

A DAUGHTER OF THE SIERRA

BY CHRISTIAN REID

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CHAPTER XVIII.

MISS RIVERS OBTAINS A PROMISE

Nothing more was heard of Armistead by the Caridad people for several days after his interview with Mr. Rivers. It was known that he had left Toppa, but for what purpose or what destination was not known; although it soon transpired that he had found some one to fill the place which had been vacated by Lloyd and declined by Thornton.

"Disappointed fellow, named Randolph," the latter said in answer to a question of his chief. "Formerly with the Silver Queen in Arizona, then drifted down to Sonora; been with one or two mines there, but didn't stay long. I met him in the place one evening and he asked me if there was a chance for him with the Caridad. I couldn't give him much encouragement."

"I should think not," said Mr. Rivers, dryly. "I never take a man of that kind into my employ."

"I felt rather sorry for the poor devil, though," Thornton went on. "I'm glad Armistead has given him a chance. It's a pretty good proof, however, of Armistead's desperation," he added with a laugh; "for benevolence isn't his strong point. I should be sorry to go to him for a helping hand if I were down on my luck."

"This man may serve his purpose," said Mr. Rivers; "although he has the disadvantage of being a stranger and not knowing the people here."

"Great disadvantage, too, in a place like Toppa, with a floating population of miners, some of whom are a pretty bad lot," said Thornton.

"Armistead is very bitter about Lloyd," remarked Mackenzie, who was sitting by—"for this conversation took place in the patio one evening, when the men with their cigars were grouped around Miss Rivers in her special corner under the Moorish lantern."

"Says he did him a great favor by bringing him back here, and now he—that's Lloyd—has deserted him—that's Armistead—because he's afraid to have anything to do with the Santa Cruz business."

"He should reserve that story strictly for people who don't know Lloyd," said Thornton. "I told him so the other day when he offered me the place Randolph now fills."

"The speaker was modestly conscious of the interest with which three pairs of eyes were turned upon him. "So he offered the position to you!" said Mr. Rivers. "I might have guessed he would. I'm a little surprised you didn't accept it. To serve Trafford's interest would be to open many lucrative chances for yourself."

"Oh, yes! I know that," Thornton answered; "but—" (he looked at a fair face smiling approvingly on him) "I suppose scruples are catching. At least I couldn't make up my mind to serve Trafford's interest in this particular case."

"Scruples are very much in the way of a man who wants to get on in life," Mr. Rivers remarked; "but I am glad you haven't discarded yours, and also that the Caridad isn't to lose your services."

"Thank you, sir!" Thornton replied, flushing a little; for the German was usually more candid than complimentary to his subordinates. Miss Rivers was yet more complimentary when he found himself alone with her a little later.

"You do yourself injustice," she said, "by talking of scruples being catching. I grant that Mr. Lloyd's example was inspiring, but I am sure that even without it you would have refused to help in this shameful business of the Santa Cruz."

Thornton smiled as he looked at her. "I don't remember saying anything about Lloyd," he answered. "I certainly was not thinking of him at all. The scruples I mentioned were suggested by—another person."

"Oh!" she laughed. "The other person is delighted to have exercised an influence. But, again, I think you're yourself in a mistake. I'm sure you would not have needed any suggestion at all in such a plain case."

"It's very good of you to be sure, but I am not," said Thornton, candidly. "I'm afraid I should have looked upon it simply as a matter of business if I had not had the benefit of your views."

of all, do you think he can do for him? Mr. Lloyd or yourself could have done?"

"On general lines, no doubt, pretty much the same; though in some respects he'll be handicapped by the fact that he is a stranger."

"And so doesn't know anything about the different characters of the men here?"

"Naturally not."

"Therefore will not know whom to select for—a surprise party, let us say?"

Thornton stared. "So you know about it, too," he said.

"Since it seems that it is no secret, I may admit as much."

"Oh, it's a secret fast enough! But, you see, Armistead was obliged to mention it when I asked what he wanted me to do."

"Yes, I see."

