

# THE DIAMOND RIVER

BY DAVID MURRAY

## CHAPTER XVI.

The day arranged for the conduct of the shroud funeral was nothing less than ghastly. The lead-colored sky seemed to muffle the very chimneys of the town, and from the low roof the rain lashed down in a ceaseless torrent for hours. Monbodo had prepared everything and soon after breakfast he and Harvey set out together for the village cemetery, which was seven miles from their starting point.

Jethroe himself had insisted upon being one of the party, and nothing would satisfy him but that he should see the ceremony through; but his friends had at least succeeded in persuading him not to be seen on an occasion so important to his own safety in a society which might instantly have identified him and brought all his plans to naught. He followed the mourning coach, therefore, in a four-wheeler.

The driver of the vehicle was more than once startled by what he took to be a goodly force of laughter from his fare, but the rain and the wind made the man uncertain.

A surprise was waiting for Jethroe, but he met it with an imperturbable face. As his fly drew up at the lodge of the cemetery a door opened, and within the doorway stood gazing carelessly out at the weather the one man on whom the keen adventurer had been most upon his guard from the very beginning of his enterprise. The man was thick set and burly, and round his neck he wore a linen bandage, which had partly slipped away, revealing the fact that he had suffered some injury there, which might, by the look of it, have been a scald. He looked up at the low sky and the plunging rain from side to side, and then, seeing Jethroe in the act of advancing toward him, he recoiled a step to make room, and in that very instant raised his eyes to the newcomer's face. His mouth gaped and his eyes stared, and Jethroe looked at him with an aspect of sudden inquiry, as if to ask why a stranger should stare so hard. The man turned away and looked out of the window across the soaking place of burial, and bit his nails in perplexity. He could not refrain from a furtive glance now and again, but Jethroe had set up his eye glass by this time, and was regarding him with a look of puzzled displeasure which he could not faze.

"Bout what time," asked Jethroe, with a "Wild West" accent which was invited to the life, "is this melancholy business expected to be over, Mr. Monbodo?"

"By mid-day, sir," said Monbodo— "by mid-day."

"Well," said Jethroe, "I want to see him planted safe and good. It's five and twenty years since I parted with him, and I don't pretend to be as much cut up as I might have been if I had known him closer; but he was my mother's sister's son, and blood's thicker than water, and it's a respectful thing to see the last of him, since I happen to be in this country."

"That is undoubtedly so, Mr.—Mr.—" "Mr. Jones," said Jethroe—"Jethroe Jones. I was christened after his father, out of family compliment. Is this gentleman," he asked, stooping forward in a half-whispering inquiry, and signaling the man with a sideway cast of the thumb—"is this gentleman a relative of the deceased?"

"No," said the burly man in a sulky tone, "I'm no relation. I'm an old acquaintance, though—p'raps about the oldest acquaintance Martin Jethroe had."

"Is that so, sir?" asked Jethroe. "Your hand, sir, if you do not mind. When all is said and done, I am the representative of the family, sir."

The burly man accepted Jethroe's proffered hand, but he feigned no heartiness over it.

"Singular likenesses runs in families," he said in that appeared to be his customary manner—a manner, that is to say, of hangdog ill temper and stubbornness.

"That is so, sir," said Jethroe—"that is so, but it is not so invariably. My fortunate cousin's nephew, for example, indicating Harvey as he spoke, "does not feature his uncle."

"You feature his uncle," said the man, with a queer flash in his eyes.

"Say!" said Jethroe. "Is that so, now? It used to be remarked when we were boys, but growing up makes a difference. Habit makes a difference. It makes a difference whether a man works or whether he lounges, sir; whether he travels or stays at home; whether he drinks freely, sir, or drinks guardedly. Now, my poor cousin Harvey and me, so far as I could learn about him, was just about as like in our ways as need be—both wanderers, both hard workers and hard liverers. Yes, I guess we'd start alike and stop alike. There was one thing about poor Harvey—you call him Martin, notice, sir, but we always called him Harvey in his youth—there was one thing about him I could never equal. He had the knack of making money, gentlemen. I've got, perhaps, as much as I want—as much as is good for me, maybe—but it's willed money mainly; and if I'd ever been right on the hard pan, like poor old Harvey, I'd have stayed there."

