

"If it is, as I suspect, Colonel Hargrave, there is one insuperable objection."

"I may hear what that is—can it be age?"

"That certainly is not an objection—but—I dare not marry a man who is not a Christian."

"And can you think I would desire you to marry any other than a Christian? But I ask you not to decide immediately—take time to consider—and then, perhaps, after officiating as bridesmaid to your friend, you may be persuaded to accept, at the same time, a similar attendant for yourself. But see, the carriage has returned with Frances," and raising her hand to his lips, he left the apartment to receive his daughter.

Frances observed the agitation of her friend, as she advanced to embrace her, and said, smiling archly, "So you have been sentimentalizing with my dear papa, I see, Miss Emily! Have a care—it is a pity Ned is not here to behold that beautiful blush; although"—and she shook her head wickedly—"I am not sure that he had any share in producing it."

The Colonel came to the rescue; "And pray, Miss Frances, where is Edward? and where, also, is the Major?"

"Oh, the Major is where he always is, in pursuit of me; and, for Ned, he will remain another day at the meeting. I think, Emily, he is under very serious convictions."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Emily, her eyes sparkling with delight.

"You look delighted—but let me tell you he has grown as stupid as an owl. I can scarcely recognize him. You will be obliged to give him up and take papa, I believe. But here comes the Major; so, dear papa, we will withdraw, that is Emily and myself, for a little private confab, and allow him leisure to relate all the wonders he has seen, for your benefit."

When the two friends reached their apartment, Frances said, "Now tell me, Emm, honour bright, has not my good papa been whispering to you about matrimony?"

"Why should you imagine such a thing?"

"Ah! your face is a tell-tale—I am right—and now for the parties, although I am sure I know one of them."

"Pshaw! dear Frances, do not talk nonsense, but tell me what happened at the camp-meeting after I left you?"

"So you wish to evade my question; well, I can be silent too."

"I trust you will use no concealment with me—did you see Foster?"

"Pshaw! dear Emily, do not talk nonsense."

"Be reasonable—I have very little to say—but you guessed correctly as to the subject of our conversation."

"I was sure of it!—and the persons?"

"Myself for one!"—

"And the other?"

"Your brother."

"Indeed! my brother!—are you sure it was him?"

"Of course, it could be no other, although no name was mentioned."

Frances was silent.

"You will now explain the cause of your brother's absence."

"Assuredly! Edward has become a seeker after the religion you prize so highly, and if constant use of the means for obtaining it will enable him to find it, he will surely be its possessor."

"Dear Francis, if it should be so! if Edward should become a child of God, how happy, how very happy I should be!" and Emily clasped her hands in the energy of her emotion.

"I have said little to him," resumed Francis, "because he has avoided conversation and sought solitude, except when at the meeting. Of course, my beloved Major was my constant attendant, saving and excepting the few times I chose to dispense with his services."

"Wild girl! and did you see Foster?"

The colour rose to Frances's brow—she hesitated—at length, as if by a strong effort, she said, laying her hand on the arm of her friend, "I did see him, Emily, and that is my secret; do not expose nor question me upon the painful subject. I may seem gay, but my heart is sorely troubled."

"Let me relieve it then dear girl, by words of comfort. Your father promises not to hasten your marriage, and delay may produce something that will prevent it entirely: he also wishes me to make your wedding day my own."

"Is it possible! and does he wish you to marry my brother at that time?"

"So I understood him, and I feared then that such an event could never take place—but now, should your suspicions be correct, what shall I say?"

"Nothing; but courtesy an assent, and become my beloved sister," and she clasped her affectionately to her bosom.

"Upon my word, Emm!" she continued, as she released her from her arms, and gazed upon her sweet face, all radiant with hope, "I think we should appear much better as sisters than as mother and daughter. What think you?"

"Your mother! that is an honour to which I do not aspire—but to be your sister!"—

"Ah! to be sure, that is another thing! but there is the dinner bell, and I am not dressed—so now for haste."

On the fifth day from the commencement of the camp meeting, it broke up; and on Friday evening, nothing remained of the encampment, but the empty tents, and the spacious building from which so many