#### A DAUGHTER OF THE SIERRA

BY CHRISTIAN REID

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CHAPTER X .- CONTINUED

"Tho worst!" Mackenzie indig-antly exclaimed. "You are either nantly exclaimed. "You are either going straight up or straight down all the time—or at least most of the time, — climbing over great rocks, where the mules have to put their feet together and jump like cats; and where, if they should miss, there's a thousand or two feet of fall waiting for you. You skirt precipices that might make the head of a goat swim; and you sleep out in the woods, with the lively prospects that a mountain tiger may kill one of your animals

'All of which sounds perfectly de lightful," Miss Rivers declared. I am afraid you exaggerate. The mail is brought with great regularity over these mountains, and one never hears of the carrier or his mule falling over the precipice or suffering death from a mountain tiger. And all the shop-keepers in Topia get their goods by the same route."

Do you suppose that if a mule Thornton asked. "The arrieros shrug their shoulders, pick up the fragments of the pack and go on.

And to diversify the way pleas-ly," Armistead chimed in, "one comes every few miles upon a cross, or group of crosses, erected by the side of the road to show where travel lers have been waylaid and killed."

The crosses need not frighten you Miss Rivers," said Lloyd, quietly. They were put up a long time ago when there were many robbers among these wild heights. But all at an end now. The robbers have either been shot or have adopted afer modes of livelihood, and travelling in the Sierra is at present perfectly safe.'

That's true as a general rule, Thornton assented. But if I had an enemy I shouldn't particularly care to meet him in the Sierra. have heard of a few fresh crosses being put up even in my time."
"You've also heard of the speedy

punishment of the murderers," ob-

Generally, yes. The rurales catch them and the government promptly shoots them. But I don't can you do anything so—treacherfeel that, personally, that would afford me much gratification after I "Treacherous!" Armistead was "Thorses" had been bowled over on some of surprised and wounded. Not even the pious custom of putting up a cross where I

none of us, have any enemies."

"It's very good of you to be sure," said Thornton; "but, unfortunately that is a thing of which one can never be quite certain. We gringos this - military stratagem ?" manners, or distressing lack of man- disgust, are unconscious of it."

Armistead moved uncomfortably. I fully agree with Miss Rivers,' he said, "that is an unnecessary dis-There are many occasions enemies; but he can't fail to do his duty on that account, or-think of | mend a man to me."

"Not even though ne knew that too."
ross in the Sierra would be the too."
"My dear Miss Rivers!" Armis
"My dear Miss Rivers!" Armis esult," Thornton agreed lightly. "My dear Miss Rivers!" Armis-But here comes the Gerente with a tead was earnestly remonstrant. handful of papers! My prophetic "You do me great injustice if you soul told me that there would be writing to do to-night for to morrow's them. But I am like a soldier, you

— we have some reports to make out," observed Mr. Rivers as he drew near. "Lloyd, I should like a few "I am afraid you will never make" vords with you about these mineral districts. The company is agitating the question of a railway again."

Armistead looked after the others

as they moved toward the office across the patio; and then, his gaze return ing to Miss Rivers, as he looked at the charming picture which she made, seated under the swinging Moorish lamp, he was conscious again of that sense of his exceeding good fortune which he had expressed to Lloyd. For surely it was wonderful luck to find this beautiful, brilliant girl, a product and part of his own world, here in these remote wilds, ready to give him an attention which he knew that he could hardly have hoped for had he met her in the scenes amid which she usually moved. He leaned forward. It was impossible not to express what he you my felt so strongly.

"I have had many lucky happenings in my life," he said; "but never one, I think, quite so lucky as the pleasure of finding you in Topia at this time. It quite repays me for the hardships and disagreeables of coming here."

you think you will have your party in readiness to go and take the mine by surprise?"