The demeanor of the burly man was strange. He was hangdog, he was furtive, he looked like one who had been overcrowded, and yet through all his discomfort there was a kind of peeping occasional indication of something like triumph. A keen watcher and a prac-

ticed physiognomist would have seen that he was alternately bewildered and assured, and that his bewilderment and his certainty each knocked the other on the head with a curiously rapid alternation.

The keeper of the place came to call them, and the quartette—Jethroe, Monbodo, Harvey, and the stranger—ran through the rain to where the first part of the service was to be held. The younger Jethroe hung his head. His whole heart revolted at this subterfuge, and he found himself wishing that he had never engaged in it. The sacred words were outraged, to his mind, and the whole business was a debased and debasing comedy. Happily for him, it was soon over. The wet earth was being shoveled over that repellent imposture of a coffin, and he was driving back with Monbodo, when that worthy spoke for the first time that day of his own initiative.

"Did you happen, sir," he began, smothering those trembling and bibulous lips of his as he spoke—"did you happen to recognize the man with whom you collided in the corridor in the small hours this morning?"

"No," said Harvey. "What about him?"

"That," replied Monbodo, "was the man at the cemetery. Did you—did you observe him closely at the cemetery?"

"No," said Harvey. "I thought it safest not to display any interest in him."

"Yes, yes, exactly—quite—quite so," said the doctor, who lived in a nervous hurry to propitiate mawkish at large. "But I observed him—I, sir, I observed him. He knows your uncle, sir; he pierces the disguise. The whole game is played out, sir; the plot is unrolled."

"What is to be done?" asked Harvey. "If this man knows my uncle, the whole plot is spoiled—"

"I have an idea," said Monbodo. "Mr. Jethroe, I have an idea! Pray don't talk. Leave me to think it out. Yes, sir, I have an idea."

Within a hundred yards of the hotel Jethroe's four wheeler drove past the mourning coach, and when Harvey and Monbodo reached the porch Jethroe was waiting there.

"Come with me," he said, and led the way swiftly to Harvey's sitting room. "That fellow suspects," he whispered, when he had closed the door.

"He knows," said Monbodo. "No," said Jethroe, laughing at the doctor's face, which was mottled and shining with anxiety; "he doesn't exactly know, but he suspects. Now, it's your business, Monbodo, to knock him off his perch. You'll get into converse with him; he stays in this hotel. You'll play the fool, you understand—the loose-tongued fool who can't hide anything. You'll hint at a mystery. Harvey here is to be horribly dejected because he can't find something which the deceased is supposed to have possessed. Work up to the problems. Do it cleverly, Monbodo. You may drink up to a point, and you may make him fancy that you're tipsy; but, Monbodo—he paused and shook his heavy forefinger in the doctor's face—"if you let him be right in that guess—"

"Oh, I assure you!" cried Monbodo. "I shall lay you out, Monbodo," said Jethroe; "I will fill that coffin!"

"No, no!" cried the doctor, as if the threat had been a real one. "There shall be no need for you to trouble about anything of that sort, I do assure you, sir—I really and truly do assure you, sir."

"You can trap that fellow as easily as you can kiss your hand," said Jethroe. "See you do it. And now go. I have something else to talk about."

Monbodo had a holy dread of this big and blustering patron, and was glad to shuffle from his presence. The hotel smoking room was cozy, with its snug fire and its deep armchairs, and the sound of the ceaseless rain that beat against the window made the place tenfold more comfortable and attractive. The stranger of the cemetery was there, with a big tumbler before him.

"A dreadful, dreadful day, sir," said Monbodo.

"Yes," said the stranger, "it's a dirty day."

Monbodo drew up his chair to the other's table.

"Do you know," said Jethroe to his nephew, striding up to him and seizing him by the arm at the instant at which they were left alone, "do you guess who that fellow was who was at the cemetery to-day?"

"No," Harvey answered. "How should I?"

"That," Jethroe whispered, crouching his tall figure till his eyes were on a level with his nephew's, and gripping him unconsciously until he winced, "that is the man of whom that fellow Taylor spoke as 'Little William.'"