Miss Rivers leaned her soft chin on her hand and looked out over the sleeping valley to the great eastern heights, their cliffs cutting sharply against the purple sky, with one deep indentation marking the pass over which she had watched a horseman disappear several days before.

"How long does it take to go from here to the Santa Cruz Mine?" she asked abruptly.

"Two or three days,—depends, of course, on how fast one travels. I don't think Armistead has gone there," he said, as if reading her thoughts.

"She smiled, for they had not been with Armistead."

"Why do you not think so?" she inquired.

"Well, he went in another direction—through that might have been a blind,—and he had only Randolph with him. He can't surprise the Santa Cruz without having a force large enough to hold it after it is surprised."

"He may have that force waiting for him somewhere in the Sierra."

Thornton shook his head. "He hasn't had anybody to get up the man. No; you may take my word that it will be some time yet before he carries out his plan; and if the Santa Cruz people are only wide enough awake, it will never be successfully carried out."

"Surely they will be wide enough awake,—surely they will suspect something of this kind."

"I hope so, for my sympathies are all with them," said Thornton, cordially. (His interest, however, was not very keen.) "And now if I bring the guitar will you sing a little?" he asked, in the tone of one turning to more agreeable things.

to be influenced by—or—sympathy."

"All of which means precisely the same thing. Well, unreasonable, enthusiasm, sympathy, or whatever you will, pray understand that I am a Calderon partisan; and if I could, I would help them fight for their rights."

Armistead succeeded in achieving a very reproachful expression.

"You would help them against me?" he asked.

"Against you or anybody else who fights for injustice and greed."

The reproachful expression changed rapidly to one of offence.

"I didn't know that you regarded the matter in quite that light," Armistead said stiffly.

"I regard it exactly in that light, as far as Mr. Trafford is concerned," said Miss Rivers. "Of course I understand that you are acting merely as his agent."

"Reluctantly, I assure you. But, as I have tried to point out to Lloyd—"

"Who has manifested an almost feminine degree of unreasonableness on the subject, I believe."

"A donkey-like obstinacy would be describing it more correctly. Well, as I have tried to point out to him, if I gave up the matter, I should simply do myself an injury and accomplish nothing for the Calderons since here one else would at once be sent here to conduct the fight against them."

"I remember that you have explained this to me before, and I think that I fully understand your—point of view."

"And the difficulty of my position, I hope,—placed as I am between two fires."

"Mr. Trafford is one fire, I suppose; and the other—"

"The other is the fear of alienating your sympathy, of doing what you dislike to do."

"Oh, really, you are very kind! But you give too much importance to my opinion," protested Isabel, hastily. "I thought you were going to say that the other fire is the fear of injuring the Calderons, who have been already so deeply injured."

Armistead shrugged his shoulders. "I confess that I haven't given much thought to the Calderons," he said frankly. "Their feelings and their injuries are altogether outside my business."

Fortunately for himself he did not understand the expression with which Miss Rivers regarded him. He was not the first man who had been unable to see anything beyond the beauty of those deep, brilliant eyes. He leaned forward suddenly.

"Why should we talk of the Calderons?" he asked. "The subject is not an agreeable one, because we do not agree in our view of it, and I would never wish to disagree with you."

"Please believe that nothing will induce me to say a word of them or of your own Victoria—to any one at Las Joyas," he said earnestly. "I will not even think of the mine if I can avoid it."

"Don't add that you will not think of me; for if you do I must reconsider my promise."

"On the contrary, I shall think of you as having obliged me very much and helped to give me a great pleasure," she said graciously. "But here comes papa. Papa, did you know Mr. Armistead had returned?"

TO BE CONTINUED

THE MAN FROM COUNTY CORK

(Florence Gilmore, in The Magnificat)

The clock was striking seven as tired, but smiling, Sister Evangelista went to the doorway of the old man's ward and stood there quietly, waiting for Sister Imelda, whose turn it was to be on duty the night.

