

# THE DIAMOND RIVER

BY DAVID MURRAY

## CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

"It strikes me," said Jethroe, "those natives are just blazing away from their camp on the other side to keep their own hearts up. I'll have a look out. Stay here, and don't expose yourself."

With that he crawled silently away to the top of the hillock which sheltered them. Everything was strangely quiet for a quarter of an hour, and at the end of that time he returned.

"There's nothing doing," he said, in a tone of complete indifference. "But," he added in a livelier fashion, "we are only just in time. These natives know enough to tell a stone when they see one, and it stands to reason that they should like to keep what they have found to themselves."

"But, surely," said Harvey, "it's poor tactics to fire on everybody that happens to pass this way without even inquiring whether they guess or know anything."

"Native tactics," said Jethroe, laughing. "I've been thinking," he went on suddenly, "that we might do a good deal worse than set light on at once. We should have very little more than half a dozen miles before us. These natives haven't come across the real find yet, or they wouldn't be wasting their time digging holes up here. A single day may do our business when we are once upon the ground. If we start now, even if we make a detour of three or four miles to keep out of sight of the enemy, we can do half of it before the moon falls us."

"What do you say to it?"

"As you will, sir," said Harvey; "I am in your hands."

"Come on, then," said Jethroe. "Just tread on that fellow, will you? Tread your toe well into his ribs, or you'll make an impression upon him. That's right."

He addressed the half breed in his own tongue, and the fellow got up and began to shuffle sleepily about. Jethroe himself did most of the simple work of preparation, but Harvey assisted him in lowering the white tilt of the cart, which in the dazzling sunlight made an object altogether too conspicuous for safety. When all was ready, they set out on foot, Jethroe leading, the half breed following with the cart, and Harvey bringing up the rear. One of the wheels of the cart, which had from time to time complained, began now to shriek in a most malignant manner, as if it were alive, and were bent at every revolution on proclaiming the whereabouts of the fugitives to the world. Harvey sweated with apprehension, but Jethroe came round in his imperturbable way, chopped open a tin of boiled mutton with an ax, found fat enough for his purpose, anointed the creaking axle, and then went back to his post of leader.

The way he chose set his back to the river for a full mile. Then he began to trend to the left at a wide angle, and, after another mile, he arranged his course to keep a parallel course with the river bed, which, from the time of its sudden dryness at the mountain's edge, ran almost in a straight line for as many miles as it could be kept in sight. The plain hereabouts was very level, and they had easy going. No incident of moment disturbed the march, and not a sign of an enemy was detected. Once in the still night air Harvey fancied that he heard a clamor of far away voices, but the sounds that dwell in silence were thick and loud in his ears, and he could not be sure that he was not tricked by fancy.

The sinking of the moon put an end to the journey, and they un hitched once more. The half caste, it appeared, had as purely animal-minded a faculty for forgetting fear as he had for suffering from it, and his last hand stroke was barely over before he was asleep.

"Get what rest you can," said Jethroe to his nephew. "I'll take watch till daylight."

He settled himself in his blanket against the cart, and lounged there with his blanket across his knees. Harvey disposed himself close by at full length and tried to sleep. But to be shot at for the first time in an experience which some men find exciting, and, in spite of all he could do, his mind would insist on reproducing for him the dash of the startled half caste, and then the stampeding mules and the wild race after them, and a hundred little thoughts, sensations and incidents which had passed so swiftly as to seem unnoticed, though now he found them indelibly stamped upon his memory.

This fugitive state of mind fettered his body, and, without knowing it, he turned this way and that until Jethroe spoke to him.

"Can't sleep, eh?"

"No," said Harvey; "I never was wicker awake in my whole life."

"What are you thinking about?" asked Jethroe. "If you can't sleep, I mustn't let's have a yarn. What are you thinking about?"

"Well," said Harvey, evading the question a little, "I've been thinking about you, sir."

"What about me?" asked Jethroe.

"I've been wondering why a man who already does not know what to do with his money should live as you have lived ever since I have known you for the sake of more."

