A DAUGHTER OF THE SIERRA

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CHAPTER X

ARMISTEAD IS CONFIDENTIAL

Stop, Lloyd!—you are going off surely! Isabel, why don't you make him stay to supper? This was Mr. Rivers' cheerful shout from the rear, when he saw Lloyd taking leave of Miss Rivers at the door of the house which contained under one roof the offices of the Car-ided Company and the residence of

its General Manager.
"Is all right, papa," Isabel assured Mr. Lloyd is going after Mr. Ar nistead. He'il be back presently."

"Be sure and bring Armistead with you! Mr. Rivers called after the departing Lloyd. "Tell him we won't take any refusal."

pace; for the Caridad house occupied a position midway between the the mine. From its door the road her, an enchanting vision to the man an slightly downward for several hundred yards, between stone walls, beyond which lay green fields; and which such a woman is the fluest then, crossing by a bridge over a small stream that in the season of the rains grew into a raging torrent, became of a child in her own.

"It is a great change, isn't it?" she said. "And you can't imagine making it, and how I

plaza of Tophia; for it is a perfect ower of green foliage and hedges of roses, that fill the air with rich fragrance. Here, as Lloyd had anticipated, he found Armistead seated on a sench under the shado w of the church, which, with its wide, ever-open door, occupies one side of

I've been wondering what had

the form of dining when we came There is a much better one." Lloyd replied; "and I ve been requested to take you to it. It is the Casa de la Caridad, which well de-

serves its name from the wide ex-tent of its hospitality."
"Casa de la Caridad! That's a charitable institution,—what we call an asylum, isn't it? I don't care to go to a place of that kind."

You'il care very, very much to go de la Caridad in this case means the Company house of the Caridad Mine. It's an old joke of the employees to refer to it as an institution of chari-

Armistead remarked that poor jokes did not in his opinion gain in numor by being in a foreign language; and then having made his protest against trivial jesting, professed his adiness to proceed immediately to

You seem to have lost no time in presenting yourself there, went on, a little suspiciously, as they walked up the street together.

I did not present myself there." Lloyd answered. "But while were in the hands of the bark " But while you strolled up to the mine-you know used to be on the staff,—and there I met Mr. and Miss Rivers, who insisted on our coming to take supper

She must be getting tired of this

She didn't express any feeling of

the kind." "Oh, she must be? What on earth is there here for a woman of her stamp? I can't imagine how she has endured it even as long this, and you may be sure she's dying to

to get away."
Lloyd did not feel called upon to contradict the opinion. Miss Rivers, he reflected, was able to answer for herself : and, after all, it was neither his business nor Armistead's whether she was or was not dying to get away. The young lady, however, gave

the contrary assurance with convincing positiveness when they found her in her sitting-room a little later.

the old room in which we used to camp," answered Lloyd. "You have The little story seemed also to

uries. Now there were not only may not arise during years of interwindows, but these windows were course, or it may arise within the windows, but these windows were hung with the draperies which even first hour of meeting a new acquaint from the outside he had remarked; rugs were spread on the floor; in one then he looked at the bookcase and then he looked again at the face to Topia, it was by that before here of the production was converted with corner a broad divan was covered with a gaily-striped Mexican blanket and heaped with cushions. In another corner a bookcase stood; a large table loaded with magazines and papers bore in its midst a tall brass lamp, with a crimson silk shade. Pictures, photographs, a tortoise-shell kitten curled up in a work-basket,—Lloyd took it all in, and then turned his gaze on the girl who Topia

had created it. For up to this time he had never seen Isabel Rivers except in outdoor costume; and charming as she had been in that, and well as it had seemed to sait her, he saw now that she was one of the women who are supremely at home and supremely charming in a woman's own realm—the drawing-room. Gowned in some soft, silken fabric, in which blue and white were mingled, her slender waist clasped with a silver "There's not the least probability girdle, the whiteness of her neck and of a refueal," Lloyd answered with a laugh, as he strode on at a rapid which covered them, she was, in her arms gleaming through the lace which covered them, she was, in her pace; for the Caridad house occu-pied a position midway between the village and the mountain which held the faint fragrance which hung about

houses, until the plaza whica forms the centre of every Mexican town ally one doesn't think of furniture: one takes carpets and tables and closest the control of the has had to create them, one's point of view radically changes. I am as proud as a peacock of my little comforts and prettinesses."