It was five or six minutes before Sister Imelda came almost running down the corridor. "Somehow, the dear Lord doesn't give me the grace to be on time," she panted laughingly. Then she added in apology: "I am very sorry to have kept you waiting. After we finished washing the dishes I went to play with the kittens, and forgot to watch the clock."

"Like every one else in the house, Sister Evangelista loved merry-hearted Sister Imelda quite as much for her childish lapses as for her very real virtues. She smiled with no trace of annoyance as she answered teasingly: "Sister, if you ever come as the clock strikes seven, I—I—but why talk of impossibilities?"

With hardly a pause, she added more seriously: "We have a new charge—an old man from County Cork. Tim is the only name he seems to have. I gave him the third bed on the window side. Such a helpless old man he is—thin, and tired, and sad, and penniless, and pathetically ashamed of having broken down. He does not talk much, but two or three times the poor dear said that he deserves all his misfortunes and has no right to complain."

"God help us all if we were to get what we deserve!" Sister Imelda chimed in. Silence was the least of her virtues.

"I do not think he means his poverty—but I must go or I shall be late for Office. Tom Shea is to have his medicine at 10 and at 2, if he is awake."

Half an hour later when Sister Imelda passed down the ward she looked curiously at the new-comer, a frail old man with thin gray hair and beard. Seeing that he was not asleep she spoke gently to him, asking if he was comfortable. To her surprise he started violently. Instead of replying he stared at her, bewildered, for a few moments; then, with a little moan, he turned his face and closed his eyes.

With a feeling of compassion for the queer little ways of advanced age, Sister Imelda passed on. By the time she made her second round he had fallen asleep. She stopped at his bedside to look, not into his worn, lined face, but at the rudely chained old beads which were twined about his right hand, such beads as she had not seen since she was a girl in Ireland. They vividly recalled a cabin of a winter's evening, with her starlight lamp giving out the Sorcerer's Mysteries—it was always those that he had said, whatever the day of the week, her frail mother kneeling beside him, but a little nearer to the fire and grouped irregularly around them her four brothers and her restless, sleepy little self. Obeying a sudden impulse she stooped and kissed the old beads and two tears fell on the coverlet. "God bless them all," she murmured and the old man stirred in his sleep.

As the days wore on Tim faded fast. He never complained and was pathetically grateful for the least kindness, but he was silent and sad and evidently did not feel at home. He made friends of none of the other old men and seemed not to know one Sister from another. One day, however, when Sister Margaret gave him his dinner he smiled widely at her, saying: "My wife's name was Margaret, only it was Maggie we called her; and he appeared to be glad when on Wednesday and Saturday nights it was Sister Imelda's turn to be on duty. She would find him awake and watching for her almost every hour; and once, very timidly, he asked if she would sit beside him a while. "I feel weak and strange tonight, and your bright face, I—I like to see it," he said. "You see, it's lonely here—and Ireland so far away."

"It's God's own country!" Sister Imelda exclaimed understandingly, and added: "I'll sit beside you if you close your eyes and try to go to sleep. We don't want Sister Evangelista to scold us both tomorrow morning."

He agreed, but instead of shutting his eyes, lay looking contentedly at her until she shook her finger and went away.

The next day, when he thanked Sister Evangelista for some little service, he added, "You are so kind that I'm almost happy here."

Knowing well that it eased a sore heart to pour its secrets into sympathetic ears, Sister Evangelista asked a few tactful questions. Before Tim realized it he was telling his history, seen from this side of Heaven. "I had four boys, Sister, big, stalwart fellows; but they died one after another. And Maggie, my wife, she's been dead more than thirty years—God rest her soul! I was good to them all, Sister, and worked hard for them; and I'm not grieving much for I won't be here long now, I'm old. I'd be eager to go—if—" His thin voice trailed into silence and he closed his eyes and leaned his head wearily against the back of his big chair. But Sister Evangelista knew that he was not done, and waited in silence for the rest of the story.

