

RACHEL.

A True Story of Western Farm Life.
BY MRS. E. V. WILSON.

It was the middle of a short December afternoon. From the scholars in the little log schoolhouse in the Stillman district rose a buzzing sound as they bent over their desks, intent on books or mischief, as the case might be. The teacher, a good-looking young man of 20 or thereabouts, was busy with a class in arithmetic when a shrill voice called out:

"Teacher, Rachel Stillman's reading a story book."

"Bring the book to me, Rachel," said the teacher, quietly, and the delinquent, a girl of about 14, slowly rose, and walking to him placed a much worn ancient-looking volume in his hands. "Why," he said, glancing at the open page, "it is the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' No wonder you are interested, Rachel. But you must not read it during school hours."

The child lifted to his face a pair of large blue eyes, beautiful with their timid wistfulness, as she replied:

"I know I oughtn't, sir, but I wanted to see how they got out of Doubting Castle so bad."

He smiled. "I will give you the book," he said, "after school; then you can read it to-night at home."

"Oh no," she whispered, "father won't let me read story books."

"He surely would not object to this book," answered the young teacher, "but will keep it until recess to-morrow morning and never fear, Christian and Hopeful will outwit the old 'giant yet'."

The wistful eyes lighted, and with a grateful smile Rachel returned to her desk.

"First-class in spelling, take your places," called the teacher. Rachel belonged to this class, as did all of the larger scholars, among whom was her brother Thomas, two years older than herself. The teacher had promised a prize at the end of the term to the member of the class obtaining the greatest number of head-marks, and consequently a good deal of interest was taken in the lessons. Rachel had been at the head of the class the evening before, therefore she now took her station at the foot. Tom, her brother was "head," and for some time no change in position was made, but finally "somebody blundered," and Rachel, who was one of the good spellers, went up in the long line. Presently another hard word was missed, and this time Rachel walked to the head. Tom gave her a spiteful push. "Another mark, Rachel," said the teacher, "for that is the last word." The class resumed their seats, and in a few minutes school was dismissed for the day. "Good evening," said the teacher as Rachel and her sister, a pretty, delicate-looking child of 10, passed him at the school room door, "now don't worry about Christian, Rachel."

"I won't," she answered laughing. "I guess he'll get out. Didn't he stand up to old Apollyon?"

"Like a good one," said the teacher. "Hope I'll come off all well."

She looked at him inquiringly, but he turned to his desk again, and the sisters set out on their half-mile walk home. Let us precede them and see what manner of home it is to which these children belong. The farm is a large one, the buildings substantial, and everything has a prosperous well-to-do look. Mr. Stillman, the owner of these broad acres, and father of these three, Tom, Rachel and Susy, as well as of three more girls and another stalwart son—a stout, comfortable-looking man of 45 or 50 years; comfortable to look at, but a glance at his close, thin lips and keen gray eyes, would convince an observant person that he could and would make it very uncomfortable for any person in his opinion or venture to dispute his authority. Just now he is chatting pleasantly about to-morrow's work with his hired man, and pays no attention to the children who pass him on their way to the house.

Indoors, Mrs. Stillman, a slender, fair-haired woman who looks as if she owed the world an apology for being in it, is preparing supper, being assisted by her two daughters, Elizabeth, a sad-faced woman of 24 and Margaret, a girl of 18, with her father's determined mouth and chin and her mother's large blue eyes and fair hair.

The clock struck 4 as the school girls entered the kitchen, a large room, which in winter did duty as both dining-room and kitchen.

"Run in the room, girls," said the mother, "and get warm; supper is about ready."

"Oh, we're not cold, mother," said Rachel. "Let me hang up your things, Susy. Mother, I got another head mark."

The mother smiled. "I hope you or Tom will get the prize," she said, "where is he?"

She was interrupted by a stamping of feet as the door was thrown open and the men, followed by Tom, entered the kitchen.

"Supper's ready," said Mrs. Stillman. "We were just going to call you."

"Well, I guess it'll keep till we're ready," said Mr. Stillman, roughly, "Rachel, bring some water. The bucket is empty, of course. Margaret, where's the washbasin? Nothing in its place, as usual. Pity there wasn't two or three more girls layin' about."

