Monbodo's vacuous-looking eye saw how the question had hit him.

"Now, look here," said the doctor, "when I trust a man, I trust him. When I don't, I don't. Now, I trust you, Plainsmith. There has been something queer about our deceased friend ever since he returned to England. There have been people after him—dangerous people."

The stranger leaned forward to listen, and the wily Monbodo made his speech at times scarcely understandable, the better to assure himself of the other's eagerness.

"Now," with a flourish that almost lurched him from his chair, "what did those people want? What does this Jethroe Jones want? What does Harvey Jethroe want? Harvey Jethroe's got a million, hasn't he? Isn't a million good enough for anybody? Now they're both howling about—what d'ye think? Come, what d'ye think?"

"Why, I suppose," said plain Mr. Smith, "it's something they attach a value to, if they're making a noise about it."

"Yes," returned Monbodo, with a sudden apparent want of interest in the whole business. "I suppose it is."

"Here," said his friend, arousing him with the croak of the walking stick. "Don't you go off to sleep just as you're getting to be such capital company. Seemed cut up, did they?" said Mr. Smith. "Any notion what they'd best?"

"That's tellings," returned Monbodo. "But I know where something is, and if anybody knew the use of it, I'd pay to be taught. You bet I should make a scholar."

"Why?" asked Mr. Smith. "What's it worth?"

"Worth?" cried Monbodo. "Harvey Jethroe wasn't a liar. He said it was worth millions and millions—hundreds of millions. Here's Harvey Jethroe has got wind of it. I don't know how. He says the same. Here's Harvey Jethroe, heir to his uncle's million, and he's weeping mad, because—"

Monbodo paused in full harangue. "Ha, ha! You thought I was going to let the cat out of the bag that time, didn't you? Well, something's lost. That's enough for you and me, isn't it? They're a mean-spirited pair, or they'd offer a reward. Why, ten thousand dollars wouldn't be anything to them. It'd be a lot to me."

"You know where to look for it, eh?" said Mr. Smith. "Ah, you're a cunning fellow, you are, and no mistake. You don't let anybody walk around you, do you?"

"No, sir," returned Monbodo, with a superb gravity. "I do not."

"Your jolly good health," said Mr. Smith. "I hope I can appreciate a gentleman when I meet one, and I meet one here. A bright and shining ornament, sir."

"Well," said Monbodo, "I'll trust you. No, I won't."

The appreciator of Mr. Monbodo's gentility glared as if he could have wrung his friend's neck with pleasure, but he controlled himself.

"Well, doctor," he contrived to say, with some pretense of suavety, "I happen to know what poor old Jethroe's wishes were. You mentioned a game just now. If what you know about has got anything to do with a game, I might tell you what to do with it. I might even like to buy it."

"Hundred millions' worth," said Monbodo, nodding like a sleepy owl. "Heap money, that."

"Do you know what to do with what you've got? Look here! don't you go to sleep, you know, just as you're getting so interesting. Do you know what to do with it?"

"Sell it, Jethroe," said Monbodo—"Jethroe junior. He was crying about 't last night. Blush for him. Crying like a child."

"Pooh!" said Mr. Smith. "he won't give you anything like value for it. You trade with me now. You let me know what it is, and I'll do a trade with you."

"All right," said Monbodo, "I'll show you. You wait here."

He walked from the room with a slightly unsteady gait, but once out of view he became very much more sober than he commonly was at that hour of the day. He visited his bedroom and returned, carrying a revolver and the satchel Jethroe had given him the day before, with the labors of the skilled lithographic artist within it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

During Monbodo's absence, brief as

it was, plain Mr. Smith was in a hundred different frames of mind, and bent upon as many varying forms of action. The first, the most natural and the most enticing idea, was to knock Monbodo on the head so soon as he had convinced himself of the truth of the document he carried and to make a bolt for life and fortune. But there were many excellent reasons against this course of conduct, inviting as it was. To rob Monbodo seemed at first sight a reasonable sort of proposition, but there were arguments against even that. To achieve possession by purchase unless every other method of acquisition were proved impossible, did not even occur to Mr. Smith. To buy what could be had by fraud had always seemed to him a foolishness. And "this way and that dividing the swift mind," he leaped to a plan which he perfected in his rogue's fancy at the very instant at which Monbodo lurched back into the room.