"That is impossible to say, because the party must consist of men who can be relied on and I don't clearly see how I am to find these without Lloyd's aid. It is very annoying that

this time. It dutte repays me for the hardships and disagreeables of coming here."
"You are very kind," Isabel answered lightly — for nothing in the way of masculine ardor, however
"You can't expect everyone to be

Mr. Trafford's daughter; although one should not be surprised at any result of divorce in California. Would you mind telling me how the strange-here."

When a beautiful woman, with the most fascinating smile and liquid eyes of softest hazel, says, "would you misd telling me?" the result in the case of most men is a foregone conclusion. It was so with Armisstead in this case. Beguiled by an interest which he mistook for sympathy, and pleased to gratify Miss Rivers, while at the same time gratifying himself by talking of his own affairs—to many people the most in-teresting possible topic,—he related the whole story of the Trafford marriage, of the manner in which the Mexican wife was divorced, of the claiming of the Santa Cruz Mine, and of the determination of mother and daughter to hold it.

"Then that, of course, will end the matter," said Isabel, when he reached this point. "Of course Mr. Traford can't think of forcing them to give it up.

Armistead shrugged his shoulders. Trafford is not a man who gives up anything," he said; " and you see the mine is his."

"You mean—legally ?"

" Legally, of course. There's no other way of owning property.' There is such a thing as moral

There is such a thing as moral right, you know."

"Perhaps so, but moral rights which are not recognized by the law don't amount to anything." Then he will try to obtain the

There is not a doubt of his obtaining it. I have been to Durango to consult lawyers and judges, and they all say his title is good. We have only to take possession."

By force ?" force if necessary. I have a letter from Trafford to day telling me to go ahead and do whatever is

'It seems incredible! And-what

are you going to do?"
"Well, I don't mind telling you that I have hit upon a plan which I hope will avoid trouble and litigation. I shall take a number of men, together with some officers of the law, go quietly out to Santa Crux and take possession of the mine before they can make any resistance. After that it will be impossible for them to

regain possession of it."
"Oh!' Miss Rivers sank back in

nothing in the least treacherous about such a procedure. It's done had been killed would in such case every day in Colorado and our other "Why should we talk of these notice that the mine is ours, they things!" Isabel protested. "Mr. refuse to surrender it, so we shall Lloyd says that there are no bandits simply go and take it; and to do so in the Sierra now, and I am sure we, in the form of a surprise is merely a military stratagem."
"I see!" Miss Rivers' tone indi-

cated that she saw a good deal-"And will Mr. Lloyd assist you in

No!" Armistead replied with gust, "Lloyd is a fool. Because ners, in dealing with the people, we his sympathies are with the women sometimes make enemies when we in the case, he refuses to assist me in any way, and has inconvenienced me greatly by this attitude. I have come to Topia now to try and find some one to take his place-some one who knows the country and lan in life in which a man must make guage better than I do. I am hoping that Mr. Rivers may be able to recom-

"I think - I hope that papa's "I think — I hope that papa's "Not even though he knew that a sympathies are with the women,

acting under orders. And sym-You boys must come to the office pathies haven't really anything to I have a sketch-book."

me understand it either."
"Oh, one expects a charming woman to be—er— guided by her heart rather than her head! It's very disagreeable to me, I assure you, to have to carry out Mr. Trafford's instructions; but I have no alternative she comes to speak for herself."

Lloyd looked up quickly. It was it wouldn't help the Calderons And it wouldn't help the Calderons if I refused to do so; for some one indeed Isabel Rivers coming between else would be sent to take possession of the mine.'