Nobody answered this tirade. The hired man picked up the basin, Margaret handed a towel, Rachel came with the water and soon the family gathered about the well spread table.

"I tell you," remarked Mr. Stillman after a few mouthfuls of the savory food had put him in apparently a better humor, "I think we'll have fine weather for hog killing by next week, and I never had a better lot of hogs, either."

"Oh, father," said Margaret, "don't butcher next week. Friday is Christmas and—"

"Christmas," interrupted her father, "Well, don't we always butcher then?"

"Yes, I know," answered the girl, her lips trembling in spite of her effort to control herself, "but, father, we never enjoyed the holidays and I thought maybe this year—"

"We will do this year as we always have," broke in the father angrily. "I suppose," with a look at his wife that made the poor woman shrink as if from a blow, "this is some of your plans. You and your girls want to go gadding around the country."

"Mother never said anything 'about it," said Margaret, her temper rising. "But nobody else takes Christmas time to do their hardest and dirtiest work."

"Will you hush?" thundered the father. "What do I care how anybody else does; I am master here."

Nobody spoke again. The assertion was not to be disputed. He was master and well his wife and daughter knew it. Poor Mrs. Stillman. Two fortunate baby girls had died a few weeks after their birth and the tears the mother shed over the little coffins were not half so bitter as those that fell on their innocent faces when first they were held to her bosom.

When on this evening the father had proved his authority his two elder daughters rose from the table and taking a couple of large buckets went quietly out of the house, and, going to the barnyard, proceeded to milk the half dozen cows awaiting them. It was pretty dark and cold, but no words were spoken except to the animals, as the girls hurried through the milking and hastened back to the kitchen where Rachel and the mother cleared away the supper things and made needful preparations for next morning's breakfast.

When the milk had been put away and all things were in order Mrs. Stillman and her daughters entered the large room adjoining the kitchen, which was used as a bedroom by the parents and sitting-room for the family, Mr. Stillman not permitting a fire kept in any other room in the house.

Mrs. Stillman sat down, knitting in hand, as close to the corner as possible. Elizabeth and Margaret brought out a huge basket of rags and went to work cutting and sewing carpet balls. The younger children were busy with their lessons at the table where the father sat reading his newspaper. All were silent, for to have spoken while father was reading would have brought a torrent of wrath on the head of the offender. At last, however, Mr. Stillman laid down his paper, and addressing Tom, said:

"Well, how did you get along at school to-day?"

"Oh, first-rate," said the boy, in whose mind that lost head mark rankled; "but Rachel was called up."

"How was that, Rachel?" said the father, sharply. "Poor girl! deep in the mysteries of 'long division' she did not answer."

"Rachel," he repeated, "what were you called up for in school to-day?"

She glanced reproachfully at Tom. "I was reading in the 'Pilgrim's Progress' just a little, father. It's not a story, it's—"

"Never mind what it is," interrupted the father; "I send you to school to study your school books, and I don't want to hear of your touching any others."

"May I bring it home?" faltered the child.

"Bring it home, indeed! No, ma'am. I guess you can find enough to do at home. Not a word now," as he saw her about to speak, "or you stay at home for good."

The child bent over her slate, but her tears would fall, and at last a sob burst forth in spite of her.

"Clear out to bed this minute, Rachel," said her father, "I want no sniveling here."

Upstairs in the cold, dark room, what bitter thoughts surged through the childish brain.

Mr. Stillman loved his wife and children although you may not think so. He wanted them to be happy, but in his way. He must choose their pleasures. If they could not find pleasure in the things that pleased him it was not his fault. It was their perverseness. And as no two souls are alike, the attempt to fit a number of them by the same pattern necessarily caused a good deal of pain to the souls undergoing the trying operation. Mrs. Stillman's sensitive organization was completely crushed; her eldest daughter's nearly so. Martha, the second daughter, refusing to be shaped, had escaped by marrying a clever young hired man who pitied and then loved the pretty daughter of his employer, and persuaded her that by eloping with him she would be more happily situated at all events than she was at home. The mesalliance angered Mr. Stillman greatly, and since the marriage, had taken place a year ago, all intercourse with the disobedient daughter had been forbidden.