It was a long time before he looked at her again and said, in a half whisper. "And I—had one little girl. I—I want't good to her. She was the youngest of all, and may had Lord forgive me—but I have loved her more than all the lads together. She was as mischievous as the worst of them, Sister, with a gentle, tender heart like her mother's; and when her mother faded away and died my only comfort was that Nora had been beside me always."

"But she was only eighteen years when she wanted to go to the convent—Nora, of all girls! And she so pretty, and so winsome and so gay, and me wanting her every hour of the day. All that was nearly thirty years ago. And I—I never defied God before, but I said 'No.' Nora waited for a while, and I still said 'No.' She waited until Father O'Sullivan told her that she was risking her vocation, and then she left home and came to America to enter."

Again he paused before going on to shame-facedly. "Sister, you can't blame me more than I blame myself, but I—I forbade her to write to us for they were angry, too. The Lord soon punished me. My sons died, all of them, and year by year I've grown lonelier, and more hungry for the sight of her face. I longed for her until I couldn't rest, and she—she's been home on her, though I didn't think of that for many a day. I had two hundred and fifty dollars, so I came to look for her. She came to New York. I knew that, but I hadn't guessed America is so big, and New York—why, it got more people in it than a dozen Ireland! And I had not known Nora Connors are so plentiful. I went, all smiling and hopeful at first, to every convent in New York City, and some of them have Nora O'Connors, but not my Nora. And I went to Brooklyn, and to Albany—walked most of the way, and it was winter then, because my money was nearly gone. Then I came here. I can't do any more. If only she could know how sorry I am, and—how long I've been sorry."

Sister Evangelista said nothing. She was thinking less of him than of his daughter; thinking, too, how many a nun carries some such weight upon her heart. She had almost forgotten Tim, when he began again.

"I'm happier here than I have been in many years. You may think I'm out of my head if I tell you, but sometimes I hear her voice out there in the corridor, or even close to my bed, and I've thought some nights that I saw her face again quite plainly, not as rosy as it used to be, but just as sweet and happy."

Sister Evangelista smiled indulgently and tried to comfort him a little; and a few minutes afterward meeting Sister Imelda in the pharmacy she said to her: "You will be on duty to-night in my ward, and I want you to be very good to poor old Tim. He is not going to last long, and most of us left lovely fathers behind us."

"Oh, I will be good to him. He seems to like me. I have always been particularly sorry for him. Poor old man!" Sister Imelda answered.

"His daughter's a nun, and he is broken-hearted because he can't find her. Nora O'Connor was her name. She left home many years ago. And now his sons are dead and he's alone in the world and grieving his heart out for a sight of his little girl."

Sister Imelda looked at her strangely for a moment. "He's looking for his daughter—and he's Tim O'Connor—iron County Cork," she said. "—Sister, I am going to speak to him," and she almost ran towards the ward.

"She will never grow up?" Sister Evangelista thought indulgently.

Sister Imelda was by the old man's bed before he saw her, and in an instant she was leaning over him and had his face clasped between her hands.

"Daddy—dear, dear daddy—don't you know me," she whispered.

For a few moments he could not answer. Then, "It's Nora! It's my little girl! Sure I know now, that the Lord's forgiven me."

ASKS FOR INTERVENTION

PAPAL DELEGATE AT WARSAW ASKS PROTECTION

The Papal Delegate at Warsaw, Mons. Ratis, has made representations to Rome regarding the situation at Vilna and vicinity, asking the intervention of the Allies and protection against the Bolsheviks in Lithuania, where there are Polish Roman Catholics.

Bishop Lysinski of the Diocese of Minsk, who is staying at Vilna, reports all the priests at their posts there, every one expecting to be assassinated as soon as the Bolsheviks arrive, which they report to be Bolshevik custom. Alluding to the Bolshevik advance, the Bishop stated:

"It will mean the destruction of all social and economic life and culture and great sacrifices for the Church."—The Tablet.