I quite understand that, and I am sure you must be sorry to have to do such an odious thing," said Miss Rivers, magnanimously. "If I Miss Rivers, magnanimously. "If I didn't have some head as well as heart, I might detest you for it." she said. istead dir

"That would be terrible. You ouldn't be so unjust."
"I think I could be, but I won't; I will try to be reasonable and give you my sympathies, too. When do you think you will have your party

way of masculine ardor, however unexpected, even surprised or discomposed her,—" but I don't think that one needs to be repaid for coming to this delightful country." observed Miss Rivers, sweetly. "Yonder comes Mr. Lloyd now. Perhaps you don't want to now. Perhaps you don't want to

CHAPTER XI IM THE PLAZA

It was Sunday morning, and Topia wore its most festal air; not only because of the brilliant sunshine and crystal atmosphere, which lent something of that aspect even to the towering, rock faced heights, but because the streets were filled with men who, having been paid off the night before, were now industriously spending their money in the tiendas, and consuming mescal in such liberal quantities as would have seemed But the disorder of Topia was never sogreat that the policeman of the mu-nicipality was not able to deal with The right of a man to drink was fully recognized; and when he pecame reduced either to insensibility, to a maudlin condition of nois iness, or to a desire to fight all his friends and acquaintances, those friends were prompt to carry him away to a place of seclusion. These scenes, moreover, occurred only in the afternoon and evening. At ten 'clock in the morning the future porrachos were still in a state of sobriety, filling the shops, the side-walks and the plaza with their clean white cotton garments and red

At this time also the better class were very much in evidence; and those who may fancy that Topia does not possess a better class should go there and sit in the plaza on a Sun day morning, in order to be convinced to the contrary. A place where for many years money has poured out of the earth in a constant streamlike water out of a fountain, must have its plutocrats, and pluto crats as we know, are speed and easily converted aristocrats. Among the well-dressed and perfectly mannered men who appear on the streets of this old robber stronghold of the Sierra there are some who are descended from its original inhabitants; others are strangers, and many are for-eigners. There is a picturesque mingling of nationalities to be seen

in the plaza of Topia.

While the church bell is ringing out its call to Mass, the air is frag rant with roses, and graceful, darkeyed woman are coming in all diections, with prayer books and beads in their hands and folding-stools hanging on their arms. In an American town of the same class one knows what one would probably find in the feminine element,-what lack of taste in dress, what love of crude and violent color, what hopeless vulgarity of appearance and manners. But these women might be princesses as they glide along, clothed in fabrics, wrapped in silken and lace draperies, with dignity in their bearing, and much delicate loveliness in the faces under the fringed parasols. They were just now passing in num bers toward the open door of the church; for the second call had big drops that slowly fall f ended, and at the third Mass would pale face on her thin hands. begin. A group of young men-chiefly Caridad employees,—seated on a bench in the sunshine, found it necessary to rise to their feet every few minutes and uncover in response to a smile, a flash of eyes and teeth anda musical "Beunos dias, senores! It was in an interval of this perform. ance that Thornton turned to Lloyd,

who was one of the group. I had almost forgotten that I have a message for you," he said A party are going out this after noon to eat tamales at the San ito Mine, and you and Armistead are invited to join us."

Who are 'us?" Lloyd inquired carelessly.

Oh, all the elite of Topia, I be The San Benito belongs to the richest man here, you know— Don Luis Gonzales. There will be music and dancing, and Miss Rivers told me to see that you bring your sketch-book." "How does Miss Rivers know that

"I told her that there was an

"What was the good of yarning about me so absurdly? Miss Rivers can make more satisfactory pictures with her camera than I can with a

the rose-hedges, transformed into a high-born Spanish maiden by the black lace mantilla thrown over her was the interpretation of father's "Give auntie your hand. R sunny hair. She paused, smiling, as the men rose.

'I am glad to see you. Mr. Lloyd.' the picnic afterward? you have been invited."

Thornton was just saving some thing about it, 'Lioya to the I am rather an unsociable person, and I'm afraid that going out to the San Benito to eat tameles doesn't appeal to me very strongly."

How differently everything had turned out! Paul had settled in a turned out! Pa

"Oh, but it should appeal to you as something immensely picturesque!" she said. "You simply must go. I am sure it will be delightful. And be certain to bring your sketchall of you to dinner. Hasta luego!"

extremely interested in the trip you have made to the Calderon hacienda. I was so pleased with Dona Victoria."

"I suppose you know who she is?"

