

A DAUGHTER OF THE SIERRA

BY CHRISTIAN REID

Published by permission of the B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo.

CHAPTER II. IN THE QUEBRADA

The tourist who enters Mexico in a Pullman car and rolls luxuriously along the great plateau, gazing through plate-glass windows at strange Oriental-looking cities, at vast haciendas, with leagues of fertile plain and the distant Sierra, thrusting its violet peaks into a sky of dazzling sapphire, obtains many wonderful and beautiful pictures to hang in the chambers of memory; but he knows little, after all, of this old land, strange as India and fascinating as Spain. To him Mexico is a panorama of brilliant sunshine, white dusty roads, walled towns, picturesque campaniles, shadowy arcades filled with the varying tide of human life and great old churches rich with dim splendors. He does not dream that the blue rim of the distant mountain range at which he gazes—that range which stretches its mighty length along the western side of Mexico and bears alone the name of Sierra Madre—marks the outline of a world so different from that which surrounds him that it might well belong to another hemisphere. It is a great world of towering heights and majestic forests, of rushing streams and stupendous gorges, where for hundreds of miles the only roads are trails; where since the foundation of the earth no wheel has ever rolled; where even the passes are ten thousand feet above the sea, and where in all the wide solitude Nature reigns supreme, with a wild beauty a charm of infinite freshness such as can be found but seldom now on this old, man-trodden globe.

In this region the traveller journeys on horseback or muleback, instead of in Pullman cars; and if he approaches it from the western coast, he soon finds himself among heights broken into deep chasms and gorges, down which the rivers rush from their birthplace in the clouds to their grave in the vast Pacific. It is by these tremendous cliffs, well named in the Spanish tongue *quebradas* (broken), that these wild hills sovereignty there pour their torrents over, under and around the rocks of every conceivable form and color which lie piled in fantastic masses in the bottom of the gorge, there is no desolation in this strange, beautiful quebrada world. On the contrary, the moisture of the river pouring downward, and of the clouds sailing in from the ocean creates a wealth of verdure, as delightful as it is rare in a sun parched land. Immense trees spread their wide green boughs over flashing water; the great shoulders of the hills are clothed with luxuriant woods, and the small dwellings of primitive construction which now and again stand on knolls, sufficiently elevated to be secure from rising water, are completely embowered in shade, generally that of magnificent orange trees.

The inhabitants of these dwellings are much in evidence as they pass up and down the quebrada; the men with white cotton *calzones* rolled to their hips, leaving their brown, sinewy legs entirely bare; and the women with skirts kilted above their slender ankles and feet, for the purpose of wading across the tumultuous, but in the dry season mostly shallow water. These pedestrians alternate with long trains of pack mules, bearing burdens of all kinds from bales of merchandise to bars of silver bullion from the mines in the mountains above, or sacks filled with freshly coined dollars from the mint of Culiacan; with trains of diminutive burros, also pack-laden, and with horsemen who seem to have ridden booted and spurred out of another and more picturesque age.

It was high in the quebrada of the Tamezula River that a party of travellers journeying upward halted one day for the noon rest. There were in the party as many mules and men as usually accompany persons of importance in these regions, but several features of the outfit would have struck the native eye as unusual and significant of *gringos*, that is to say, of foreigners. For one thing, three or four of the mules carried on their *aparejos* large, square modern trunks, such as are seldom used by Mexicans; others were loaded with boxes bearing signs of ocean freight, and to complete the note of strangeness one pack consisted of a tent, which is an article almost unknown in Mexico, even in the army.

This tent was not erected at present, however. It lay on the ground with the rest of the packs, while the animals took their feed by the side of the stream, just here swirling over its rocks with some approach to tranquility and the *mozos* lay near them in various recumbent attitudes, their *serapes* making bright bits of color against the gray rocks and amid the varied greens of the abounding verdure. A few yards distant a different group reclined under the shade of one of the great trees which abound here—a group consisting of a middle-aged man, two

younger men and a lady, the latter youthful and extremely pretty, with an indefinable air of the world in her appearance which contrasted piquantly with the wild picturesque-ness of her surroundings. Not that it should be supposed that she was not adorned with perfect appropriateness to these surroundings. It was the very perfection of her costume with regard to time and place, of the well-cut habit, fitted as if moulded to the lines of her slender figure, with its skirt short enough to show the trimly-booted foot, and the practical simplicity of the hat of soft, gray felt and veil of silvery tissue, which marked her difference from the women to be met now and then on the road wrapped to the eyes in their *rebozos* sitting in saddles like arm chairs; helpless, ungraceful masses of drapery, strikingly suggestive of the woman of the Oriental countries. This was a type of the modern woman, not only ready to go anywhere and do anything which duty or inclination demanded, but after certain unusual advantages of education, travel and life, she had become one of those exceptional women whose power of attraction is not limited to men, but whom all classes of humanity find fascinating.