PROHIBITION

A reverend gentleman of renown, one Mr. Billy Sunday rises up in the arid desert of Richmond, Virginia, to announce that when Nebraska adopted the Federal Prohibition Amendment, the gates of hell and threw the key away. Several difficulties block the acceptance of this "brighten the corner where y' are" doctrine. The first is geographical, or more accurately, haeceographical; the other is drawn from the science of theology. If the devil threw the key away, where did he throw it? Where was he when he threw it away, and where is he now, not to speak of the key? The theological difficulty lies in the simple fact that the devil has no more power to decide who is to abide in hell, or stay here of it than he has to separate the sheep from the goats, placing them to the right of the Eternal Judge. But accuracy never yet came between Mr. Sunday and a lurid phrase.

THE AMENDMENT AND SINAI

Mr. Sunday, exulting amid the congenial acidity of Richmond, Virginia, "damp" on the edges and "wet" only at \$15.00 a quart, speaks for all who believe that the Federal Prohibition Amendment is "the triumph of the greatest movement for Christian morality since the Crucifixion." With De Quincey, we are all for morality and all that, but some of us doubt whether the Amendment will do much more for morality than the Ten Commandments have done, and some of us have no doubt at all. In fact, if sustained by the Supreme Court, we hold that the amendment will be (1) a continual menace to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, (2) the apotheosis of hypocrisy and law-breaking, and (3) a greater political danger to the Republic than successful nullification. If this be insanity, we are glad to rave in company with His Eminence, James Cardinal Gibbons. By admission of all, Cardinal Gibbons is a representative American citizen, and a prelate who for years has contributed actively to the support of every public and private movement genuinely making for good citizenship and a purer morality. He has been thinking of these things, as the New York Sun recently remarked, "for more years than most of us have lived." Quite as well, not to draw the point too fine, as Mr. Sunday, and the subsidized crew of lobbyists and hangers-on, does he know what morality is, and how it may be best promoted. In wisdom and in courtesy, in high-mindedness and in zeal, and above all else, in temperance, he has nothing to learn from any salaried anti-saloon agent who ever set up a secret "moonshine" still to replace an open saloon, or grew passing rich in the pursuit of the elusive demon rum.

CARDINAL GIBBONS SPEAKS

It so happens that this venerable prelate does not regard the Federal Prohibition Amendment as in any sense a triumph of morality. On the contrary, he remarks that it implies legislation which cannot be enforced, encourages the secret and illicit manufacture of bad liquor, and empowers governmental agents "to enter our houses with the violence of burglars, and the immunity of officers of the law." Were I not aware of the lengths of insolence to which paid prohibitionist agents usually go, I would say that this prelate, distinguished for wisdom and virtue, has never been accused of participating in the liquor traffic. But no honest American can be ignorant of the fact that for years Cardinal Gibbons has advocated a plan of restriction which would do away with the evils incident to the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors, and that in this plan he has been unopposed by interested prohibitionists, league with sworn enemies of the Church. "I have always been in favor of strict regulation of the trade," writes the Cardinal, "because thereby the liberty of individuals is preserved; whereas by Federal Amendment we face legislation which in the long run cannot be carried out. An early result will be the secret and illicit manufacture and sale of bad liquors. For the benefit of those who have insisted upon legal prohibition (if indeed it be legal) the Cardinal adds:

"To me it is very strange that after 2,000 years men should pass legislation which strikes at the very fundamentals of the Christian religion. Will not the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of wines affect those who profess the Christian religion. We have 30,000 Catholic priests in the United States who every day offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. How can they do this, if they cannot obtain wine?"

"I know it will be replied that wine is permitted for sacramental purposes. I cannot see how this will be if the manufacture, sale and importation of wine is prohibited."

The Federal Amendment makes no explicit exception of wine for sacrificial purposes. Is it possible that any Catholic can consider Federal Prohibition equivalent to a new and higher dispensation, in which the Unbloody Sacrifice becomes a symbolic rite of secondary importance?

CONSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIONS

So much for the first and second points. The third point was well expressed in Henry Watterson's phrase to the effect that the Amendment breaks down the principle of stability upon which this Government is founded at the very time when Bolshevism is becoming an

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