"So you ought to be. You must

have worked very hard to create all

these.' "Oh, no-there were so many will ing hands to help me! But I think am most proud of my book-case. become of you, he observed, in an injured tone, as Lloyd walked up. "You must know this place,—isn't there any better fonda to be found than the one where we went through the found than the one where we went through the found than the one where we went through the found than the one where we went through the found that he was simply delighted. 'That is my trade—cabinet making,' he said. You will see. I will do a nice job for you, and I shall take pleasure in doing it' He did take pleasure in it, I am sure; and I would go to the carpenter's shop and talk to him as he

worked. He was very interesting." Lloyd laughed as he thought of the odd, irascible old Frenchman. "I should not have credited him with that quality," he said

Perhaps you never talked to him. when you understand that the Casa de la Caridad in this case means the interesting when they really open themselves to one. He told me about his youth in France, and how he intended, as soon as he had made enough money—as soon as he sold a mine he had out in the Sierra,—to go back and visit his childhood's home in Burgundy."
Lloyd shook his head.

I am afraid be will never visit Burgundy if he waits to sell that mine." he said. "It is a prospect into which, when I was here, he was putting all his savings; though your father told him there was nothing in it and advised him to deop it. The old fellow was obstinate, however,

"He wanted to go back to Burgundy, you see," Isabel said. "His life was hard and without satisfaction; so he cherished one beautiful dream—to go back to Frauce before he died." She paused a moment, and Lloyd did "It is certainly very kind of them, and—ah—charitable too. I begin to appreciate the point of that joke.

Miss Rivers?"

not underse.

not underse.

in the face, although be was struct in the point of that joke.

by its sweetness and sadness. "It is a good thing, perhaps, that he did not a good thing, perhaps, that he did not a good thing." she went on. "He would, no doubt, have been disap-pointed there. Things would not have been so beautiful as they seemed to him by the light of memory. so it is well that he was called, instead, to go on a far longer journey to a country more remote

"Do you mean that he is dead?"
"Yes, he is dead. The bookcase
was his last work. I am glad that I gave him the pleasure of doing it, and of talking to me the while of his memories and dreams. He died sud-denly, just after he finished it."

There was a short silence. What was there in this girl's voice which seemed to give such exquisite mean ing to very simple words? Lloyd did not know; he only knew that as she spoke he had a comprehension of things which would have been veiled Tired of Topia !—anxious to go from many eyes and minds. What ay !" she exclaimed in reply to had he, for instance, ever seen in the Armistead's condolences. "But on old carpenter but a good workman the contrary I am enchanted with and eccentric man? But Isabel Topia. Life hear is an experience I Rivers had not only discovered in would not have missed for anything; him the ability to do fiver work than and I shall certainly not go away un- any one else had ever suspected his til after las aguas, as the people call the rainy season." call the rainy season."

"It's hard to understand how you can possibly be contented in such a place." Armistead wondered with evident incredulity.

"I have always said I had a dash."

"I have always said I had a dash."

"I have always as a least disappointment." of the gypsy in me," she laughed.
"And yet I like civilization too. I see you are looking at the room, Mr. tribute of a feeling so kind, so gentle, Lloyd. Don't you think I have civi- that Lloyd felt as if it should make the old Frenchman rest more easy in I am trying to recognize it as his foreign grave out in the Campo

before him.

before him.

"Do you always understand like this?" he said. "It is a rare gift."