"Is that the article?" asked the doctor thickly. He held the case tightly and jealously in both hands and allowed an inch or two of the parchment to be visible, with a fragment of a chess problem, where a rook stood on its own square with a knight beside it.

Plain Mr. Smith was a man of resource, but at the sight of this simple-looking object his joints relaxed and his head swam and his eyes were dazzled. He stretched out shaking hands toward it, but Monbodo leered knowingly and drew it further away.

"Is it any good?" he asked. "Good?" gasped his companion. "The man who owns that and knows what it means—"

He was unable to finish his sentence and broke off short with an agitated groan. He made a great effort and pulled himself together.

"You needn't be afraid of me, doctor," he said. "I can tell you what to do with that lot. Let me have a closer look at it."

"So you shall," said Monbodo. He was a great artist, and he knew how, if the stakes he pretended to play for had been real, the stress of this moment would have braced and sobered him. "So you shall. But this is business. Stand over there."

The other obeyed word and gesture instantly, and he and Monbodo were separated by the length of the room. The doctor drew the revolver from his breast pocket and laid it before him on the table. It was unloaded, but it looked as imposing as if there had been six men's lives within it, and Monbodo was not fond of loaded firearms. He drew a single leaf of parchment from the satchel, and then, taking the weapon in his right hand, he held out the leaf.

"Come and take this," he said, "and go back to look at it."

Plain Mr. Smith advanced, looking Monbodo in the eye. The doctor had not the appearance of a man who was conspicuously brave, and plain Mr. Smith was a blood-stained desperado, who had carried his life in many lands as men in a spoon-race carry an egg in a teaspoon. He walked up to Monbodo very slowly, quelling him with his eye as he advanced, and Monbodo's rubles lost their vivid color and took tones of mauve and magenta. And plain Mr. Smith walked right up to the pistol barrel and took the shaking leaf from Monbodo's hand, and then, without a word, possessed himself of the satchel, which still lay upon the table.

"Now," said he contemptuously, "we'll have a look at these, and then we'll talk business. Put that thing down," he added, indicating the revolver. "If it's loaded you'll be doing a mischief with it."

He stretched out his hand with such a perfect coolness of mastery that Monbodo allowed him to seize and take away the weapon. He opened it at the breach, spun the chambers, and seeing that it was empty, threw it to the seat of an armchair a yard or two away, and began to examine the contents of the satchel.

"Yes," he said, "I've seen all these before. They're right enough."

He had been as cool as a cucumber in his defiance of Monbodo's revolver, but he broke out in blotches of perspiration, and his hand trembled visibly as he handled these little leaves of parchment, which to his imagination gave their owner the cue to uncounted millions.

"Do you know what to do with these?" he asked, and he was so brusque and intense that he fairly frightened Monbodo, who could think of nothing better to say than that he had a sort of general idea.

"A sort of a general season ticket for an idiot asylum," said plain Mr. Smith. "Do you know how to find the key to the statement these things have got for the man who can understand 'em?"

"Yes," said Monbodo, "I know enough." He heartened himself by a great exercise of resolution. "I'll thank you to give me my property back again."

"All in good time," said plain Mr. Smith. "You sit there, and don't you trouble yourself."

So Monbodo sat and mused within himself as to what he should do with this bold and overbearing adversary. He had won in a measure. He had persuaded Jethroe's pursuer that he had found the thing of which he had been so long in search, and Monbodo was fairly satisfied, further, that the man no longer doubted Jethroe's death. But if he had perhaps succeeded in this enterprise so far as his employer's interests were concerned, he had no doubt whatever as to the completeness of his failure with regard to his own. Jethroe had signified a means through which a few loose thou-

sands might be made by swindling the unprincipled. Plain Mr. Smith was not in the least likely to part with any thousands for what he held in his hand already, and it began to afflict Monbodo to think that Mr. Smith might even detect the fraud which had been played upon him, and take personal vengeance upon his deceiver. He was, indeed, bound to find out the truth sooner or later. Monbodo wondered why he had not estimated this certainty at its full value earlier. He felt very, very sorry for himself and he wept a few tears. It was his time of day for being low-spirited, for one thing.