That the two young men now lying at her feet as she sat enthroned between the gnarled roots of the tree—Thornton, a graduate of Columbia, signing for the *fish-pots* of New York, and Mackenzie, a young Mexican Scotchman—found her so was patent to the most superficial observation. It is likely that under any circumstances this would have been the case; but when, after long social exile in the wilds of the Sierra Madre, they met their chief in Culiacan, on his return from the States, accompanied by this captivating daughter, there was only one result possible; and that result achieved itself, to employ a French idiom, in the shortest possible time. It was a result which surprised no one. Mr. Rivers, accustomed to seeing men bowled over like nine pins by his daughter's charms, regarded the speedy and complete subjugation of his staff with the indifference with which we regard the usual and the expected; while to Isabel Rivers herself home had long since become merely the atmosphere in which she was accustomed to live and move. Regarded superficially at least, this had not spoiled her. In manner, she was delightfully simple; with an exquisite quality of human sympathy, to which was owing a large part of her charm.

At present it was evident that she was less interested in her two admirers than in the surpassing picture of the scene around her. For two days she had been riding in a state of constantly increasing admiration through the deep gorge, her eyes shining with delight behind the silvery folds of her veil, as the wild loveliness of the way opened before her. "I could never have imagined that there was anything in the world so beautiful, which was not also famous," she was saying now, as she glanced from towering rock to flashing water. "People cross oceans and continents to see things less wonderful; but I doubt if any one, outside of the people who live here, ever heard of this."

"You may be quite sure," said Thornton, "that no ever did. And we who live here don't, as a rule, go into raptures over the quebrada; Mackenzie?"

"Our sentiments concerning it can be pretty much summed up in the opinion of the *arrieros*—*muy mala la quebrada*," he said. "Of course," looking around dispassionately, "one knows that it is very picturesque, and—"

"Sublime, grand, wildly beautiful,—those are the adjectives appropriate to the quebrada," Thornton prompted patronizingly.

"There's another still more appropriate, and that is rough—in the superlative degree," said Mr. Rivers. "If we could only get a railroad here—"

"Papa, the suggestion is a sacrilege!"

"Sacrilege or not, my dear, it is a thing I should like amazingly to see; and so would everyone else, except the freighters who are making fortunes out of our necessities. Think of the increased profits in our ore heaps if we had cheap freight to the ocean!" he went on, addressing his subordinates. "And, by the by, have I told you that I've some hope of seeing a railroad here?"

"No!" said Thornton, with quick interest. "How?"

"I heard in San Francisco that the Puget Sound Reduction Company want ores, and that they are coming into this country after them. I am inclined to believe there is truth in the report because I met Armistead, who is Trafford's expert, in

Guaymas, and he told me he expected to see me in Topia. Now, if those people come into these mountains and buy mines they will build a railroad at once—no freighting with mules for eight months, and being tied up by high water in the quebrada during four, for them!"

"Not much!" Thornton agreed. "Armistead!" he added, reminiscently. "It's astonishing how that fellow has succeeded. We were in the same class in the Mining School, and I don't remember that he displayed any particular talent. It's all a matter of getting the confidence of the capitalists and syndicates; but how did he manage it?"

"Generally managed through personal influence and connection," said Mr. Rivers, who knew whereof he spoke. "Lloyd is with him," he added carelessly.

"He couldn't get a better guide for the Sierra," said Thornton. "Lloyd knows it thoroughly. He will do the work, and Armistead will get the credit."

"That's how it generally is," said Mackenzie, in the tone of one disgusted by the ways of an unsatisfactory world.

Miss Rivers regarded the speakers meditatively with her beautiful eyes, which were of a golden brown tint, and singularly expressive.

"I remember those men—we talked with them one evening in the patio of the hotel," she said. "They struck me very differently."

"They couldn't possibly have struck you otherwise," said Thornton. "They are very different; so different that their conjunction is rather odd. I like Lloyd."

"The inference is plain. Well, I too liked Lloyd—if he was the tall, sunburnt one; but if they are on their way to bring a railroad into this marvellous quebrada, I hope they will both be lost."

"It's possible that they may be—they were going to visit some mines in the mountains of Sonora, where the Yaguis are pretty thoroughly civilized," said Mr. Rivers. "But if they aren't lost, they were to follow us by the next steamer."

"In that case they'll be along soon," observed Mackenzie; "for I heard the day we left Culiacan that the *masatlan* had arrived at Altata."

"If they leave Culiacan promptly and ride fast they may overtake us," said Mr. Rivers; "for our progress since we entered the quebrada has been more leisurely than travelling."

"Nothing could be more charming than such loitering along such a way. I am so glad I came with you, papa! I have never enjoyed anything more in my life."

