

SUNSHINE-SHADDER

of'en feel like sendin' Billie or Jimmie over to give you a han' at the weedin'," she lamely retorted.

"You're very thoughtful, but I have managed so far, and when I find I can't, I'll have the less to do," she answered half defensively as she folded the dress and laid it over a chair.

"I thought you would have been to the Ladies' Aid Society this afternoon," Maria remarked, as Mrs. Riggs stood once more outside the door.

"I wus goin', but the way some folks, mentionin' no names, tries ter run church 'n' preacher, I sez ter Bill, 'Let 'em shift fer themselves fer awhile.' But, be the way, I'll be wantin' that dress fer cousin John's weddin', week come Friday."

"I'll be able to give it to you to-morrow night if nothing happens," Maria responded as she thankfully watched Mrs. Riggs raise the leaky umbrella.

"If it keeps on rainin' like this the craps will be spiled," she called out as she picked her steps across the street.

Maria breathed a sigh of relief as she closed the door and hurried to the kitchen, fearful that the fire had scorched her discovery. However, it lay just where she had left it, looking much greyer and drier. It was long past noon hour, but disregarding all thoughts of food she set the kettle aside, and, picking up the book, left the kitchen and went mechanically up the staircase to her bedroom.

Once inside the simply furnished room she threw herself across the crotched spread on the old four-poster, and burying her face in the hand which