Margaret, the third daughter, as we have seen, also rebelled at the fitting, and having a goodly portion of her father's determination it was evident he would have some trouble in completing it. So far Rachel had given him no trouble. She and Susan were only babies in his opinion, and as he ordered them about he had no more thought of their feelings than he did of those of the horses he worked.

With the boys it was different. They would be men some day. They must be treated with more consideration. At an early age, John, two years older than Elizabeth, was given a share in the stock and land to cultivate for himself, so that when at the age of 24 he married the daughter of a neighboring farmer he had a "right good start" in life.

But his sister followed early and late, washing, ironing, milking, churning, baking, nursing the younger children, in short, sharing as far as she could her mother's labors for her board and a scanty, grudgingly given wardrobe. She was 24 now and had never in her life known what it was to possess a five dollar bill. There are many Mr. Stillmans. Are they honest men? If the son had a right to wages had not the daughter? I leave the question with you.

Poor Rachel carried a heavy heart to school next morning. The Tinker's wonderful allegory to her vivid imagination was very real. And now to leave her hero in that awful dungeon, never to know how he escaped, was almost more than she could bear.

"Here, Rachel," said the teacher when the time for recess came, "here is your book." He held it toward her but she did not take it, "Father," she

said, then sobbed choked her utterance. The young man looked at her silently a moment, then he said, "I am so interested in Christian, Rachel, that I will read aloud if you will listen."

In all her life Rachel never forgot their readings at recesses and noons, which lasted not only until Christian reached the Celestial City, but until Christiana and her children joined him. And her gratitude to her young teacher would have surely awakened love if she had been a few years older. When in March the term closed, not even the prize as best speller—a beautiful copy of the Pilgrim's Progress—consolated her.

As for the teacher, he was only glad the winter's work, which had been undertaken solely to furnish means for the pursuit of his profession, was over. He liked some of his scholars very much, Rachel especially, she was so intelligent, so grateful, and when, with blue eyes swimming in tears, she said good-bye, he did for a second feel sorry to leave her, and told her so.

"You ought to have seen Rachel's 'Susy cryin' when old Grey bid us good-bye," said Tom at home the evening of that last day of school.

"Did you cry?" asked Margaret.

"Guess not. I'm glad school's out. Hope I'll not have to go next winter," said Tom.

"I guess you won't," answered Margaret. "You're smart enough now, huh." She always called him "huh" when she wanted to vex him. "But old Grey, as you call him, will make his mark in the world, see if he doesn't."

The entrance of Mr. Stillman closed the conversation, and Tom went out banging the door after him. No wonder Margaret was getting ill-natured. The winter was a long dull season in the Stillman home. Even her enjoyment at the few social gatherings she was allowed to attend in the neighborhood, was marred by the knowledge that she could not entertain her young friends in fun. Once or twice she had attempted to fix up the spare room and have a fire there for company but her father had forbidden it.

"I'd like to know," he said, "why the settin' room ain't good enough. If your company can't sit with the family you can stay away, Miss."

And "they" stayed away, generally after one visit. Mr. Stillman was not a success as a host, especially for young people.

And a young minister who came home from meeting one Sunday with Elizabeth was so completely abashed by the cool reception he received that not even the daughter's pleading eyes could induce him to remain in the father's presence. A few weeks afterwards Elizabeth heard of his departure for a distant part of the State, and her face, became sadder than ever.

Jim Lansing, the son of a widow neighbor, who managed a good sized farm and two grown sons with equal skill, was more successful.

He generally brought his mother along on his visits, and while she, with ready wit, entertained Mr. Stillman, Jim, the girls and the carpet rags escaped into the kitchen.

"But spring was near, and," thought Margaret, "he can't keep us out of the spare room in warm weather; and, besides, we will have all out-of-doors."

[To be continued.]

The "Imperial Wringer" and Wash-tub Stand. (Clothes Forks, etc.)