"Yes: papa told me. I was very much surprised to hear that she is " she assured him.

"I suppose you know who she is and women were hastily pouring from all sides; while Thornton laughed at the expression of Lloyd's face.

"Viva la reima!" he said. "It would take a bold man to disobey to find the commands. We'll I'll see you later. Now I must put in an appass to the assured him.

and I think she probably looks upon me with a more favorable eye if she has seen me leaning in the doorway during Mass. It shows that I have mind free from prejudice and per

haps—under certain circumstances
—open to influence, Come, Mac!"
Mackenzie—a Catholic by inheritance, being a Scotchman of High-land ancestry—rose, together with two or three Mexicans who also formed part of the occupants of the bench, and moved toward the already overflowing door of the church which opened on the plaza. Lloyd sat still in the sunshine a little longer; and then, as the sound of the organ came out to him, he also rose and walked round to the door which opened on the street, where the crowd was less. the street, where the crowd Here, leaning like Thornton against the side of the doorway, he looked over a scene familiar to all sojourners in Mexico-a compact mass of people filling the church (a nave without aisles) from wall to wall; the women kneeling on the brick floor, the men mostly standing until the solemn part of the Mass. At the farther end of the vista candles were gleaming on an altar, before which a priest was slowly moving to and fro. Lloyd had but a vague idea of what was pro-Lloyd had gressing there, but the scene appealed to some instinct of his nature he hardly understood-it was, in fact, the instinct of worship, the deep seated human need to turn to some thing higher than itself-while a certain fineness of mental and spirit-ual fibre, together with a fair amount of culture, enabled him to feel and in a measure enjoy the antiquity and

poetry of the mysterious rite. TO BE CONTINUED

## TWO CHRISTMAS EVES

By F. M. Lyndon in the Christian Family It was Christmas eve. A cold wind swept through the streets of the small western city and shook the leafless branches of the trees that stood in front of the high dark house near the church. There was a light the first floor. The room was comfortably warm.

Before the stove on a low stool sits a woman. Her back is turned to the fire, her arms are crossed over her breast, and her head is drooping. On the round table in the center of the room stands a Christmas tree hung with glittering pearls and silvery threads, but all these things look as though they had served the same

A few minutes ago she has lit the tree and the little flames gently flicker up and down on the red, yel-low and blue candles, a faint odor of pine and wax permeates the room. but the cowering woman does not notice it. Her head droops deeper and the light from the Christmas tree flits over her blonds locks and white neck, but does not strike the big drops that slowly fall from her

She weeps-and it is Christmas

From the church tower the bells begin to ring, at first only a few notes, some high, some low, inharmonious, but soon the three bells join in one grand chorus, which floats over the houses of the city, and far out over the dark plains, carrying a message of peace into nousands of homes and hearts.

The girl hears the bells and sobs.

To her these Christmas bells do not bring peace and comfort, they only awaken sad memories in her heart. Thus it has been for many years She remembers it all so well. now fifteen years, that she, just twenty years old, stood in this same room, before the glittering Christmas tree with her father and mother brother and sister. And her heart was thrilled with joy and her eyes showed an unwonted lustre, for at her side stood the friend of her ition. like happy children they looked at artist spoiled when you became a mining engineer and prospector."

"When the tree and the presents under it, and dreamed of golden days to come. and dreamed of golden days to come.

He had just confessed his love, he wish to excuse myself." had kissed her rosy lips, and assured her that his heart belonged to her alone, and soon he would come and take her to their new home and they

would never have to part again. Father and mother were satisfied. She had seen how mother had secretly motioned to father, and how he had answered with a smile. They were a beautiful couple and seemed

smile Paul was the son of their neighbor and had been her protector as far child she said. "Won't you and Mr. Arm-istead dine with us today, and go to had shortly before passed his last hand, while holding on to her medical examination and was about father's coat with the other. She to look for a practice, which would enable him to build his own home. thing about it," Lloyd replied. "But How beautiful had the life at his side

far off city. His friendly manners, his skill and conscientiousness, had quickly won a large practice and quickly won a large practi book: Mr. Thornton tells me you draw admirably—ah, there is the third call for Mass! I shall expect been home for a short visit and told been home for a short visit and told all of you to dinner. Hasta luego!" her that a great future was evidently She passed on toward the open door of the church, into which men now and then, but his letters had gradually become more scarce and more cool, and finally a last letter from him had destroyed all her hopes. They probably had taken friendship for love, he wrote, but

friendly remembrance.