"I hope you will remain in that frame of mind, my dear," remarked Mr. Rivers, a little sceptically. "But it is barely possible that six months in Topia may prove to you a strain even to your love of novelty and the picturesque; and since the quebrada becomes impossible when the rains begin, it will be at least that long before you can get away."

"I shall not want to get away," she declared. "I feel as if I were going into some wild and wonderful fastness of Nature, far and high in the hills, with the gateway closing behind me."

"That's exactly what you are doing," said Mackenzie, practically; "for when the river rises the gate is certainly closed. Nobody goes up and down the quebrada then. But here comes Lucio at last to say that lunch is ready."

"*Ya esta la comida, Senorita*," said Lucio—who was a slim young Mexican, attired in the national costume, approaching the group.

They gathered around the provision chest, on the flat top of which a rather elaborate repast, considering time and place, had been arranged. It was all delightfully gyp-like; and as Isabel Rivers sat on a great stone, while she ate her chicken and tongue and drank her California claret, with a canopy of green leaves rustling overhead and the crystal river swirling by over its stones, her face expressed her delight in the elegant fashion some faces have.

"Like a picnic?" she said in reply to a suggestion of Thornton's. "Not in the least. A picnic is merely playing at what we are doing. This is the real thing—the thing for which I have longed—to go away and live for a time remote from what we call civilization, in the heart of Nature. And here we have not only the heart of Nature but an Oriental Arabian Nights-like charm in all our surroundings. Look at that now!" she lifted her hand and pointed.

"Doesn't it take one back a number of centuries? And could anything be more picturesque?" Her companions turned their heads, following with their glances the direction of the pointing hand, just as a train of horsemen and pack-mules came splashing across the ford below them. They made, as Miss Rivers said, a strikingly picturesque effect, and one altogether in keeping with the wild scenery of the quebrada. At the head of the train rode a group consisting of three men, dressed as Mexican caballeros dress for the road: in high boots of yellow leather, breeches, and braided jacket of cloth or buckskin, and broad sombreros, with their silver-mounted trappings glittering in the sunlight, and a woman, who sat her horse in better fashion than most of the feminine equestrians who travel in these regions, but whose costume lacked the perfect adaptability to its purpose of that of her male companions. It was, in fact, extremely ungraceful; for she wore openly a riding-skirt over her ordinary dress; and above a blue *rebozo*, would like

the post-office through a driving rain. For ten years after that Miss O'Boyle sent to Ireland every penny she could save, lovingly determined that Maggie should have the education denied her, and the old people a taste of comfort after the long toll of their younger days. But there came a sad and terrible year. Miss O'Boyle stood motionless as she looked at the heads and thought of it. She lost her position and could find no other, and at the same time her father and mother fell ill. Longing to help them, she could do nothing, she was hungry, and cold, and half-clad herself. Utterly discouraged, she left her boarding place in Albany and went to New York in search of employment, where she found it only after other weary weeks. When she was again able to send money to Ireland she got word that her parents were dead. Nearly frantic with grief and anxiety, she dictated a letter asking particulars of their last days and inquiring for Maggie. The story of the happy death of her parents came in time, but of Maggie she could learn only that the girl had written to her sister in America, and getting no response had gone in search of her. All this had happened long, long years before, and Miss O'Boyle had heard nothing since; she had never had a clue or a ray of light until she found the white beads on the church floor.

Presently her first bewildered excitement changed to joy. "Maggie is at White Springs! Maggie is here!" she thought exultantly. "These are her beads. She must be here, and she must have been at Mass! She is faithful! Thank God she is faithful!"

How she got home Miss O'Boyle never knew. Trembling from head to foot and blinded by happy tears, she stumbled up the road and into her mistress' grounds, unconscious that the people whom she passed turned to look after her wonderingly. Reaching the house, she went directly to the servants' quarters, and meeting one of the maids in the hall asked excitedly:

"Jane, do you know a girl named Maggie O'Boyle who works somewhere in White Springs? No, not exactly a girl, either; she must be forty years old by this time—a pretty little thing, with a roguish laugh, and dimples, and pink cheeks—but that was thirty years ago! I mean, do you know any one at all named Maggie O'Boyle?"

Jane shook a bewildered head. "No, ma'am, I don't; but you know this is my first year here. I don't know anybody but the girls here and at Warner's and at Keith's."

"That's true. I had forgotten about your being new. I'll speak to Jennie and to Grace—or perhaps Katie would know her."

At once Miss O'Boyle went in search of Jennie and Grace and Katie and questioned one after another, not much more coherently than she had questioned Jane; but none of them had ever met a Maggie O'Boyle at any of the nearby summer places, or had ever heard of her.

