

THE DIAMOND RIVER

BY DAVID MURRAY

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

"Well," said Harvey, "I'm leaving everything, and I don't know why or wherefore. I leave it to you, but don't you think it time you let me know something definite?"

"You may think me crazed, I dare say," said Jethroe, "but I have what amounts to a fixed belief that if I speak my secret before the time I shall never live to profit by it. You shall know all in good time, and meantime you've only got to believe that I mean well by you. I tell you, Harvey, I'm going to make you the wealthiest man in the world. In six months we can be back, prepared to buy up the Rothschilds between us, and when I'm gone you'll have my share as well as your own. There won't be an Emperor, my lord, who'll take airs with Harvey Jethroe the younger."

Jethroe had booked himself for the voyage as Richardson, and had entered Harvey under an alias also. He had purposely chosen a boat by which he had never sailed before. His confidence in his disguise was shaken, but he was prepared to face any and all suspicions with a perfect effrontery. It would have been a strong likeness indeed, which would have convicted him against the absolute sang froid of the denial with which he was ready. As it chanced, he was not called upon for the denial at all. There was a steward aboard the boat with whom he had traveled upon another line, and who from time to time looked at him curiously. But if the steward ever allied Jethroe and Richardson in his mind at all, he must have dismissed the fancy instantly, for the Mr. Jethroe he had known was a power in the State, and a man reputedly made of money, and why on earth should a millionaire have disguised himself and gone under an alias?

The voyage passed without adventure. The landing was as uneventful; the journey up country passed without recognition or incident which calls for narration. But at last the two arrived at a station with great hills rising on the far horizon, and they passed the night at a weather-board shanty of a hotel with a roof of corrugated zinc, on which a rain shower played a thundering concerto as they lay abed. Before they slept Jethroe had been abroad bargain making, and in the morning there were two very saddle horses at the door, and a baggage cart laden with all manner of bags and boxes, with four upstanding mules harnessed to it. A half-breed had charge of the cart, and the small cavalcade started in the cool of the day.

Nobody in the sleepy township seemed to have noted either their coming or going. Those who had been approached in the way of business had done their little bit of trade and had thought no more about it. As to the business of the travelers, whence they came and whither they were bound, there was no more interest in them than if they had been a pair of house flies. They came, they went out into the desert unregarded. There were a hundred places to which they might have been going, and the people who made up the township did not care whether they were going to them all, or driving out to die in the wilderness.

This absolute indifference suited Jethroe to admiration. Nothing could have suited his purpose better, and he mounted in high good humor.

"Is the time yet here?" asked Harvey, as they faced the vast prospect of the wilderness, which would have seemed interminable but for the blue barrier of the hills miles and miles away. "Am I to know on what wise errand I am going?"

"Now's the time!" cried Jethroe. "I've taken pains to know that our guide behind us doesn't speak a word of English, and here, at least, we're pretty safe from listeners. All the same, we'll ride out of earshot. I shouldn't be in the least surprised to learn that one of the very mules was Little William in disguise."

He put in spurs and galloped for some two or three hundred yards, and Harvey followed his lead.

"Now," said Jethroe, turning on him with a glittering eye. "I can tell you. I'm taking you, Harvey, to what poor old Zekkar christened Diamond river, a place compared with which Sinbad's valley was not a circumstance."

"Who was Zekkar?" asked Harvey.

He was mightily little moved as yet. "Zekkar," returned his uncle, "was a Hungarian Jew, who was famous in his day as a chess player and now famous still as a constructor of chess problems. He was not the discoverer of Diamond river, and he never saw it, but he was in a sort of way the chronicler and cartographer of it. Let me begin at the beginning."