That was the end of her beautiful

Christmas dream. No, she had not been mistaken in her affection, but she had the same dear faithful eyes, he had disappointed her, and she had the same pure open forehead with never been entirely cured of this disappointment.

By and by she learned the cause. Another woman had won him, one of those bewitching beauties, who with their charms so easily capture the little pause, then he began again: heart of a man. Was he happy? Her brother had told her that his marriage had not brought him real peace and happiness, that he bore in silence but with infinite regret the chain he had forged himself. However she knew her brother was angry with the friend who had robbed his sister of her expected happiness and she did not fully believe his words.

In a dark corner of her soul a feel ing of satisfaction over his misfor tune would stir now and then, but she would not nourish it. She prayed that God would give him all the happiness that had been denied

other. Brother and sister had married and were far away, her parents had died, and she, Margaret, was all alone in the lonesome house. She could not bring herself to quit it, no Why carry her silent sorrow to others? Sorrow had become so familiar a guest with her that she her. It was always with her and she did not care to expose it to the gaze of the noisy crowd. Every Christmas eve she fixed up

a tree, also after father and mother had died, and always decorated it with the same tinsel, which had enchanted her eye, when hand in hand with him she had stood in its light. Only once she had omitted it. She wanted to try to tear the memory of that day out of her heart but that had made matters worse. Tearless she had sat the entire evening in the corner by the stove and her heart had threatened to burst from the pressure that weighed it down like a heavy piece of ice.

In the glow of the Christmas candles she could cry, and her sorrow gleamed in happy anticipation.

seemed to melt like snow before the sun, and she was able to bear it again

in quiet resignation. Thus again she cried now, her

tears flowed unceasingly.

Suddenly the door bell rang and the shrill sound made the weeping the shrill sound and pressed a kiss on it. old hired woman slowly went to the door and opened it. She heard how the sonorous voice of a man asked a question, how the woman had closed the door. The steps came nearer. Margaret sprang up, wiped the tears from her eyes and cheeks and looked expectantly at the door. An inexplicable feeling of anxiety came over plicable feeling of anxiety came over he murmured. "Oh, Margaret, what her as she waited; she could harnly a fool I have been. Should it be breathe. There was a knock and then entered a man in a traveling suit, who led a little girl of about six

years by the hand. A half smothered scream escaped from Margaret's lips, she seemed to faint and closing her eyes grasped jubilant heart. stood he for whom she had wept, the man who had been her joy and had

become her sorrow.
"Good evening, Margaret," he said
in a low voice. He had seen her sudden terror and was confused. O papa, a Christmas tree,

Christmas tree," exclaimed the child and, letting her father's hand go, approached the table.

"How pretty! I wish I could stay the birth of Abraham, two thousand At the sound of the child's cheerful voice Margaret opened her eyes. What had the little one said? She

tried to gather her thoughts. She

the man as though he were an appar-He took another step toward her.
"Can you pardon me, Margaret?" he said in the same low voice.

though a heavy burden were taken the Eternal Father, and the solo of the control of the Eternal Father, desirous to from her breast, she sank on a chair, sanctify the world by His most merci-

the child.

The physician stood in painful embarrassment and did not know what to say. The child in unconcealed Give auntie your hand, Elsie," he

seemed uncertain what reception she

Margaret let her hands sink. Be with big doubting eyes. Sudden ly she drew the child to her heart

would love me." Margaret smiled, and the physician

with a great petition."
"Oh, but sit down, Paul," the girl

In conclusion he asked her for a noticed that his eyes rested sadly on

Her features showed the traces of so often charmed him in days gone by.