"I think," she replied simply, "there is a great deal in taking interest enough to understand. You see I always take interest—but here comes Mr. Mackanzie, with the mail. comes Mr. Mackenzie with the mail! I am sure you haven't forgotten what an event the arrival of the mail is in

Mackenzie entered as she spoke followed by a mozo carrying a large sack over his shoulder. Mr. Rivers turned from the examination and discussion of ore samples with Armistend, and directed the pouring out of the contents of the sack on the table, where it formed an attractive pile of matter under the lamp.

"The carrier is very late in get ting in to day," he observed. "I an afraid it is your fault, Isabel, for making the mail so heavy. Here are two packages of books for you, besides a dozen or so other things."
"How delightful!" exclaimed Miss

Rivers. She came forward with sbining eyes and stood by the table, the softened radiance of the lamplight falling over her graceful figure and charming face, and catching a gleam of jewels on the white hands untying strings and tearing open wrappers. Involuntarily all the men, except Mr. Rivers, found themselves watching her, with a sense of pleasure in her beauty and grace. "Could anything be more delightful than to get half a dozen new books all at once, when one is so happily situated as to be in Topia with any amount of time to devote to them? asked, glancing up at Armis-

There are not many people who would describe themselves under such circumstanes as 'happily situa-" he answered, smiling. But how it teaches one the value

of books !" she insisted. What do people live within easy range of libraries and booksellers know of the thrill with which one opens a pack-age of volumes that have been ught on a mule two hundred miles

To hear you, one would think the gave them a special value," said her father.

And so it does," she answered. "To a person without imagination— and I regret to say that you haven't, a bit papa,—the thing is indescribable; but, as a matter of fact, the mule add a value."

It is a pity he couldn't know it : for I am sure that if he were able to express himself he would wish that you had less taste for literature. Won't you look at some of these papers, Armistead?—and you, Lloyd? The 18th—you've seen nothing later than that in the way of a paper from the States.

So the little group gathered round the table, reading letters, glancing over papers and books, for a pleasant half hour, until Lucio appeared in the curtain hung doorway, and, with his most impressive air, an-

Ya esta la cena, senorita l'

At Topia, from its comparatively noderate elevation, the temperature of the nights is much milder than Las Joyas; so when supper was over, the party found it pleasant to linger in the corridor running alo rear of the house. Its arches framed at all times a wide and beautiful picture of the valley rolling away to the towering eastern heights; but at night, either bathed in floods of silver onlight, or in the still more exquisite radiance of the stars which shore with such marvellous brightness out of the vast field of the violet

The corridor which commanded this wide outlook over valley and mountains and sky was itself a delightful place: and in one of its corners Miss Rivers had fitted up a nook, where swung the Moorish lantern which had done duty before the door of her tent on her journey up the quebrada, and where long steamer-chairs invited to lounging. Here the group of men, with cigars and cigarettes lighted, gathered around her; and there was much gay talk and laughter, chiefly about people and events in the distant world which they called home. But suddenly Miss Rivers paused, and, turning her graceful head, looked out over the silent valley, where only a few lights gleamed here and there, toward the great encircling ramparts of the cliff crowned hills, their mighty outlines cut against the

star set heaven.
"We are frightfully frivolous," she said with a little sigh, " in the face of anything so grand as this scene." What would you have us do?

quote Wordsworth?" asked Thornton. "I contess I've never tried living up to scenery; but if I should select something less elevated than the Sierra."

Sea-level would about suit your apacity, I should think," remarked Mackenzie, with gentle sarcasm.

This is a very good distance from which to admire the Sierra," said Armistead, leaning comfortably back in his chair. "At nearer range one's sentiments toward it are not exactly those of admiration."

found myself in the sierra-'pura

route, and I thought I should never reach here. Such mountains! such canons! such woods! Why, for days we travelled through forests where the trees shut out the sun!"