"Well," said Jethroe, "it's a question I have asked myself sometimes. But is it for the sake of more? Now, that is the point when you come to think it over. Am I greedy for money? Not a bit of it. Power? That's another matter. But what's really my point here? I'm in my right, and I won't be beaten. I'm one of those who can't bear to be bluffed, my lad. I wouldn't show myself to be hum-

bled by a crowd of cut-throat ruffians like the Ezekiel gang. What d'ye say? Might better pay to let 'em have their own way? You miss the point. It isn't a question of how it pays when once you get a man's back up. It's a question of the proper pride and the grit in his own nature, Harvey. Here's a certain advantage belongs honestly to me. Here's a gang of rascals claiming a share in it without a ghost of reason. Now, there's only one thing can make me yield to them, and that is—fear. Well, you see, I'm not a very timid man. I got out of the habit of being frightened long ago. I'm not going back to it for the Ezekiel Company, don't you believe it."

Harvey had nothing to say in answer and the conversation died. The younger man had fallen into an uneasy slumber when his uncle's voice aroused him.

"Boot and saddle!" said Jethroe, gaily. "But they passed for breakfast, and then set out upon their way again, uneventfully until the moment at which Jethroe stretched out his hand and cried: 'The last landmark.' And at that instant, as if he had given a signal, a little storm of bullets knocked up the dust about them, and one of the mules, being hit, screamed hideously."

Jethroe hurled himself from the saddle, threw the reins to Harvey, and took the injured mule by the head. The beast was plunging madly, and it was touch and go for a new stampede with the whole team. Jethroe set a revolver close to the wounded animal's head and fired.

"Now," he said, "we're in a tight corner. There's no shelter for a mile. What's to be done?"

"You're captain here, sir," said Harvey.

He had been thinking much of Jethroe's latest words, and had been making up a mind of his own concerning them. Now the chance was here to show himself whether or no the mind would stand.

"We'll give 'em as little to fire at as we can," said Jethroe. "Help me to turn the cart's tail toward 'em. That'll shelter the mules, anyway, and give us a bit of cover, too."

Harvey lent a hand, with a swell of pride in his heart at his own coolness; but he was not long in discovering that the pride had some hysteria in it. If he had not made this discovery in time he would have been weeping for pride in his own courage in another sixty seconds. That reflection struck him as being so funny that he wanted to laugh at it, and then he found that there was danger in laughter. And being thus instructed by experience, he began to harden his heart in earnest, and acquitted himself with an apparent coolness which would have done credit to a veteran.

After the first thick patter of a discharge, in which some fifty rounds appeared to have been fired, there was silence for a time, and the respite gave the assailed party a chance to complete its frail arrangements for shelter. Jethroe induced mules and horses alike to lie down, and took measures to secure them all. Then he and Harvey, by his orders, snaked away through the grass on either side until they were a hundred yards apart, making no answer to the loose and desultory fire which was directed at the cart.

"They're fanning out," said Jethroe in a distinct voice. "Keep a keen lookout to your left, and pot anything that shows itself."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Harvey, but his voice was so hoarse and thick that his own ears barely heard it.

"You hear?" asked Jethroe.

"Ay, ay, sir," said Harvey, clear enough this time. He kept an unrelaxing outlook, and by-and-by he was rewarded, for a head came round a boulder some three hundred yards away, and seemed to pass hither and thither. "I ought to be able to hit that," said the volunteer marksman, "if it will only stay."

It came a little further, and a pair of shoulders were in sight. Harvey fired. The man was gone. He could not have told whether he had hit or missed, but whilst he wondered a swift and piercing sound informed him that his own lurking place had been discovered. He had never heard a flying bullet so near at hand before, for it passed within a foot of his ear; but he had no need to be told what the meaning of the noise might be. He was strong to his utmost by this time, and debated within himself, quite coolly, as to the wisest thing to do. To move would be to set the long grass flying. He decided to play possum; he kept still and watched, and the long and uneventful silence was beginning to get at his nerves again, when a mule within twenty yards of him suddenly tightened his clenched teeth, and pulled every nerve tense and taut as a fiddle string. This, at least, was a daring enemy, whoever he might prove to be. The rustle was repeated, and Harvey could locate the sound exactly or so it seemed; but he would not fire until he had more than a sound to go on. Nearer and nearer it came, and at last he saw a moving bulk not a dozen paces away. He fired, and he was answered by a yell and a volley of curses in English. But the curses were suddenly cut short, and gave way to groans, and the groans sank lower and lower until they were stilled.