With a sigh he sat down near her.

"Perhaps you will understand, Margaret, why I choose Christmas eve for the day on which to come to

you. You know that about a year ago I lost my wife?" Margaret nodded and bent her face to the child, who trustingly leaned against her knees. He con

'Of my children only this one re

mains. Elsie is a dear and good child, but she needs a mother. I cannot attend to her education as I should because my work does not leave me time for it. I have no relatives to whom I could intrust her. There is a sister of my wife's but—well, you may understand, if I say no more. But it grieves my heart to think she would have to grow up without a mother's loving care, and so I thought," here his voice trembled a little, "I should bring matter how urgently brother and the child to you and ask you to take sister invited her to come to them. her mother's place. I know how her mother's place. I know how good you are and how much you always loved children. Could make up your mind to make would have missed it, if it had left great sacrifice for me? I would be very grateful to you. I have not deserved any favor," he added in a low voice, "but perhaps you pity the child and take her, she needs love so much.'

He was silent and waited for a answer.

The girl's head had dropped still more and tears glistened in her eyes; again she drew the little one to her and kissed her tenderly on her fore Would you like to stay with me

Elsie?" she now asked. Oh, yes, because you are nice to me and do not scold me like Hannab." Hannah was the doctor's

Paul breathed easier, and his eyes "I will keep her," said Margaret, and hope that the little one will soon get used to her new surroundings." With these words she looked up and shook hands with the friend inge.

The girl blushed deeply and hastily withdrew her hand. Thanks, thanks, Margaret,"

whispered warmly. that I would not come in vain. She looked at him. In her eyes shone the old love. "Thank God, it is not too late yet." he murmured.

possible that I could be happy once In answer the girl took up the little girl, and stepped over to the Christmas tree and the man looked at her with glowing eves and a with glowing eyes and a

# CHRISTMAS DAY

In the year from the creation of the world, when in the beginning thousand, one hundred and ninety nine; from the flood, two thousand, nine hundred and fifty-seven; from and fifteen; from Moses and the com-ing of the Israelites out of Egypt one thousand, five hundred and ten; from the anointing of King David, one thousand and thirty two : in the was as yet not able to speak a word, sixty-fifth week, according to the her limbs trembled and she stared at prophecy of Daniel; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad in the year seven hundred and fifty Rome; in the forty-second year of the empire of Octavian Augustus, when the whole world was at peace, in the sixth age of the world, Jesus At these words the girl felt as Christ, eternal God, and the Son of covered her face with both hands and sobbed aloud.

ful coming, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost, and nine months "Paps, why does auntie cry?" said having elapsed since His conception, is born in Bethlehem of Juda, having become man of the Virgin Mary Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

Thus, in solemn chant rising with each note to a plane of higher joyousness, is the Church annound said after a while and shoved the to the world the consummation of the hopes of the old Testament. Timidly Elsie extended her little Thus does she enshrine in language of unparalleled simplicity the fears of our first parents, the protection of the chosen people, the founding of the Royal line, the sighs of the Prophets, the unspoken and unhoped for destinies of Greece and Rome, fore her stood the child with out-fore her stood the child with out-stretched hand and looked at her Trinity with the human nature that d kissed her.
"So you love me anyway?" asked of the daughters of God, the virgin much."
"Oh, how nice; papa said you visible God, the Brilliancy of the Eternal Light, the unspotted Mirror Margaret smiled, and the physician of God's majesty, the Lion of the passed his hand over his forehead tribe of Juda, the Root of David, and pressed his lips together.

"Pardon, Margaret," he said after a short pause, "that I break into your quiet home like this, but I come the Prince of the kings of the earth, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the would take a bold man to disobey to her commands. We'll I'll see you later. Now I must put in an appear. ance at church. No, I'm not a Catholic; but Miss Rivers is, you know;

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