"The murderer?" Harvey asked.

police in the world could not guard my secret. If I had evidence to hang this scoundrel, I would hang him; but that would avail me nothing, for there is a whole syndicate in pursuit of me and of what I carry about with me. Monbodo should have something to report this evening. In the meantime shall we sit down to a game of chess?"

"Chess!" cried Harvey impatiently. "I couldn't play chess at a time like this to save my soul!"

"Ah, well," said Jethroe, with one of his queer laughs, "I suppose it's a question of temperament."

## CHAPTER XVII.

Monbodo, reaching over from where he sat, seized the poker and stirred the fire. He did this like an artist, and was not satisfied until he had turned the glowing face of every individual coal to the outside. When he had propped the poker in its place, he mopped his face with a large silk handkerchief. He sat enraptured before that happy vision for a time; then, after rubbing his hands, he caressed both sides of the tumbler with his palms. He did not drink at that moment, but, having performed this act of benediction, he sank back in his deep armchair and smiled at the stranger.

"A drop of something warm, sir," said the stranger, "is an uncommonly comfortable thing on a day like this."

"You are right, sir," said Monbodo; "you are indubitably right." And, as if the speech had reminded him of a duty, he emptied the tumbler. He set it down with a contented sigh.

The stranger smoked also, and the two kept silence for a time. The fire purred and rustled as a comfortable fire will when it is at its best, and the rain lashed the window panes. The stranger had a stout walking stick between his knees, and in his abstraction he was toying with the handle of it.

Finally the stranger did a strange thing. He tapped Monbodo on the shoulder with the crook of the stout walking stick and said:

"Was there a corpse in that coffin, doctor?"

Now, if this surprise had come upon Monbodo at any other than the psychological instant at which he was prepared to meet it, he would certainly have betrayed himself. The first thing in the morning anything bowled him over. As the day advanced his nerve gained tone. His sixth tumbler left him invulnerable to fate—for five minutes. Could he have kept himself in that condition, he would have been a man to be envied.

As fortune would have it, he was there in all his forces to withstand the shock the stranger had brought against him. He raised his eyebrows, and he stared at the stranger in the most natural manner in the world. He had very large and rather projecting eyeballs, and when he stared there was a great deal of red-veined white visible. His thick lips were apart, and he scratched his cheek with a forefinger. Doubt sat upon him. His whole attitude seemed to inquire if he had heard aright.

The stranger had leaned forward, walking stick in hand, to signal his companion's attention by that tap on the shoulder, and he had spoken with a tranquil air and tone. "I know everything, and it isn't worth while to attempt to humbug me for a moment," said the stranger's eye. But when Monbodo turned round to meet that threatening aspect, and did it with so complete an appearance of surprise, the certainty gradually vanished from the other's look, and a half-sheepish wonder slowly took its place. At length things went so ill with the stranger, under Monbodo's staring amazement, that there was nothing left for him but to withdraw his gaze and betake himself to his tumbler. He drank with a most feeble attempt at a swagger, and Monbodo, still looking amazed at him across his tumbler, drank also.

Then that medico set himself to work to play a fantasia on the emotions of the stranger. He did it like an artist, and his companion, watching him closely, believed that he could read his reflections like a book. Now this particular art of pretense is practiced by thousands every day. It is a part of the accustomed liar's stock in trade. But it is a fortunate thing for the world at large that the enormous majority of those who seek to practice it are extremely clumsy, and that they are bowled out ninety-nine times in a hundred. But what Dr. Monbodo's manner said to the stranger was so convincingly said that it was much more persuasive than words. First of all it said, "What on earth is this man talking about?" Then it said, "Dear me, now! that's really very remarkable, because it reminds me." Then it said, "Upon my word! there's something very curious going on. I'll inquire about it." Then it said, "No, I won't," and then, "Yes, I will," and then, "No, I won't," again. Having carried on his voiceless soliloquy so far, Dr. Monbodo assumed an air of profound cogitation. When he next spoke there was a husky thickness in his voice which he could have cleared away had he so chosen. It served his turn, however. He left it to do its own work on the understanding of his companion.

"Excuse me, sir," he began, "but had you known our deceased friend's affairs?"