"I'll tell you what," said plain Mr. Smith: "you and me'll go up to Chicago together and get an expert to solve these problems. Here's a plan of the chess-board with the key on it. When we've got the message plain and straight we'll go out to South America together."

"How do you know it's South America?" asked Monbodo.

"Oh!" his companion answered with a jeer. "I've known that much a year or two. When shall you be ready to come to Chicago?"

"But I don't want to go," said Monbodo tearfully. "I want my property back again, that's what I want."

"You can please yourself, you know," said Mr. Smith. "I'm going, and I'm going to-night. I shall start by the midnight mail."

"If you don't give me my property," said Monbodo, handkerchief in hand and tears in full flow, "I shall call in the police."

"Oh, dear, no," said Mr. Smith. "You won't do that, you know, because you stole this property yourself."

"No, I didn't," wept Monbodo. "It was given to me. I mean I found it."

"Well, now," said plain Mr. Smith. "It's been given to me—I mean I found it—and I'm going to stick to it till I get it translated."

"Then," said Monbodo, "I'm going to make a clean breast of it, and tell relatives of deceased."

"Hold on there!" said Mr. Smith, seizing him as he began to lurch away. "You release me, sir!" exclaimed Monbodo, with tragic dignity. "I am going to do my duty to honorable family. They're ready to give ten thousand down in ready money. That's inducement to any honest man to do his duty."

"You sit down and talk business," said Mr. Smith. "How do you know whether I'm willing to pay until we've had a chance of talking things over?"

"I am going to do my duty," said Monbodo, and by this time he was really persuaded that he was on his way to a noble action. He waved the adversary aside, and made for the door, but Mr. Smith suddenly laid hands upon him, and by an unexpected display of agility and strength flung him into an armchair, where he sat down so hurriedly and heavily that he left his wits behind him. The chair must have been an unusually solid piece of furniture, for except that it recoiled a foot or two under Monbodo's impetus, it was unaffected by his plunge into it. But Monbodo himself was absolutely as indifferent as the chair. He made not a movement and gave no sign of life for a quite considerable number of seconds, during which plain Mr. Smith stood watching and listening with bared teeth and gleaming eyes. Then the half-recumbent figure heaved one great sigh; the limbs and hands began to dispose themselves as if for slumber. Whether Monbodo thought at all of this rough and novel method of being put to bed or no, he gave no sign, and in a minute he was snoring softly like a man who might practice one deep and vibrating note on the violoncello over and over again. Mr. Smith still watched and listened until he was persuaded that Monbodo was really and truly asleep. Then he gathered up the leaves of parchment, inserted them in good order in the satchel, bestowed all in a roomy pocket and left the sleeper in his sleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

Jethroe laughed like a tornado when Monbodo told the story, or partially told the story, of his own discomfiture. The doctor strove to enlarge upon his own cunning, upon the resource and artifice he had displayed, but it was all of no avail to stay Jethroe's mirth, and the big man laughed until he was fairly tired.

"But now," he said, at length, "this lets me through. I start for town this morning, and I want you with me, Harvey. Good-by, Monbodo; I am really very sorry for you. If you played your cards properly you might have had an easy two thousand out of Mr. Smith. But cheer up, doctor; you haven't made a bad thing of it after all. We must turn to and pack, Harvey."

That afternoon saw them in Chicago. Jethroe took quiet lodgings, and his nephew, acting on instructions, went back to his hotel and waited there. He had not long to wait, for on the following morning there came a telegram from Jethroe, instructing him to draw ten thousand dollars, to pack for a voyage, and to proceed to New York. He obeyed without question; he had long since ceased to question, for he seemed to have been taken by a tide he had no power resist. His uncle was beforehand with him at New York.