"Game Wiley first came out to Brazil years and years ago—long before my time. The natives were thorough-going savages then, but Wiley got along with 'em well enough, and he was in this region off and on for three years. Got down to the coast twice in all that time. Second time he was there—back to some sort of wild approach to civilization—he meets a fellow by the name of Kaster, who was on the point of sailing for Europe with the very first big diamond ever found in Brazil. 'Is this diamond of yours in the rough?' says Wiley to Kaster. 'Yes,' says Kaster; 'but it's a fine big stone and it bids fair to be worth a lot o' money.' I should like to look at it," says Wiley, and Kaster makes no ado about the matter at all, but just unpacks his kit and shows Wiley the stone. 'You don't mean to say that thing's a dia-

mond?' says Wiley. 'But I do, rather,' says Kaster. 'Well,' says Wiley, 'I'll have a spell up country and come back and buy out the Rothschilds. I know where there's thousands of 'em.' Kaster argued that it was easy to mistake a diamond—that is, for an ignoramus like Wiley, who knew nothing in the world and cared for nothing in the world but big game shooting—but Wiley stuck to it. He knew the bed of a dried-up river up country which was strewn thick with 'em. He'd picked 'em up, handled 'em and never dreamed that they had any special value. Not a bit like diamonds in a jeweler's window. It was likely enough that Wiley thought they were dug up already cut and polished.

"Well, Kaster took his one big stone to Europe. It was polished in Amsterdam. It sold for twelve thousand pounds. That piece of luck killed Kaster; he couldn't stand it. He went on one unbounded bender of a spree and died before he had spent a quarter of the money. But Wiley, meantime, went up country, not believing much, so far as I can make out, in the diamond idea, but quite persuaded, all the same, that if Kaster's stone was a diamond, he could pick 'em up like pebbles on a beach. He was away this time about a year and a half, and when he got down to the coast again he had been very badly mauled. He had got into close quarters with a lion, and he was fairly spoiled for life.

"I can't tell you half the story, but the natives had got fond of him for some reason or another, and they nursed him and they pulled him round in a measure, and they got him down to the coast again. The beast had spared his vitals, but he had no use of either leg or of his left arm. I never saw the man, but I know those who knew him well, and they have told me he had to be carried about, and dressed and undressed and put to bed and taken out again like a baby.

"Wiley had plenty of money, and could have gone home and finished his career; but Brazil had got into the soul of him. I shall die here, Harvey; I shall have to be in reach of the mountains when my time comes. Wiley stuck on, and he was very queer. He used to laugh when he talked about it; but he told his tale about the river bed full of diamonds to anybody who cared to hear it, and the majority of people thought that on this particular point his wits were turned.

"Well, now, old Zekkar comes upon the scene. Zekkar, as I told you, was a Hungarian Jew. He had been in trouble with Kossuth ages ago, and he had been in trouble with Mazzini, and he had been in half the prisons of the Continent for hatching treason of one sort or another, and at last, by some strange chance, he drifted out to Brazil, and so on until he lighted on Wiley. I know Zekkar in his late days, as I shall tell you when I come to my own share in the story. Outside his politics he had only one interest in the world; it was the royal game of chess. I do believe that you might have lit a slow fire under old Zekkar when once he had fairly settled down to a game—he got so astonishingly absorbed. Wiley turned out a sort of protector for him, and a local carpenter, who was clever at the lathe, turned 'em out a set of chessmen and a board; for there was nothing of that sort to be bought nearer than Rio Janeiro, and the two played together every day. It came out that Zekkar's great passion was the making of chess problems, and Wiley set him to work at it. All the problems you have seen and worked at were made by Zekkar, but the old man was kept in ignorance of the purpose he was working for. All he knew was that his patron would say to him: 'I want you to invent me a problem in which the black king shall be forced to such and such a square.' Zekkar thought this a mere caprice, and since Wiley always gave him a gold coin when he had tested and approved the problem, it served his turn so well that he would have asked for nothing better all his life.

"He was working two or three problems a week—it was no sort of task for him, for he had a perfect genius for the work—and all on a sudden he made the discovery that he was working on a plan. He found one day in Wiley's room between the title page and the binding of a big Bible a sheet of cartridge paper marked out for a chess board, and each of its squares marked with a letter. The whole alphabet was used up twice, and as far again as was needed to cover every square on the board. He had in his pocketbook the roughly penciled notes of his problems, and it occurred to him to go over them. He found that the letters on the successive squares on which the black king stood in the problems as they came in order spelled out words in reasonable sequence. He took a note of the board, for the letters were distributed all about it at haphazard. And so it came to pass, as they used to say in old times, that when all the problems were made that Wiley wanted, old Zekkar had got the whole inscription. Wiley, I ought to tell you, professed to have brought a score of the finest stones away with him, but he lost them when he got mauled by the lion. The natives who rescued him and took care of him had no idea of their value, and left them behind.