Disappointed but not discouraged, Miss O'Boyle went to both Masses on the following Sunday and at each was the first to enter the church and the last to leave it. Just inside the door did she take her station that she might scan the face of every woman who came; but she saw no one bearing even a slight resemblance to her Maggie, although she tried to make every allowance for the passing of the years. The following Sunday found her in the same place near the church door; all to no purpose. Reluctantly she was becoming convinced that her sister had been in White Springs for only a day or two and was there no longer; so it was with a heavy heart that she went to the parish house after the late Mass to arrange to have a Mass said for her mother on July fifteenth, the anniversary of her death.

When she told Father Quinlan what she wanted he took a memorandum book from a pigeon-hole in his desk and looked to see if he had already promised his Mass for that day.

"Yes, I have, Miss O'Boyle; I am sorry," he said. And then he frowned and looked more closely at the note which he had made, before adding in a puzzled way: "Why, what I have already written here, under July fifteenth is, Mr. Honora O'Boyle, anniversary; you must have asked me before, and have forgotten."

"No, father, I did not! I know that I did not!" Miss O'Boyle contradicted emphatically and excitedly. "Was it—oh, was it some one named Maggie O'Boyle who gave you the offering for that Mass? Was it Maggie?"

"Maggie O'Boyle," he repeated, surprised at her agitation. "No, there is no one of that name in White Springs, as far as I know. Let me see—when was it? I believe—oh, yes, I remember now! It was Mr. Randolph Madison who asked me for that Mass. She came two weeks ago to arrange for it because she was going away. I had quite forgotten."

Miss O'Boyle's face was a study; it was gripped and puzzled and hopeful, and disappointed all at once. "Mrs. Randolph Madison," she echoed. "It may be another Honora O'Boyle—it must be, and still—"

"Of course Honora and O'Boyle are usual Irish names. The Mass is for her mother, Mrs. Madison said."

"You mean the Madisons who live in the big house on Forest Hill?" Miss O'Boyle asked.

"Yes, Mr. Madison is dead. He was a splendid man; married rather late in life, and his wife gave him no peace until he came into the Church!" Father Quinlan laughed

heartily at his little joke, and added, "She was a school teacher, I am told. Mr. Madison met her somewhere, fell in love with her at first sight, and married her six months later."

"She was born in Ireland, wasn't she, father?" Miss O'Boyle asked, in a tone that pleaded for an affirmative answer.

"I think I've heard that she was—and educated there by the Sisters of Mercy, if I remember."

"And she's rosy and pretty, with curly hair, and the mark is a laugh that ever came out of Ireland? It's so, isn't it, father?"

Phone Main 6146. After Hours: Hillcrest 2181. Society of St. Vincent de Paul Bureau of Information

Special Attention Given to Employment Cast off Clothes Always in Demand 25 Shuter St. TORONTO

PROFESSIONAL CARDS WATT & BLACKWELL Members Ontario Association ARCHITECTS

FOY, KNOX & MONAHAN BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, NOTARIES, ETC. Hon. J. J. Foy, K.C., A. E. Knox, T. Louis Menahan E. L. Middleton

U. A. BUCHNER BARRISTER, SOLICITOR, NOTARY SPECIALTIES: Estates Collections Money Loaned

H. L. O'ROURKE, B.A. (Also of Ontario Bar) BARRISTER, SOLICITOR, NOTARY Money to Loan

DAY, FERGUSON & CO. BARRISTERS James E. Day 26 Adelaide St. West John M. Ferguson Joseph P. Walsh TORONTO, CANADA

Reilly, Lunney & Lannan BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, NOTARIES CALGARY, ALBERTA

St. Jerome's College Founded 1864 KITCHENER, ONT. Excellent Business College Department Excellent High School or Academic Department

Funeral Directors John Ferguson & Sons 180 KING ST. The Leading Undertakers & Embalmers

E. C. Killingsworth FUNERAL DIRECTOR Open Day and Night 533 Richmond St. Phone 3327

When in Toronto visit the Tabard Room King Edward Hotel

Breakfast 60c. to \$1.00 Lunch 75c. Dinner de Lux \$1.50 Splendid Service Romanelli's Orchestra

Father Finn's Latest Book His Luckiest Year A Sequel to 'Lucky Bob' Cloth, with Frontispiece \$1.00 Postpaid

In this new story the vividly interesting young hero comes into his own at last, after a year of adventure in a large city. By Christian Reid

A Daughter of the Sierra 367 Pages 60c. Postpaid "The story of the Santa Cruz Mine is admirably told, and the denouement is just what one would wish."—Ave Maria, Notre Dame.

The Catholic Record LONDON CANADA

WHOOPING COUGH SPASMODIC CROUP ASTHMA CATARRH COUGHS BRONCHITIS CROUPS Vapo-Cresolene