"We sail to-morrow for Rio Janeiro," said Jethroe. "In seven weeks from now we shall be at our journey's end; and you will see what only one white man's eyes have seen before you, the greatest storehouse of riches in the world. That gang of thieves and murderers is all gathered together in Chicago, Harvey. They are working out the problems." He laughed in his boisterous way. "We have a clear field, and if they track us they can be made welcome. I have one method of welcome they don't dream of."

(To be continued.)

Couldn't He'p It.

"If I'm so horrid, what induced you to marry me?"

"You did!"—Cleveland Leader.

GOOD Short Stories

At the closing exercises of a Syracuse school, a little girl was asked: "Who is the head of our government?" "Mr. Roosevelt," she replied, promptly. "That is right," said the teacher, "but what is his official title?" "Teddy!" responded the little miss, proudly.

During President Harriman's visit to Cheyenne, Frank Jones, the young son of Chief Clerk D. A. Jones, of the master-mechanic's office, was sent to his private car with a telegram, Mr. Harriman, attracted by the lad's bright demeanor, said: "What do you do?" "I'm one 'f th' directors 'f th' Union Pacific." "What!" exclaimed Mr. Harriman. "Yep, I direct envelopes over 'f th' master-mechanic's office," was the laconic reply.

Appropos of the recent examination season at Oxford, a particularly good story of Oscar Wilde is being told. At his viva voce trial at Magdalen, Wilde was asked to translate a page or two of the New Testament, which the examiner suspected would puzzle him. Not so, however, for the future author opened the book and apparently without any difficulty began to translate the passage about St. Peter walking on the waters. "That will do nicely," said the examiner, after a verse or two had been beautifully rendered. But Wilde raised a deprecating finger. "Hush," he said. "I wish to see if the gentleman is drowned."

As the liner cleared the heads and the heavy swell of the open Atlantic became noticeable, dinner was served. The twenty-six places at the captain's table were filled, and as the soup appeared, the captain addressed his table companions. "I trust that all twenty-five of you will have a pleasant trip," he said, "and that this little assemblage of twenty-four will reach port much benefited by the voyage. I look upon these twenty-two smiling faces as a father upon his family, for I am responsible for the lives of this group of nineteen. I hope all fourteen of you will join me later in drinking to a merry trip. I believe, we seven fellow-passengers are admirably suited to each other, and I applaud the judgment which chose from the passenger-list these three persons for my table. You and I, my dear sir, are—"

The captain chuckled. "Here, steward, bring on my fish and clear away these dishes."

The late Secretary of State John Hay was fond of telling a story of a king who once upon a time fell into a state of deep melancholia. Court physicians could do nothing for him, and were in despair, when a certain very wise man bethought himself of the well-known cure of sleeping in the shirt of a perfectly happy man over night. So couriers were dispatched everywhere in search of the shirt of a perfectly happy man. One by one they returned from their fruitless search throughout the vast kingdom. At last only one courier remained out, and he, too, began to despair of finding the shirt of a perfectly happy man. It was just about twilight, and he was riding over a village green, when he was attracted by the careless laughter of a disreputable beggar who was stretched full length upon the sward. "Are you a perfectly happy man?" demanded the courier, reining in his horse. "I am," said the beggar. "A thousand crowns for the loan of your shirt!" "But I haven't any," replied the beggar.

STORY OF THE CLOVER.

The Familiar Field Flower Not a Native of This Country.

To the average man it is usually something of a surprise to learn that there are more sorts of clover than two—the red and the white, says the Philadelphia Record. As a matter of fact, eight or nine varieties, of various hues, are common in fields and by the roadside in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, all of them immigrants from the old world. The few species that are native to the United States are chiefly western in their range.

The pretty white or Dutch clover, of creeping habit, which is a favorite for lawns and places where a close, smooth turf is desirable, has a tall cousin known as alsike, or Swedish clover, which is one of the most charming of wayside blooms. It is distinguished from the white clover by its upright habit and the color of the flower heads, which are usually more or less flushed with pink.

Practically useless for pasture, but lovely as a nosegay, is the yellow, or hop clover, so called because of the resemblance of its flowers to hops. In age the flowers lose the brilliant yellow of their prime and change through tones of bronze to a warm chestnut brown, which is very charming.

