

RACHAEL. A True Story of Western Farm Life. BY MRS. E. W. WILSON. Concluded. June came with her blue skies, her singing birds, her wealth of beauty. But there was no time at Stillman's to enjoy it. A larger crop than usual had been put in since extra hands employed. Not in the house. Why, there were five women, counting 10-year old Susy and the poor, delicate mother. What extra help could they need, although washing and cooking must be done for all the men? You see "hands" had to be got for low wages if the farmer boarded them and had their washing done; and what else had the women to do? True, mother was not as strong as she used to be, but she did not complain. She was only more shadowy and quiet than ever; and Mr. Stillman told his daughters to "sit" around themselves, and not let mother do all the work.

had brought her. "Rachel," said Mrs. Lansing, "I saw Dr. Lewis' buggy coming down the road as I came here, you run out and stop him when he gets here." When about 4 o'clock the rain began to fall in torrents Mr. Stillman had the satisfaction of seeing the last load of grain just inside the great barn door, and taking off his hat he wiped the moisture of his face exclaiming, "Well, boys, we beat the rain; it will come down now for all I care." Replacing his hat on his head he turned towards the house, and to his surprise saw the well-known figure of Dr. Lewis on the porch. "Driven in by the rain," he thought; "guess I'll get him to see mother."

He is one of the lawyers in the Sanders case, and he knew me right off; he's coming out this evening, so look your prettiest, for I tell you he's a snoot one. I heard some of the lawyers talking about him." "Rachel," said Susy, as they arrayed themselves for the evening, "you are so hard to please this evening; what ails you? You look so excited." Rachel smiled. "I was thinking of old days," she said; "that is all." And she enters the little parlor where Mr. Stillman and the guest are seated in a perfectly self-possessed manner, saying as she extends her hand: "Good evening, Teacher. How goes the battle with Apollon?" And the young lawyer springs to his feet, exclaiming: "Rachel! Is it possible! And he looks her hand and looks into her eyes so long that Susy and Mrs. Stillman declare he fell in love then and there.

However that may be, it is certain Mr. Grey shows a wonderful interest in the S. Hillman district during his stay at Maywood. The trial is tedious, but his patience never gives out, and when some of the lawyers propose night sessions of court to hasten matters he opposes it earnestly. "Too hard on the old Judge," he says. But all things must end, and the case was at last decided in favor of Mr. Grey's client. As Rachel congratulated him on his victory he said with a look that brought the color to her face: "How long must I stay in Doubting Castle, Rachel?" "Dear me," she answered, "I did not think a promising young lawyer, as father calls you, ever got into that dismal place." Then Susy came in and the young man bade them good-bye, but he watched an opportunity to whisper in Rachel's ear a promise of speedy return, and as he traveled homeward, those wonderful eyes seemed to haunt him persistently. "Who would have thought," he said to himself, "she could have become such a woman? No wonder I never could find a girl to suit me when she has been my ideal."

You see he was trying to persuade himself that he had thought of her ever since that winter term of school; perhaps it was true. Maybe all unknown to him those eyes had held him. At any rate he says they did; and when time after time they drew him back to Stillman's he at last succeeded in making Rachel believe it, and then with the little "key of promise" she delivered him from "Doubting Castle." Let us take one more look two years later at the Stillman household. There is a family gathering and all the girls are present—Martha and her two little ones, Margaret with her two boys and Rachel with her baby, Susy, a proud young aunt, fits and to do, now teasing one and now another of the children. Elizabeth, with unwonted brightness in her eyes, looks on and even laughs a sweet, low laugh at some of the merry mischief. "Well," says Margaret, "it does seem odd to think of Lizzie's lover coming back after all these years." "Yes," answered Rachel in the same low tone, "and how happy she seems. I suppose the wedding will be soon, they have been separated so long." The husbands are all present in the evening, and the old house is full of light and gaiety. Rachel steps off upstairs to put baby to bed. As she sits in the room where in her childhood her dear mother who had suffered and died, and the old bitterness rises in her heart. Baby drops asleep, and laying him gently in the cradle in which she herself had been rocked, she kisses two dainty lips and goes down stairs. Some impulse prompts her to enter the sitting room instead of going into the parlor, where she thinks all the family are gathered. As she opens the door she sees her father sitting by the table, where the lamp stands as of old, and half turns to go out again, but something in his attitude touches her. He is not reading his newspaper, he is looking at something he holds in his hand. She notices how gray he is getting, and how his eyes are tracing lines in his stern face. Drawing near, she says: "Are you sick, father?" "O, no," he answers, "I was thinking of your mother, Rachel," and he handed her a faded daguerreotype of the fair young girl who had been his bride in the days of his youth.

"How like Susy, father," she said with tears dropping on the lovely face. "Yes, only she was prettier," he answered. "I have been thinking of her so much lately, Rachel," he went on; "I am going to do something I think will please her if she sees. I thought that pretty little form of Perry's the other day and I am going to put Martha and her husband on it. Dick's an industrious fellow, but it's hard getting on a rented place, and Martha is worried too much. You don't think any of the rest would object?" and he looked anxiously in her face. "Object? Why father, they will all be glad," and dropping her head on his shoulder she puts her arm around him for the first time in her life, and as she slips the little daguerreotype in his hand a sweet peace fills her heart as she thinks "the bitterness is gone and love takes its place." After a while she joins the group in the parlor. They are singing, while Susy plays accompaniments on the organ. "Sing 'Consonation,' Susy," she says, as she sits down beside her husband. "What is it?" he asks. "You look unusually happy." "Ah!" she answers, "I have had a vision of the land of Beulah, and Love is its king." As the voices joined in singing the old familiar hymn Mr. Stillman came quietly in and sat down to listen. So let us leave Rachel and her sisters, hoping that whatever may befall them in the journey of life, "Love, for them, may always be king."

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