Then from the rifle of Jethroe the elder, rop! rop! rop! clear and quick and imperative, and rop! rop! rop! again.

"Any luck, boy?" asked Jethroe.

"One for certain," Harvey answered. "Two, I rather think."

"Two to me," said Jethroe, "and the attack's withdrawn. Let's have a look at the field."

The attack was certainly over for the time being, and a search over the field of combat revealed four badly wounded men. The first surprise was to discover that they were white men, but the next transcended it so far as to make it seem a circumstance of no value.

The man whom Harvey had hit at short range was no other person than plain Mr. Smith. He was lying all tumbled and twisted together in the attitude in which his agony had placed him before it had brought the relief of unconsciousness, and the first part of him Harvey saw was his left cheek, which, together with his throat, still bore the impress of his own grip. The two momentary visitors at first imagined him to be dead, and Jethroe, no less yet guessing who the man might be, turned him over so that he might look at his face. Uncle and nephew gazed at each other without being able to find a single word between them, until Jethroe asked through set teeth, and with a voice like a mastiff's growl:

"What does this mean?" The question was not asked for the sake of an answer. "This fellow came by the same boat as ourselves," he went on, more calmly. "Do you know what that means?"

"Know?" said Harvey. "I know nothing; I'm all abroad."

"Mouboddo's in it," Jethroe said, answering his own question. "Mouboddo sold me the very instant my back was turned. This villain came over in our boat, with all his pals. They traveled steerage, and kept out of sight. Well, Little William," he added, looking down at the unconscious figure, "you have asked for it often enough, heaven know! Whether you have got it this time I can't tell; but you'll plot no more murders in this life, Little William, you may bet on that!"

"What shall you do with him?" asked Harvey.

"Heaven may take him out of my hand," said Jethroe, "and I hope it may be so. But if he gets over this I shall do justice on him. I wish you had shot straighter, lad, and had saved me a dirty job."

And now the two set to work to save the lives of their enemies, which has somehow come to be the fashion with civilized men after battle, and Jethroe's experience of rough-and-ready surgery, which had been considerable, gave him hopes of two. One was beyond all remedy, and breathed his last within an hour of the close of the action. Little William's case was doubtful, and doubtful on the unhelpful side. Jethroe had no desire that he should live, and no desire that he should die, but he handled him to the best of his ability and made a shelter for him, and having done what he could for him, left him.

"I don't know if these heathen will respect a flag of truce or no," he said, "but I shall try them. They must take charge of their own. I'm not going to be bothered with 'em."

He took a white towel to a six-foot splinter of wood, which he clipped from the wagon for the purpose, and with his handkerchief across his chest and his rifle on his shoulder he marched toward the river bed, waving the flag from time to time. A man came out to meet him, and Harvey saw them encounter midway. They talked for a few minutes only, and then Jethroe came strolling back, with his pipe in his cheek and a smile in his eye.

"They're sending over," he explained, "a cart and one man for their wounded and their carriage. I keep our friend William as a hostage. It won't be long before they're here."

He busied himself once more about his prisoners, one of whom had somewhat revived. The man, being questioned, was willing to be communicative. He hadn't troubled himself much about the rights and wrongs of the matter, he confessed. He had been told that a party of adventurers were trying to jump a valuable claim. He had been offered a handsome sum to come out and fight in the cause of justice.

"Justice?" asked Jethroe.

"Well, that's how they put it," said the wounded man. He wasn't a judge and bench. It was no particular affair of his, and fifty quid was fifty quid, wasn't it? and so no particular easy to lay hold of these hard times."

"And how about Tom Mouboddo?" asked Jethroe.

"To be continued."

An Obscure Feature.