He was grotesquely emphatic with a waverling forefinger, and he wore a look of solemn perplexity, as if he were saying to himself, "I'll turn this fine fellow inside out like a glove." And the stranger recoiled within doors, thinking, "If this fellow does know anything, now's my time." He answered quietly that he had at one time been in Mr. Jethroe's business confidence.

(To be continued.)

## Her Specialty.

Bleeker—Your wife is something of a wit. She tried to make game of me at the reception last night.

Meeker—Huh! That's nothing. She often makes me quail.

## THE FIELD OF BATTLE

### INCIDENTS AND ANECDOTES OF THE WAR.

#### The Veterans of the Rebellion Tell of Whistling Bullets, Bright Bayonets, Bursting Bombs, Bloody Battles, Camp-Fire, Festive Bugs, Etc., Etc.

"Yes," said Captain Fowler, "we frequently fired at an enemy when we couldn't see a man or a gun. At Ayrshboro, N. C., General Kilpatrick ordered my section of the battery forward to dislodge the enemy. When I reported to the general the lines were quiet and I could see neither our own troops nor the rebels. I asked Kilpatrick where the enemy was and he waved his hand dramatically toward about half of North Carolina and said, 'Right over there.'"

"I turned to look for a position for my rifled ten-pounders, when a shell from the enemy whizzed over the general and staff. Kilpatrick flattened himself on his horse, saying a moment later: 'I always dodge these things. I don't suppose it does any good, but it is human nature to dodge, and I dodge. But, I say, captain, can you dismount that gun without seeing it?' I told him we could, and going into position we opened fire at 1,500 yards and the enemy soon concentrated the fire of six smooth bore twelve pounders on my two rifled ten pounders.

"The range was too great for the smooth bores, and I lost not a single man. But we located the enemy's guns, one by one, and the gunners, with three years' practice, put every shot in the right place to make trouble. Soon an orderly rode up to say: 'The general's compliments—you have dismounted a gun.' In ten minutes he came again: 'The general's compliments, and you have exploded a caisson.' In five minutes another cavalryman disturbed us with: 'You have disabled another gun.' Then for five minutes the rebel battery was silent.

"When it opened again the boys let drive with the two guns and literally demoralized one of the rebel guns, breaking the carriage and turning the gun end for end. We saw it later when the rebels had retreated, and when we discovered we had been firing over our own men, who were near enough for their lookout to see our shots strike. When the lines came together the affair was over in fifteen minutes, and Colonel Rhett, a South Carolinian in command, was a prisoner.

"Two or three hundred of Rhett's men were captured with him. Just before their capture, Captain Duncan of our own army, who had been captured at Fayetteville, reported to General Sherman minus hat, shoes and coat. He stated that Wade Hampton's men made him get out of nearly everything he wore at the time of his capture, and appropriated all the articles, and that when he appealed to Hampton for protection he was answered with a curse. Hearing the story, Kilpatrick ordered that Rhett be permitted to march on foot to Goldsboro.

"By the way, when the Union troops concentrated for the battle of Missionary Ridge, our battery was left at Dallas without support to guard the river crossing. The rears on the other side of the river knew a battle was in progress, and the first day shouted at intervals: 'How is the fight going? Every time our boys shouted back: 'You're getting licked.' As the rebels accepted this without comment we suspected they had more information than we had, and knew the battle was going against them. However, we traded coffee for tobacco the day Hooker went over Lookout mountain, and exchanged views on the situation.

"The rebels had quite a large force on their side of the river, and that night one of the pickets shouted: 'We will be relieved soon. Good-by, Yanks.' The next morning a flatboat loaded with men in gray came over to our side under a flag of truce and said as their whole army was retreating they would like a chance to get into Kentucky. Another boat load came later, giving us news of Missionary Ridge and expressing a willingness to surrender. When they saw that our battery was unsupported they allowed they could have taken us in out of the wet if they had known the infantry and been withdrawn.

"At Stone River we had smooth bore guns, but we did a good job. After the rebels retreated we followed beyond Murfreesboro on the Manchester pike. The rear guard made a stand while a heavy column crossed the pike just out of our range. The boys noticed, however, that when the solid shot struck the hard surface of the pike they ricocheted forward to the point where the heavy column was crossing, so they fired glancing shots, using the pike as a bounding board, and did effective work. A general officer who rode a white horse and who was very busy was struck and killed by one of these ricocheting cannon balls."