"It's a way trees have, Mackenzie," id Thornton. "I don't wonder at said Thornton. "I don't wonder at your surprise, since you come from a region where they are very scarce and quite incapable of such conduct. But if that is the worst you can charge against the Sierra-

TO BE CONTINUED

LED BY A LITTLE CHILD

It was Christmas Eve. Charles Roland pushed aside his books. Study was beginning to pall on him. Wisdom is an exacting mistress; but the antechambers leading to her royal presence seemed on that day to be full of a particularly stressful at mopshere.

Charles went over to the window and looked out. The snowflakes drifted steadily through the bare trees in the square opposite his win-dow, and fell softly on the pavement before the house. Two or three poor children, oblivious apparently of the damping influences of the scene, and in spite of their scanty clothing, were talking with childlike earnestness near the open door. One, a little girl, five or six years old, was clasping a towridly dressed doll. To the two baby boys by her side, innocent of the mother instinct to which such ecstacy might be due, who surveyed critically enough the object of her adoration, the toy appeared to offer unthought of vistas of play and

Charles looked down and smiled. The little scene was not without its humanizing effect; and it brought back to his mind with a rush many things which he had forgotten, among others that it was Christmas Eve. Gazing out at the snowflakes and down at the children playing under his window, he reflected rather bitterly that Christmas held no meaning for him anyway. He was an exile and alone, and to give or to receive presents was a joy be could not hope to share. He had drifted away from family and friends; he had also drifted away from his child hood's faith; yet the thought of Christmas now recalled memories which he could not lightly set aside, -recalled the need of human sym pathy and human kindness; made him feel acutely the necessity of taking some human being to his heart or of sharing with some fellow creature that love of his kind which in spite of all his sophistication, had not quite died out of his heart.

Charles put on his hat and great coat and went out. The children he had watched from the window had disappeared, but he knew other children would be easy to find. The words, "and a little child shall lead them," kept repeating themselves in his mind, without any conscious acquiescence on his part; though he knew himself to be now in search of

a little child. He walked on towards the church and the schools, and looked at his watch to see if it was past the time when the schools would discharge their inmates. No, it still wanted a quarter of an hour to the appointed time. He walked slowly towards the girls' school. In the porch the cure was waiting. Charles knew his appearance well enough. The curé, elonging as he did to the meak of the land, waited patiently, something loveliness,—a poetic suggestiveness and majestic repose impossible to express in words.

Charles took note of the old man's kindly expression, it was childlike, and it was research.

and it was pleasant. Charles did not like priests; he particularly objected to their meekness and good will. But at that moment the patient figure standing in the porch, waiting evidently to surprise the children by some act or word of kindness, fell in with the young man's passing humor, and seemed to be part of a desired fitness of things.
He walked up to the priest.

"Monsieur le Curé," he said, When the children come out, will you let me have the very poorest the lot, just for an hour or so? I promise to take good care of her.' The cure's eyes wandered over Charles' face with one shrewd glance, which left him apparently

At that moment the school doors opened, and the children came tumbling out in mad disorder, like a stream of water which had broken its dam and was free to flow where it

The curé stood aside, but he watched the children. He knew personally every unit in that motley whole. Presently he seized one child and separated her from her companions; then another and another, until a little group remained in the porch with Charles and the

Make your choice, sir," said the é. "You are not the only one who has designs on these youngsters today. Providence is always very busy in their behalf at Christmas.

camp," answered Lloyd. "You have simply transformed it."

The little story seemed also to make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might believe that it was the same place with which he had formerly been familiar. It had been a large, brick floored, windowless apartment, almost as devoid of comforts as of lux.