"Yes, I have a pretty big mouth," said the candid man, "but I have learned to keep it shut. I got my lesson when I was a small boy. I was born and brought up on a farm, and I had the habit of going about with my mouth wide open, especially if there was anything unusual going on. One day an uncle whom I had not seen for years paid us a visit. 'Hallo, uncle!' said I, looking up at him with my mouth open like an abarn-door. He looked at me for a moment without answering, and then he said, 'Close your mouth, sonny, so I can see who you are!'"

Said the Right Thing.

Mother—Why did you let him kiss you?

Edith—Well, he was so nice about it. He asked—

Mother—The idea! Haven't you you must learn to say "No."

Edith—That's what I did say.

Mother—Then why are you angry if I kissed me.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Indifferent Honesty.

Wigg—Harduppe is perfectly honest, isn't he?

Wagg—Well, he won't steal so long as he can borrow.—Philadelphia Record.

## THE BATTLE-FIELDS.

### OLD SOLDIERS TALK OVER ARMY EXPERIENCES.

#### The Blue and the Gray Review Incidents of the Late War, and in a Graphic and Interesting Manner Tell of Camp, March and Battle.

Colonel W. R. Holloway, United States consul general at Halifax, Nova Scotia, who was Governor Morton's private secretary throughout the civil war, in writing to the Indianapolis News of some war incidents, tells an interesting story of General Lew Wallace and how the Indiana regiments in the war for the Union came to start at six as the number of the first infantry regiment. "From the first," says the colonel, "Lew Wallace, then adjutant-general of the State of Indiana, insisted that the new regimental numbers should begin at 6 to avoid a duplication of the five that had served during the Mexican war. Then began a struggle among those who had raised these first regiments to secure the lowest possible number, each being anxious to show by such a record that he and his regiment had entered the service early. It became known that Lew Wallace was to command one of the regiments, and it seemed as if half the officers of the companies that had been accepted were anxious that their companies should become a part of his regiment. So he had little peace until it was settled what companies were to serve under his command."

"The field officers of the various regiments came to me in large numbers and suggested that they were confident that Wallace would take the lowest number, 6, for his regiment, and requested me to request Governor Morton to assign the numbers by lot. I told them the governor could not interfere in the business of the adjutant-general, and then spoke of it to Wallace, who said he had not thought of the matter and cared nothing what number should be given to his regiment, but to settle the matter he would say then and there that he would select the number 11, the highest number, for his regiment, and the other colonels might settle the numbers to be assigned to their regiments among themselves. The numbers of the other regiments, if my recollection is correct, were then determined by lot."

"It is a well-known fact that the Eleventh Indiana was one of the best drilled and best disciplined regiments in the service. That regiment furnished a larger number of officers as field officers to other regiments, as well as major and brigadier-generals, than any other from Indiana, if not from the Union."

Colonel Holloway in this letter gives the following characteristic anecdote of President Lincoln: "William H. Byrington, now American consul at Naples, who was one of the Washington staff of the New York Tribune during the civil war, told me last summer that late one night following the receipt of the news that Sherman had cut loose from Atlanta for the sea, he received a message from the managing editor of the Tribune to see President Lincoln at once, and tell him the Tribune wanted to send two correspondents to meet Sherman when he reached the sea, and desired to know to what point to send them."

"This was late at night, but Byrington must obey orders. He went to the White House. The President had retired, but the Tribune man insisted that the attendant take his card to the President, as it was important that he should see him immediately. The Tribune man was taken to the corridor on the second floor. The attendant entered the President's room and a moment later the chief executive came out in his night shirt. The correspondent apologized for intruding at such an unseemly hour, but delivered his message."

"Mr. Lincoln looked puzzled for a moment and then said: 'I don't know.' a curious look came over his face as he added, 'but if I were going to guess I would say send one to Mobile and the other to Savannah. Now if Stanton knew I told you he would kill me. Don't tell him!'"

"The correspondent then thanked him. As he started to go the President yawned as he was going back to his bed and said: 'He'd kill me, kill me.'"

A Ruse of War.