"Speaking of glancing shots," said the lieutenant, "there was a case in the Philippines that beat the record. The

day General Lawton with only two hundred men was cut off from his command, operating south of Manila, there was great excitement on the Monadnock. We could see that the general was in a scrape and that the Filipinos were closing in to capture him. Finally the general signaled for help and ordered that men be landed from the warships at once to come to his rescue.

"The vessels started five or six hundred shoreward and opened with all available guns on the Filipinos in the bushes. As all the world knows, the rebels were driven off, General Lawton was rescued and established communication with the other parts of his command. When the bluejackets returned to their ships they were ordered to remove the cartridges from their guns. One man failed to obey, and on the Monadnock there was a commotion when a shot came from a group of men putting their guns away.

"The bullet struck a man in the foot, glanced from the deck, cutting another man in the hand, went a considerable distance until it struck the capstan, where it divided into two pieces, one of which took a section out of an officer's ear and the other struck a man in the leg. This sobered everybody, but only one man knew where the eccentric bullet came from, and he made no remarks."

"I was down at Bridgeport, Ala., some weeks ago," said the major, "and things are not as they were in 1864. On one occasion in the last year of the war I went to Bridgeport tired, sleepy and hungry. The hotel was without glass in the windows and without doors. There were no beds and very little furniture of any kind. Yet the rooms were full of lodgers sleeping on cots or on the floor, and of boarders who paid self-appointed guards a high price for army rations served on a table in what had been a dining room.

"A comrade with me said he must have sleep under shelter, and, offering a high price for a place to sleep, he was given a box in a lumber room. He wrapped himself in a blanket, and, stretching himself on the box, slept the sleep of a man who doesn't care for trifles. In the morning, when daylight made it possible for him to inspect his bed and surroundings, he found that he was sleeping on an empty coffin. I told him when I came back that Bridgeport could do better now and at a lower price."—Chicago Inter Ocean.

#### Lost His Nerve.

While reading some of the incidents of the late war, written by my comrades, a circumstance comes to my mind which I would like to relate.

I was a member of Company B, Fourteenth Indiana volunteers, and it was while we were camping at Elk river valley, western Virginia, I think. In our company we had an Irishman whose name, of course, was Pat. This Irishman had a particular friend in the company whose name was Joe Gutheridge. One afternoon Col. Wilder came to us with the order that we should be ready to march that evening, immediately after dark, at the same time explaining: "Now, boys, we are in the enemy's country, and in a mountainous country, where the enemy can view our every movement, so don't make any unnecessary movements, but be ready to march at dark with two days' rations and your cartridge boxes full of ammunition."

We were called into line at dark and received order No. 2: "Boys, don't make any noise; don't speak above a whisper. I shall be at the head of the column, and if anything happens you will hear from me."

We marched along until about two o'clock in the morning without stopping, when the colonel, thinking we needed a little rest, said, "Halt and rest." Just loud enough for the first company to hear. The next company knew what it meant and followed suit, but the next company didn't know what it meant, as they had heard no command, and by the time it reached the tail end of the regiment there was quite a confusion. Some one said "charge of cavalry," and you could hear guns click, click, but our officers ordered us to stand until we received orders. Just then Col. Wilder rode down the line and explained the cause of the confusion; then said, "Fall into rank, keep the same order, and move very quietly."

Just as we were ready to march we heard a voice calling from the top of a tree near by: "Oh, Joe, and where is the devil is me gun?" It was our worthy Irishman. Should any of my comrades happen to read this, will they remember how Col. Loomis cannonaded the breastworks of Green River Bridge?

The number of timber sleepers on the railways of the world is calculated to be about 1,491,000,000 and their value is estimated at about \$300,000,000. This item makes a serious drain on the timber supplies of the world.

It is only when at work that man fulfills his proper place in God's creature scheme. They are indeed rare exceptions who "also serve, who only stand and wait."

—Home is the seminary of all other institutions.—E. H. Chapin.