The little story seemed also to make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might best than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be seemed the make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be make him comprehend herself better than a long acquaintance might be would have done, chose the prettiest — a dark eyed, curley headed mite of six, who, in her dingy, threadbar contained increase the nearer I came to it. I shall never be satisfied "—she glanced six would have done, chose the children, and, as many a man in Charles looked at the children,

thought with pleasure of the trans-formation which could be effected in her appearance by pretty clothes. The child trotted by his side, quite

nabashed by her sudden change of circumstances; and, taking it for granted that the young man was to be her special providence that day, expressed to him with frank simcity all the desires nearest to her

And a doll to open and shut its eyes, and with pink clothes to come off,—real clothes with buttons and

"A nature baby?" suggested Charles, vainly trying to remember where he had got hold of the term of

"No Me like a real doll, with a nice face, and blue eyes and yellow

She was evidently an epicure-in Well, you can choose for yourself. But first you must come and have a

"I's not dirty." "But a nice, warm bath," said Charles, soothingly; "and your hair

And tied with blue ribbon? Den won't mind the bath.

He gave the child in charge to one of the bathing women at the public the intention of procuring a complete

outfit for his portégé 3.

He was beginning really to enjoy his whim. Going into a large store, he gave an order for an entire suit of ised. clothing for a girl of six, naming approximate price. But so general an order could not be carried out without some personal choice; and when it came to selecting between ace befrilled garments the of which he hardly suspected, he felt that it was time to draw the line. Compromise, he saw, must enter into the hest intentions; and he decided choice confiding the whole matter to

a competent and motherly looking saleswoman, whose sympathy saved the young man from further embar-rassment. At last only the coat and hat and the inevitable blue ribbon remained for his personal taste to decide upon; and, these being chosen Charles emerged from the shop with a goodly sized parcel and a freshly grown crop of parental feelings in his heart. He now smiled indulg ently at what, a week ago, seemed utter folly.

Somewhat ashamed of his parcel. he returned to the baths, reflecting that even if he did meet any fellow students they could not possibly know what was in the parcel. It was duly given to the bathing woman and a quarter of an hour bathing later the little girl emerged so transformed as to be hardly recognizable. Her dark, damp curls glistened under the blue cap; her eyes and cheeks glowed with new life; the blue coat set off her well knit little body; and the brown shoes and stockings showed to advantage her straight, shapely legs and feet. Charles' taste had made no mistake: as she was now dressed, the child was really beautiful. She sprang in his arms

and kissed him on both cheeks. "Isn't I fine? And I has lace and fwills inside! I's just lovely now, I

know!"
She kissed bim again before he put her down. Charles was unaccus tomed to such demonstrations, and the child's embraces produced on the child's embraces product to a beautiful program to him a strange effect. He could not say if it were pleasure or pain, but he felt more human, nearer to the that no greater trouble is impending.

had felt for years.

He took the child's hand and they started on a tour of inspection of the shops. He was altogether indifferent Dr. Johnson, of Wheeler Street? now about meeting his fellow-students or any one else. The child looked as if she might really be a cousin or any kind of convenient relative. The young man felt proud of his little companion; she, still prouder of her newly found protection of her newly found protection of some?" Father queen of some?" Father queen of some?" Father queen of some?" tor, bounded gaily by his side, chatting unceasingly all the time, as if the bliss of the occasion needed an

overflow of words. Her imagination had evidently never strayed beyond the merest necessities of life, or such luxuries as a few pence could procure. Charles generosity appeared to her the wildest prodigality, and she sought to restrain him. Only on one point was the exacting—that of the doll, which was to be her own particular possession: a doll with blue eyes, a pink dress, and yellow hair. The exact shade of the hair presented a difficulty; but at last she was fully satisfied.

"And it's my own—my very own, forever and forever? And Marie is not to take it away from me?"
"No, but Marie must have something, too—something for herself.

What would she like? "Marie would like a book—a big book with lots of stories in it; and then she can read the stories to me.

Oh, it'll be lovely!"
"And you will let her play with your doll sometimes?"
"Yes, pwap on Sundays after catechism, and nights when we have a fire. Den we's awfy good and quiet,

'cause mother goes to sleep.' The book was bought, and some other things—for mother and father, and Aunt Louise, and even the baby. At last, when Charles and his little

"Oh, it's not far from the church ! Won't you come to see me when you enhood, and the simple rooms of the comes on Sundays?"