CHAPTER XX.

"Wiley, as I told you, had talked about his discovery to anybody and everybody, but he had never given a ghost of a hint as to where it lay. Nobody could have guessed within five hundred miles, even if anybody had taken the trouble. Most people took it for a craze, but old Zekkar

believed it, and he made all these problem drawings I have about me now, and the plan of the board with its letterings, and he used to go about offering to guide people if they would only find the money for the expedition and go halves with him. He couldn't find a soul to believe in him or his diamonds, and when it came to Wiley's knowledge that the old Hebrew had offered to betray the treasure, he swore he'd shoot him at sight. That kept Zekkar out of Wiley's way, as you may very well imagine, and, with his only patron gone, the problem worker was so hard up that he was without food for days together.

"This is where I come in. In those days—it's fifteen years ago now—I belonged to a syndicate which had arranged to prospect for gold. It was a measly sort of an affair, and it never came to much. It was called the Ezekiel Company, because an old Jew of that name had been its founder. There were a dozen of us altogether, and a bigger set of cut-throats than you could have found among us was never seen in the world. The whole crowd of us were down at a place called Ampsie together when I met Zekkar, and heard the story of the treasure—the river-bed full of diamonds. I laughed at it, as everybody else had laughed, and I chaffed old Zekkar about it until I found that he was literally dying of starvation. I fed him up, of course, and we all went up-country for a week to look at a place we'd heard of. It turned out good for nothing, and we came back. Zekkar was on the hard pan once more. He offered me his problems on parchment, saying nothing, of course, about their meaning. I didn't want 'em, but finally, out of pity for the old chap, I bought 'em. The whole gang of the syndicate was there at the time.

"The old boy used to hang about after this and hint about some mysterious value that attached to his problems until I was sick of him. But one day, when he was bothering me, it occurred to me to say: 'Look here, old chap, I know all about it; you've sold me Diamond river.' It was the strangest thing that ever happened in my life. It wasn't even drawing a bow at a venture. What I said hadn't any real meaning to myself. It was a mere piece of silly banter. But I had no sooner spoken than Zekkar let out a cry, and came straight for me with a face as pale as ashes. 'How do you know?' says he, all trembling and shaking and staring. You never saw a fellow in such a state as he was. I looked at him very straight, and I said, 'Well, Zekkar, I didn't know anything, but you've given me something to think about.' He went away without a word, but he sent me one or two of the queerest looks I ever saw, and several of the ruffians of the syndicate who happened to be there at the time were quite fixed in their own minds that there was a good deal in it.

"The next thing I knew was that Wiley was dead, and it was said that he had put his problems and his plan into the hands of a young Englishman, a distant relative of his, and had explained everything to him. The youngster went up-country, but the native tribes were at war among themselves, and the expedition came to grief. Problems and plan were lost in the wilderness. The lad was shot, but he managed to send down some kind of mutilated message. He had actually found Diamond river. There was no mistake about that. Perhaps it was through his fever, or he may have written in haste and flurry, but though his one professed purpose in writing was to tell the whereabouts of the find, he gave no intelligence of it at all. And so the thing died out of remembrance for years and years. I thought that Zekkar must be dead for a certainty, for the legend of a dried up watercourse full of diamonds as big as pigeon's eggs was common property, and he would have been able to find any number of men to back him. There were lots of men, too, who knew how Wiley had meant to lock up his secret in the chess problem.

"It turned out that Zekkar was alive after all, but he was as helpless as if he had never had an inkling of the secret. He had never had an inkling of the secret. He in which he had kept a record of his problems, but the theft was useless, because the thief had failed to secure the key. When I lighted on Zekkar two years ago he was a wreck, senile, ragged, homeless. He was still maundering about his river of diamonds, and would get a drink from a new chum sometimes by showing his key to a puzzle which everybody supposed to be undecipherable until the day of judgment. He did not know me when we met, but he jumped at the chance of selling his worthless bit of parchment for a ten dollar note. I didn't act unfairly by him, for I bought him an annuity, which he didn't enjoy long, poor old beggar!"

