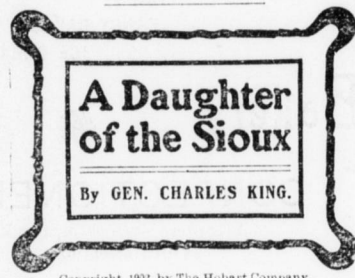




SMILES IN THE RAIN.

The coward may smile When there's sun all the while— It's braver to smile in the rain. The weakest may joy When there's naught to annoy— He's stronger who smiles through his pain. And then when there's sun, when there's bird song and breeze, When gloom's put to rout and discouragement flees, What need has the world Of the mouth corners curled In the cheeriest smiles, when the fields are green and trees Are smiling so broadly that nobody sees The sun's bit of brightness you're giving the world? But days when it's rainy there's need for your smile.



CHAPTER XV.

Woman's intuition often far outstrips the slower mental process of the other sex. The mother who has to see a beloved daughter's silent suffering, well-knowing another girl to be, however indirectly, the cause of it, sees all manner of other inquiries in that other girl. Kind, charitable and gentle was Mrs. Dade, a wise mother, too, as well as most loving, but she could look with neither kindness nor charity on Miss Flower. She had held her peace; allowed no word of censure or criticism to escape her when the women were discussing that young lady; but all the more vehement was her distrust, because thus pent up and repressed. With the swiftness of feminine thought, for no man had yet suspected, she fathomed the secret of the trader's sudden going; and, carried away by the excitement of the moment and the belief that none but her husband could hear, she made that startling announcement. And her intuition was unerring. Nanette Flower was indeed gone. Yet for nearly an hour she stood alone in her conviction. Her husband quickly cautioned silence, and, going forth, gave instructions to the couriers that sent them speeding for the Rawlins road. But at seven o'clock, Mrs. Hay herself appeared and asked to see the general, who was taking at the moment his accustomed bracer, tonic and stimulant—the only kind he was ever known to use—a cold bath. So it was to Mrs. Dade, in all apparent frankness and sincerity, the trader's wife began her tale. Every one at Frayne well knew that her anxiety as to the outcome of the battle on the Elk had well-nigh equalled that of the wives and sweethearts within the garrison. While her niece, after the first day's excitement, kept to her room, the aunt went flitting from house to house, full of sympathy and suggestion, but obviously more deeply concerned than they had ever seen her. Now, she seemed worried beyond words at thought of her husband's having to go just at this time. It was mainly on Nanette's account, she said. Only last night, with the mail from Laramie, had come a letter, posted in San Francisco the week before, telling Miss Flower that her dearest friend and roommate for four years at school, who had been on an extended bridal tour, would pass through Rawlins, eastward bound, on Friday's train, and begging Nanette to meet her and go as far at least as Cheyenne. Her husband, it seems, had been hurriedly recalled to New York, and there was no help for it. Nanette had expected to join her, and go all the way east in late October or early November; had given her promise, in fact, for she was vastly excited by the news, and despite headache and lassitude that had oppressed her for two days past, she declared she must go, and Uncle Will must take her. So, with only a small trunk, hastily packed, of her belongings, and an iron-bound chest of the trader's, the two had departed before dawn in Uncle Bill's stout buckboard, behind his famous four-mile team, with Pete to drive, and two sturdy ranchmen as outriders, hoping to reach the Medicine Bow by late afternoon, and rest at Brenner's ranch. Confidentially, Mrs. Hay told Mrs. Dade that her husband was glad of the excuse to take the route up the Platte instead of the old, rough trail southward over the mountains to Rock creek, for he had a large sum in currency to get to the bank, and there were desperadoes along the mountain route who well knew he would have