It is not always policy to acknowledge a defeat. A little coolness at the critical moment sometimes saves the day, as in the case described in Mr. Ripley's "Story of Company E." In a close encounter during the Civil War, two soldiers, one from each army, came to face each other at short range.

The first shot rang, and the bullet of one man struck the other in the back, and the shot he passed through the coat of the other. Each man, knowing his ammunition was gone, supposed himself to be at a disadvantage.

One of them made a great show of

reloading his gun, and stepping forward, demanded a surrender. The other threw down his arms with a groan.

"If I had another cartridge I would never surrender!" he exclaimed.

"That's all right," calmly remarked the captor, marching off his prisoner. "If I had another, you may be sure I shouldn't have asked you to surrender."

Grant and Lee.

It has been said that as often as a new book is written about the Civil War a new legend of Appomattox is created. The famous apple-tree, which has been sold a hundred times piecemeal, and under which Grant and Lee never met—the touching scene in which Grant refused Lee's sword—this and many more bob up in new disguises in the writings about those stirring times.

The Companion recently quoted from a volume on "Lee and Longstreet at High Tide" on account of the meeting of Grant and Longstreet on that famous occasion, and this, too, is now added to the list. One of the two men now living who had the honor of witnessing the meeting of the commanders at the McLean house, then a New York Herald correspondent, calls attention to the fact that General Longstreet was not there, nor was any room in the house used as headquarters by Grant.

As a matter of fact, as General Grant himself has told in his "Memoirs," negotiation between Grant and Lee was begun by Grant a day or two before the surrender, as he saw that continued struggle by the Army of Northern Virginia was useless, and wished to clear himself of responsibility for further bloodshed. Several letters passed between the two in which General Lee urged a meeting to consider peace and General Grant insisted that he could consider only surrender. Meanwhile Sheridan was getting in the rear of the Confederates. On Sunday morning an engagement began about some provision trains seized by Sheridan. It soon became general.

General Grant was ill with a sick headache, and was riding slowly in the rear of his army, some miles from the scene. He had not expected a climax so soon, and had left headquarters in his usual rough traveling garb—the uniform of a private soldier, with merely the straps of his rank on the shoulders of his blouse. He had not a sword with him. In this guise he was met by a messenger, bringing word that at Lee's request hostilities had been suspended pending Grant's arrival to negotiate. Sheridan wished to go ahead at once and "clean 'em out," as he believed he could do.

Holding the impetuous cavalry leader in check, Grant sent Lee word that he was coming, and would meet him where convenient. He rode on with his staff, of whom General Horace Porter is perhaps now the only survivor, and was directed to the McLean residence. There he met Lee, whom he had known in the Mexican War. Lee came in a new dress uniform, with a fine sword at his side. With him was but one aid, Colonel Man-

shall of Baltimore.

After a few moments of greeting, Grant sat down and wrote out the terms of surrender as they came into his mind. As he wrote, it occurred to him that the Confederate officers would need their horses, and that it would be a humiliation to ask them to give up side-arms. Lee did not speak till the whole terms were written. Then, reading it, he expressed the conviction that it would be well received. He asked if the horse officers included artillerymen, and General Grant replied that it did not, but at a moment later added that as the soldiers were probably mostly farmers who would need the animals, he would order that wherever a Confederate established a claim to a horse or mule he might keep it. Lee wrote an acceptance of the terms and the two parted, after general introductions. They met again the next morning for a brief chat between the lines, and Grant then went on to Washington.—Youth's Companion.

Clever with His Pen.

"He's very clever with his pen." "Is he a poet?" "No."

"He writes prose, eh?" "No."

"Well, what in blazes does he write, then?" "He can't write. He's a juggler and he tosses a pen up in the air and catches it behind his ear nine times out of ten."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Maker of Fights.

"Sir," remarked the sanctimonious traveler, "you appear to be one who is making the good fight."

"Well," replied the man in clerical black, "I'm sometimes accused of making the good and the bad ones fight. I'm a whisky distiller."—Philadelphia Press.

Honesty.

"What," asked the youth, "is your idea of an honest man?" "One who can pass a newsboy selling 'extras' without trying to read the headlines," answered the Sageville sage.