Another species for which the farmer has no respect, and which is common on lean lands, is one with grayish green leaflets like tiny olive leaves, and oblong heads of daisy flowers

which are all but concealed by a cloak of long silky hairs. Common throughout Europe and western Asia, it is known in half a dozen languages by names that all mean "rabbit's foot," and rabbit's foot clover we call it here. It is believed to have been brought to the West Indies by Spanish explorers prior to 1547, and thence has spread well over our country.

Best known of all the trefoils is the common meadow or red clover, whose fat round heads of magenta bloom dot every summer mead. Beloved of men from time immemorial a feature in their festivals and in mystic rites, its value to the agriculturist seems not to have been recognized until about the sixteenth century, when its cultivation was first begun. During the middle ages it was reputed efficacious against the wiles of witches, and knight and peasant alike wore the clover leaf as a charm. The popular association of the four-parted leaf with good luck dates from the same ancient time, when the cross formed by the four leaflets was held to imply somewhat of supernatural virtue resident therein. Such a clover leaf was believed to make the possessor capable of detecting evil spirits; to insure safe return from journeys; to induce dreams of one's sweetheart and various sorts of pleasant fortune.

The fondness of bees for clover flowers is well known. The visit of those nectar hunters probably suggested the old Anglo-Saxon name for the red clover, which was "honeysuckle," a term still current in rural England, and synonymous, doubtless, with Shakespeare's "honeystalks."

The showiest of all our trefoils is the crimson or Italian clover, which in recent years has become frequent as a crop in Pennsylvania fields. It is a native of Italy and southern France. The flowers are not in round heads like the red clover, but in long spikes of so fiery a color as to have attracted the attention of flower growers, who employ the plant at times as a decorative annual in the flower garden.

A MEETING WITH "B.L.L."

"Some years ago I was ordered to take a long rest," said a man, quoted by the Washington Star. "I journeyed as far East as New Brunswick in search of a good place, and being in St. John when an old fisherman friend of mine was getting ready to make a voyage to New York, I took a sudden notion to go with him.

"The weather was bad all the way, and when we entered the Sound you couldn't see the companion way from the wheel. I never saw such a fog. I was on deck with the old man when we entered the Sound. He was standing by the wheel. Suddenly I saw him lean over and bawl:

"'Sloop-a-ho-o-y!"

"I didn't hear a thing to indicate the proximity of a sloop or anything else, but those old fishermen from the Provinces have a faculty of seeing things in any kind of weather.

"The old man gave his attention to the wheel, and presently I heard a faint cry off in the fog.

"Schooner-a-ho-o-o-y!"

"The old man straightened up and bawled:

"Is that the Lucy Ann?"

"Again the silence for a moment, and then faint and weak came the answer:

"'Aye, aye! Is that th' Mandy Jane?"

"'Aye, aye!' bawled our skipper, and he twirled the wheel. He never looked my way, and for a time I thought him unconscious of my presence. After fifteen minutes of silence he suddenly turned with an emphatic nod of his head toward that section of the fog from which the answering hail had come, and said:

"That was me Brother Bill. I ain't seen him before for a year. Then he went on with his steering as if nothing had happened."

A School Girl's Essay.

The following extract from a school girl's essay comes from a high school in India, and was published in the monthly magazine of the school: "King Henry 8, was the greatest widower that ever lived. He was born at Anns Domino in the year 1036. He had 516 wives, besides children. The 1st was beheaded, the 2d was revoked. She never smiled again. She said the word 'Calais' would be found on her heart after her death. The greatest man in this reign was Lord Sir Garrett Wolsey. He was surnamed the Boy Bachelor. He was born at the age of fifteen unmarried. Henry 8 was succeeded on the throne by his great Grand Mother, the beautiful and accomplished Mary Queen of Scots, sometimes known as the Lady of the Lake, or the Lay of the Last Minstrel."

Cause and Effect.

"It was eating so much candy that made me plump," explained the obese maid.

"Ah," rejoined the smitten youth, "that accounts for the sweet weight you have."