later declared that he wished to talk with Mrs. Hay and see Nanette. Was it possible that he knew anything of what she knew—that between Hay's household and Stabber's village there had been communication of some kind—that the first thing found in the Indian pouch brought home by Capt. Blake was a letter addressed in Nanette Flower's hand, and with it three card photographs, two of them of unmistakable Indians in civilized garb, and two letters, addressed, like hers, to Mr. Ralph Moreau—one care of the Rev. Jasper Strong, Valentine, Neb., the other to the general delivery, Omaha? Yes, that pouch brought in by Capt. Blake had contained matter too weighty for one woman, wise as she was, to keep to herself. Mrs. Blake, with her husband's full consent, had summoned Mrs. Ray, soon after his departure on the trail of Webb, and told her of the strange discovery. They promptly decided there was only one thing to do with the letter—hand or send it, unopened, to Miss Flower. Then, as Blake had no time to examine further, they decided to search the pouch. There might be more letters in the same superscription. But there were not. The first one they had already decided should go to Miss Flower. The others, they thought, should be handed unopened to the commanding officer. They might contain important information, now that the Sioux were at war, and that Ralph Moreau had turned out probably to be a real personage. But first they would consult Mrs. Dade. They had done so the very evening of Blake's departure, even as he, long miles away, was telling Kennedy his Irish heart was safe from the designs of his wife, Mrs. Hay knew that he had sent couriers off by the Rawlins road—a significant thing in itself—and that couriers had come in from the north with further news from Webb. She knew he had gone to the office, and would probably remain there until summoned for breakfast, and now was her time, for there was something further to be spoken of, and while gentle and civil, Mrs. Dade had not been receptive. It was evident to the trader's wife that her lord and master had made a mistake in leaving when he did. He knew the general was on the way. He knew there was that money business to be cleared up, yet she knew there were reasons why she wanted him away—reasons hardest of all to plausibly explain. There were reasons, indeed, why she was glad Nanette was gone. She was glad Nanette was gone, because Field, wounded and present, would have advantages over possible suitors absent on campaign—because all the women and a few of the men were now against her, and because from some vague, intangible symptoms, Mrs. Hay had satisfied herself that there was something in the wind Nanette was hiding from—her benefactress, her best friend, and it seemed like cold-blooded treachery. Hay had for two days been disturbed, nervous and unhappy, yet would not tell her why. He had been cross-questioning Pete, "Crapaud" and other employes, and searching about the premises in a way that excited curiosity and even resentment, for the explanation he gave was utterly inadequate. To satisfy her, if possible, he had confided, as he said, the fact that certain money for which Lieut. Field was accountable, had been stolen. The cash had been carefully placed in his old-fashioned safe; the missing money, therefore, had been taken while still virtually in his charge. "They might even suspect me," he said, which she knew would not be the case. "They forbade my speaking of it to anybody, but I simply had to tell you." She felt sure there was something he was concealing; something he would not tell her; something concerning Nanette, therefore, because she so loved Nanette he shrank from revealing what might wound her, indeed, it was best that Nanette should go for the time, at least, but Mrs. Hay little dreamed that others would be saying—even this kindly, gentle woman before her—that Nanette should have stayed until certain strange things were thoroughly and satisfactorily explained. But the moment she began, faltering not a little, to speak of matters at the post, as a means of leading up to Nanette—matters concerning Lieut. Field and his financial affairs—to her surprise Mrs. Dade gently uplifted her hand and voice. "I am going to ask you not to tell me, Mrs. Hay," she said. "Captain Dade has given me to understand there was something to be investigated, but preferred that I should not ask about it. Now, the general will be down in 15 or 20 minutes. I suggest that we walk over to the hospital and see how Mr. Field is getting on. We can talk, you know, as we go. Then you will breakfast with us. Indeed, may I not give you a cup of coffee now, Mrs. Hay?" But Mrs. Hay said no. She had had coffee before coming. She would go and see if there was anything they could do for Field, and would try again to induce Mrs. Dade to listen to certain of her explanations. But Mrs. Dade was silent and preoccupied. She was thinking of that story of Nanette's going, and wondering whether it could be true. She was wondering if Mrs. Hay knew the couriers had gone to recall Hay, and that if he and Nanette failed to return it might mean trouble for both. She could accord to Mrs. Hay no confidences of her own, and had been compelled to decline to listen to those with which Mrs. Hay would have favored her. She was thinking of something still more perplexing. The general, as her husband finally told her, had asked first thing to see Hay, and

reaching and rescuing the Dry Fork party within six hours from the time the courier started. They might expect the good news during the afternoon of Thursday. Scouts and flankers reported finding "travois" and pony tracks leading westward from the scene of Ray's fierce battle, indicating that the Indians had carried their dead and wounded into the fastnesses of the southern slopes of the Big Horn, and that their punishment had been heavy. Among the chiefs killed or seriously wounded was this new, vehement leader whom Capt. Blake and Ray thought might be Red Fox, who was so truculent at the Black Hills conference the previous year. Certain of the men, however, who had seen Red Fox at that time expressed doubts. Lieut. Field, said Webb, had seen him, and could probably say. Over this dispatch the general pondered gravely. "From what I know of Red Fox," said he, "I should think him a leader of the Sitting Bull type—a shrewd, intriguing, mischief-making fellow, a sort of Sioux walking delegate, not a battle leader, but according to Blake and Ray this new man is a fighter." Then Mrs. Dade came out and bore the general off to breakfast, and during breakfast the chief was much preoccupied. Mrs. Dade and an aide-de-camp chatted on social matters. The general exchanged an occasional word with his host and his hostess, and finally surprised neither of them, when breakfast was over and he had consumed the last of his glass of hot water, by saying to his staff officer: "I should like to see Mrs. Hay a few minutes, if possible. We'll walk round there first. Then—let the team be ready at ten o'clock."