Caarles did not tell her that he did

"Yes, I'll come to see you. But you must go home now."
She saddened visibly, and trotted

on in silence by his side Everything stops," she said at t. "I want something that keeps on all the time. Does things stop up in heaven, too?"

You mean do things come to an end in heaven? No: in things last forever and ever.

Den I wants to go to heaven and I wants you to go, too! Don't you want to go to heaven?"

Charles blushed and hesitated. I believe I do now, for your sake girlie

And you'll come to the Crib tomorrow! Oh, it's lovely! Lots of lights and flowers and things! And the little Infant Jesus-oh, He's so won'ful! You'il come to see Him,

They had reached a dingy street, and at the door of one of its poorest houses the child stopped.
"I lives here, up at the top of that

big house where you see the clothes dwying in his window."

Then I must say goodby here, but I'll come to see you."
"You'll come soon—very soon?
And you won't forget the Crib to

orrow, will you?"
He transferred the parcels from aths, and then went his way, with his arms to those of the child. could bardly hold them all. stooped to kiss her, her eyes filled

I'll come very soon," he prom

"And you'll come to the Crib to morrow ? "Yes, perhaps-"

"Say really, truly!"
"Yes, I'll come."

She brightened at once. The little Jesus will give you lots of presents," she whispered.

give you myself.' He watched her toiling up the dusty stairway of the wretched house. Half-way up she turned to call a last adieu; and he saw her there as a thing of beauty and sweet ness-a flower fresh from the hand of God, blossoming in the midst decay and dirt and ugliness. And he thanked Heaven for that flower which seemed to have sprung up along life's dusty highroad just for

. ALICE M'CAFFREY

A CHRISTMAS STORY Father McGee was worried. His sual cheery smile had given place to a troubled expression, especially evident at this season of Christmas. Mrs. Dillon noticed it immediately when she came to him to get the names of the poor whom she was to make glad at this joyous time.

"You look worried, Father," she said, as she was about to go on her

errand of mercy.
"Dear me, and it is so evident? Indeed I am worried, and yet to you it may seem a trivial matter. It's about our Christmas music. You know the pride I have taken in the music always—this may be my pun-ishment—and how hard we worked at it, and here at the last moment most of the singers are sick, and it's too late to get others, and so on And that's my trouble; not as bad as a fire or an earthquake, but bad enough, and the people are so used to a beautiful program at Christ-

orld of his fellow-beings than he But about your music. Do you know course not, he came here only month ago. His wife is a beautiful sirger, in fact a star of the first mag nitude up to three years ago when he married her. Possibly you know

The queen of song?" Father McGee trembled at the prospect. The same, known in all the civil-

And you think she would sing for

Undoubtedly, if I ask her. She and I were classmates at Notre Dame and bosom friends for years. She is a Catholic then?

"Nominally so. I fear the prac-tical faith is weak. Dr. Johnsonenormously wealthy you know-is an avowed atheist, a sort of iconoclast, an anti-everything, and I fear that Alice has borrowed many of his

" Hardly a suitable person to sing at the Mass—do you think so?"
"I know Father, but then—it may stir up old memories. Who knows?
"True, Mrs. Dillon. Dear me

what a providential body you are Always ready when you are needed most. See Mrs. Johnson if you will We'll have the finest music in the

And so it was agreed that Mes. Dillon would ask the celebrated singer to assist in saving from destruction the musical efforts poor parish priest. She felt that she had a good cause to plead, and without a fear of defeat she drove immediately to the grand home which the doctor had built for the happiness of his celebrated wife. As she sat in the reception room await ing the entrance of her old friend companion had ended their pur-chases, he asked her where she oriental magnifience about her with the humble little cottage in which Alice McCaffrey had grown to maid convent of their school days. In the wildest dreams neither had imagined not go to Mass on Sundays or any other day; but she seemed to have some misgivings on the subject, for on music, Mrs. Dillon could fancy the rich rooms transformed into the ex

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