"But the Ezekiel firm, and Little William, and Mr. Taylor?" asked Harvey, when his uncle had made a seeming end of his story.

(To be continued.)

The Reckless Courtiers.

An excellent story about James McNeill Whistler, which is thoroughly characteristic of "the gentle master of all that is fine and flippant in art," is going round in artists' circles. A certain gentleman whose portrait Whistler had painted failed to appreciate the work, and finally remarked: "After all, Mr. Whistler, you can't call that a great work of art." "Perhaps not," replied the painter, "but then you can't call yourself a great work of nature!"

Drunkards Sent Home in Carriages. In Denmark it is the law that all drunken persons shall be taken to their homes in carriages provided at the expense of the publican who sold them the last glass.

A man may be a hopeless idiot, but no woman will admit it after he has proposed marriage to her.

GOOD Short Stories

In talking with a young Yale graduate who had been at the recent commencement, a newspaper man asked whether he had heard any adverse comments on Yale's acceptance of Rockefeller's "tainted money." "Well," he said, "the only comment I heard was 'tain't enough.'"

An extremely unintelligent Philadelphia "repeater" was arrested at the last election in the Quaker City. He asked what crime was laid at his door, and the policeman replied: "You are charged with voting twice." "Charged, am I?" muttered the dazed prisoner; "why," I expected to be paid for it."

When in New York, F. Marlow Crawford has his barbering done and his boots blacked at his office. He always has the same men, and both are Italians. In engaging the bootblack, Mr. Crawford asked him where he was born. "In Genoa," was the answer. "And what is your name?" "Patrick Murphy," was the astonishing reply. "Where in the world did you get that name?" asked the novelist. "I take the name after I come here, so people think-a I the American," said the boot-black.

A sculling-match once took place under the auspices of the athletic association at Oxford, the contestants being a Londoner, of the Oxford crew, and an Irishman, of the Cambridge crew. The Oxford man won handily, at no stage of the race being in danger of defeat. So sure was he of winning the contest that in a spirit of fun he ceased rowing several times, and bade the Celt in the rear to "hurry up." When the race was over, the Irishman received a good deal of chaff at the hands of all, in view of his overwhelming defeat. But to this he merely elevated his eyebrows. "Sure," he finally consented to reply, "I'd have beaten him easily enough if I'd taken the long rests that he took."

Professor Nichols, the famous Cornell physicist, during the recitation of a freshman class in natural philosophy, observed a tall, lanky youth in a rear seat, his head in a recumbent position, his body in a languid pose, his eyes half closed, and his legs extended far out in an adjacent aisle. He was either asleep or about to lose consciousness. "Mr. Frazer," said the great scientist, "you may rectify." The freshman opened his eyes slowly. He did not change his somnolent pose. "Mr. Frazer, what is work?" "Everything is work," was the drawing reply. "What! Everything is work?" "Yes, sir." "Then, I take it, you would like me and the class to believe that this desk is work?" "Yes, sir," replied the youth, wearily, that desk is wood-work."

A literary man, who has seven children, recently purchased a country place. This man has rather strenuous ideas about bringing up children, including cold baths among the things that are good for them. One morning he carried his youngest, a two-year-old, to the creek near the house, and gave him a cold plunge. The child objected, but the father soused him in again, and plunged him under. At this instant a hand grabbed the Spartan father, and a neighboring farmer, owner of the land, roared at him: "Here, none of that! I'll have the law on you for this!" "And," said the literary man, "it took me half an hour to convince that man that I was not trying to drown that child. Even then he wasn't wholly convinced. To the very last minute he kept on shaking his head skeptically, and saying: 'Wal, I dunno about that. I dunno. You got six besides this.'"

WHEN LOST IN THE WOODS.

Keep Your Wits, Take Time, and, if Possible, Follow Stream.