"How's business, Eben?" The old man was washing at the sink after his day's work, relates Youth's Companion. "Fine, Marthy, fine!" "Does the store look just the same, with the red geranium in the window? Land, how I'd like to see it with the sun shining in! How does it look, Eben?" Eben did not answer for a moment; when he did his voice shook a bit. "The store's never been the same since you left, Marthy." A faint little flush came into Marthy's withered cheek. Is a wife ever too old to be moved by her husband's flattery? For years Eben and Marthy had kept a tiny notion store; then Marthy fell sick and was taken to the hospital. That was months ago. She was out now, but she would never be strong—never be partner in their happy little trade again. "I can't get over a hankering for a sight of the store," thought Marthy one forenoon. "If I take it real careful I can get down there; 'tisn't so far. Eben'll scold, but he'll be tickled most to death." It took a long time for her to drag herself downtown, but at last she stood at the head of the little street where the store was. All of a sudden she stopped. Ahead, on the pavement, stood Eben. A tray hung from his neck on which were arranged a few cards of collar studs, some papers of pins, and shoelaces. Two or three holders were in his shaking old hand, and as he stood he called his wares. Marthy clutched at the wall of the building. She looked over the way at the little store. Its windows were filled with fruit, and an Italian name fluttered on the awning. Then Marthy understood. The store had gone to pay her expenses. She turned and hurried away as fast as her trembling limbs would take her. "It will hurt him so to have me find out," she thought, and the tears trickled down her face. "He's kept a secret from me, and I'll keep one from him," she said to herself. "He shan't know that I know." That night when Eben came in, chilled and weary, Marthy asked, cheerfully, the old question: "How's business?" "Better'n ever, Marthy!" answered Eben. A Moving Seat. When Turner exhibited his great picture, "The Building of Carthage," he was disappointed because it had not been sold at once at the private view, and angry with the press for criticising it severely. Sir Robert Peel called upon him, relates Youth's Companion. "Mr. Turner," said he, "I admire your 'Carthage' so much that I want to buy it. I am told you want 500 guineas for it." "Yes," said Turner, "it was 500 guineas, but to-day it's 600." "Well," said Sir Robert, "I did not come prepared to give 600, and I must think it over. At the same time, it seems to me that the change is an extraordinary piece of business on your part." "Do as you please," said Turner. "Do as you please." After a few days Sir Robert called again upon the great painter. "Mr. Turner," he began, "although I thought it a very extraordinary thing for you to raise your price, I shall be proud to give you the 600 guineas." "Ah!" said Turner. "It was 600 guineas, but to-day it's 700." Sir Robert grew angry, and Turner laughed. "I was only in fun," he said. "I don't intend to sell the picture at all. It shall be my winding-sheet."

Two Secrets. Pathetic Little Tale of Two Fond Old Hearts That Suffered in Silence for Each Other. "How's business, Eben?" The old man was washing at the sink after his day's work, relates Youth's Companion. "Fine, Marthy, fine!" "Does the store look just the same, with the red geranium in the window? Land, how I'd like to see it with the sun shining in! How does it look, Eben?" Eben did not answer for a moment; when he did his voice shook a bit. "The store's never been the same since you left, Marthy." A faint little flush came into Marthy's withered cheek. Is a wife ever too old to be moved by her husband's flattery? For years Eben and Marthy had kept a tiny notion store; then Marthy fell sick and was taken to the hospital. That was months ago. She was out now, but she would never be strong—never be partner in their happy little trade again. "I can't get over a hankering for a sight of the store," thought Marthy one forenoon. "If I take it real careful I can get down there; 'tisn't so far. Eben'll scold, but he'll be tickled most to death." It took a long time for her to drag herself downtown, but at last she stood at the head of the little street where the store was. All of a sudden she stopped. Ahead, on the pavement, stood Eben. A tray hung from his neck on which were arranged a few cards of collar studs, some papers of pins, and shoelaces. Two or three holders were in his shaking old hand, and as he stood he called his wares. Marthy clutched at the wall of the building. She looked over the way at the little store. Its windows were filled with fruit, and an Italian name fluttered on the awning. Then Marthy understood. The store had gone to pay her expenses. She turned and hurried away as fast as her trembling limbs would take her. "It will hurt him so to have me find out," she thought, and the tears trickled down her face. "He's kept a secret from me, and I'll keep one from him," she said to herself. "He shan't know that I know." That night when Eben came in, chilled and weary, Marthy asked, cheerfully, the old question: "How's business?" "Better'n ever, Marthy!" answered Eben.

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