New devices for convenience on Wash-day save labor and lighten the work left to be done. H. F. MARQUESS, Chatham Street.

Pigs for Sale.

Young Pigs, part and full bred Berkshire, at Station farm. Apply at J. B. SNOWBALL'S OFFICE and a FAIRM. Chatham, 3rd October, 1885. 0022.

DISSOLUTION OF CO-PARTNERSHIP.

The partnership heretofore existing between Jas. Johnston and John Fitch, Chatham, N. B., is this day dissolved by mutual consent. All claims having any just claims against the firm, and all claims due to the firm, will please render their accounts, and all persons indebted to them, are requested to pay to the undersigned at once. Debts will be paid and accounts collected by Jas. Johnston. JAS. JOHNSTON, JOHN FITCH, Chatham, N. B., Oct. 13, 1885.

Tea Importations.

To the Editor of the Sun: Sir—In the advertisement in this morning's Telegram, Mr. John Mackay claims to have imported into this port from 1st January to 30th September, 1885, more than four tons of the Tea imported from Great Britain, China and United States.

The statement is not true, and to back my assertion I will deposit the sum of One Hundred Dollars in any bank in the city, Mr. Mackay to deposit a like amount, and the loser to pay his hundred dollars to any charitable object that may be named upon the 1st of March next.

Yours respectfully, J. J. McAFFIGAN.

To the Trade: The average public Auction Sale daily in London is by the vicinity of Fifty Thousands Half-pence. My Tea is superior to the Credit of Bank of Montreal. J. J. McAFFIGAN.

Flour, Pork, Fish, Etc.

200 Bbls. Brown FLOUR; 100 lb. Cans. CORN MEAL; 125 Bbls. CORN MEAL; 100 Quinlets new CORDSHIP; 40 Cases CANNED OYSTERS; 10 do COLEMAN'S MUSTARD; 10 do PEACHES; 7 do COLEMAN'S MUSTARD. Geo. S. DeForest, 13th May, 1885.

ANTI-DUST Carpet-Sweeper.

A Room to Housekeepers. The Bissell Carpet-Sweeper supplies a want long felt. No dust ceases to disturb the curtains and other furniture in a room. See them work and be convinced. Samples can be seen. Miss Staples' confection store, Water St., Chatham. An Agent will canvass the town in a few days. J. G. KETHRO, Newcastle. Gen'l Agent for Northumberland, Newcastle, Sept. 29, '85.

General Business.

HORSE FOR SALE.

A large 12 year old mare, very suitable for a thrashing mill, will be sold cheap. Apply at STATION FARM, Chatham, October 1st, 1885.

General Business.

WE SELL POTATOES, SPILING, BARK, R. R. Ties, Lumber, Laths, Canned Lobsters, Mackerel, Berries, Potatoes, Fish, Etc.

Best Prices for all Shipments.

Write fully for Quotations.

Hatheway & Co. General Commission Merchants, 22 Central Wharf, BOSTON.

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COFFINS & CASKETS.

The Subscriber has on hand at his shop, a superior assortment of ROSEWOOD & WALNUT COFFINS, COFFIN FINDINGS AND ROBES, which he will supply at reasonable rates. EDWARDS FOR PAUL DE: LIVES also supply WM. McLEAN, Undertaker.

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Firewood for Sale.

At CHATHAM STATION. Hardwood in four-foot lengths and split by the cord or cord, either stored in town or on cars at the station. CHEAP FOR CASH.

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Ready-made Clothing, Hats, Shirts, Gents' Furnishings Goods.

Meerschaum and Briar Pipes and all Smokers' Goods.

As we intend leaving the Province next spring, the whole stock must be sold and will be sold, regardless of cost.

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At the Chatham Carriage and Sleigh Works, a Lot of DOUBLE and SINGLE Truck Wagons. Also a few double and single second hand WAGONS. To be sold Cheap.

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has at his shop, UPPER WATER STREET, a large assortment of CEMENTRY WORK, in TABLETS, GRAVE-MARKS, ETC. Ranging at prices from \$1 upwards. Chatham, July 21st, 1885.