"What should you do if lost in the woods?" Young foresters taking the civil service examinations for government service used to find this question a favorite, says the Boston Transcript. Later, most of them have had more than one occasion to put their answers to a practical test. One of the commonest experiences of people who go to the woods is to stray away from the trails and familiar landmarks and lose their bearings. Every year brings its quota of stories of lost men and women, of search parties organized, of days spent in fruitless quest, and perhaps of the finding of the lost ones in wretched condition, ragged, starved, sometimes temporarily insane from the fright and hardships. Such experiences as these are usually due to panic. They seldom happen to the man who is able to act with calmness and judgment. Summer visitors to the woods are peculiarly likely to be lost, but so may also people who are accustomed to living in the woods. No man in a wild country is altogether certain when he goes to the woods that he will find his way back without difficulty, no matter how

many times he has been over the same ground. A snow, a forest fire, even a windfall in the forest, may have obliterated his guide marks and changed utterly the appearance of things.

Every man who goes into the woods should make up his mind that in case he is lost he will observe a few simple common-sense rules of conduct. In the first place, he should resolutely refuse to be frightened. The immediate effect of the discovery that one is lost is usually complete demoralization. The victim falls into a panic of fear and wants to extricate himself immediately. He runs about in different directions, hallooing, until what little sense he had left is completely gone. Avoid that. If you should miss your trail or be in doubt as to your whereabouts the best course is first to sit down where you are and think over matters. It is not a serious affair; be assured of that. There are few regions in this country where a man is not within a day's walk of some settlement and if the season be summer you have nothing to fear. Consider the matter calmly; use your memory and your reason. Make up your mind about the proper direction to follow, then take your course and refuse to change it without good and sufficient cause. Don't hurry; take your time and when you feel exhausted stop and rest. Don't try to travel at night. A night spent out of doors in the summer doesn't hurt anybody.

If you have so lost the sense of direction that you cannot make up your mind what course to take it is usually best to follow a stream. In a rough country there is almost always flowing water. Streams always leads to settlements. The way may be long and the "going" tortuous, but stick to your stream and it will bring you out.

Keep your eye on the sun, if it is out, and get your directions from it. Study the contours of the hills and mountains, the appearance of the trees and of the stream. Try to find something familiar. Don't look for moss on the trees to determine your direction. It is not a safe guide.

Don't throw away food or clothing in order to travel faster. You will probably need both.

Keep your confidence. When everything else is gone, hold on to that. Getting lost in the woods is, after all, under certain restrictions, a rare kind of sport. There is certainly excitement enough about it to stir the most jaded, with plenty of opportunity for the exercise of coolness and common sense. A country like the Adirondacks furnishes ideal conditions for getting lost—and getting back again. Settlement is nowhere so far away that you are not within a few hours' walk of a hotel or a summer cottage and think of the romantic possibilities of such an experience.

Be Kind to the Whale.

Speak kindly to the elephant
And gently to the whale,
And when you meet the jaguar
Please do not yank his tail.
Respect the tiger's feelings, dear,
His whiskers do not pull;
Oh, let your heart with kindness
Be ever, ever full.

Oh, do not pinch the python
Or punch the rattlesnake.
If you should hurt the cobra
His little heart would break.
Don't stick pins in the crocodile
Or irritate the yak;
Pray do not bruise the polar bear
By pounding on his back.

Don't make the lion cry, my child,
By walking on his toes;
Nor slight the hippopotamus
By standing on his nose.
For all good children, you must know,
Each morning gladly sing:
"Oh, help me be considerate
Of every living thing."
—New York Times.

Not a Willing Victim.

The neat, middle-aged matron gazed suspiciously at the disreputable looking tramp who had knocked at her kitchen door. "What do you want," she asked.

"Would ye mind givin' me a piece o' pie, ma'am?" he said.

"I don't know about that. I can't say I like the looks of you."

"I know I ain't very prepossessin' ma'am, but it ain't my fault. I can't afford to dress any better."

"I'm not speaking of your clothes altogether. You don't look clean."

"I'm willin' to confess it, ma'am. I guess I don't."

"And you don't look as if you ever combed your hair or took any sort of care of yourself."

"Well, I reckon that's 'cause I live close to nature."

"If you do," she said, as she went after the pie, "I'll guarantee it isn't nature's fault!"

Not the Same Wife.

Kilson—Gaylord's wife used to be awfully stout, and now she is quite thin. What caused the change, I wonder?

Marlow—Diverse. This isn't the same wife.—Town and Country.

Almost anybody would rather have a steady job than steady work.