

I do the same—for I am a poor unworthy creature, and need them. I hope there are no critics here—I do not like critics, my brethren, they are like Turkey Buzzards; they eat up all the garbage. They are like the evil one—they fly away with all the bad, and leave all the good. Sinners are like a flock of sheep—when one sees a hole in the fence, and runs through it, all the rest will follow; so when one sinner does a wicked thing, all the rest will do so too. But I can tell you of a friend who can call them all back again—it is the Saviour, and I will describe him to you. He is kind and loves you all, and he—and he is—and he will—and”—here the unfortunate preacher came to a full stop—paused a moment longer, and then actually took his seat, unable to utter another word.

After some hesitation a brother arose and informed the congregation that the reason “brother Syms could not go on, was because they had not prayed for him.” This was too much for the gravity of Frances, and they were obliged to retreat from the stand, in self-defence, or run the risk of scandalizing the excited audience by very ill-timed laughter,

Fatigued by the scenes of the day, the friends retired early to rest, but they were not destined to enjoy their repose long undisturbed. They were awakened by the most fearful shrieks. Emily listened appalled—again they reached her ears, accompanied by groans and exclamations? then above those sounds of anguish, were heard voices of exhortation and prayer, and louder still was shouted the Hallelujah of praise. Frances marked the horror-stricken face of her friend. “Rest quietly, Emm,” she said, “it is only the people at the meeting. They are frantic with excitement. What do you think some of those sounds resemble?”

“The cries of tortured spirits,” answered Emily, as she hastily enveloped her head in the clothes, to exclude the terrific noise.

“And this,” said Miss Winthrop, as they sat at breakfast next morning, “this is a camp meeting!”

“The excitement is assuredly too strong here,” observed Col. Hargrave, but many a child of heaven gaves his adoption from some one of these meetings.”

“But would not an attendance in churches answer the same sacred purpose, and secure them from the scandal attending such scenes as these?” enquired Emily.

“I do not know why they would not,” said Frances—“but you know these meetings last several days, and in that time we have an opportunity of seeing many friends who assemble here.”

The Colonel smiled at this sally of his lively daughter, and observed, “We might meet at our churches, Miss Winthrop, but unfortunately they are small, and would scarcely contain one-fourth of the congregation; you are not aware, perhaps, that

worshippers from all parts of the country assemble here.”

“I might judge so from the increasing crowd, sir but how did these meetings originate?”

“In necessity: our planters dwell, each man on his own estate, and usually remote from one another—consequently, numbers must travel a great distance, if they would attend divine service in a church. This occasions our congregations to be small, and christian intercourse unfrequent. On the first settlement of the country this was peculiarly the case, and several good men, lamenting the consequences of such a state of things, suggested these general meetings as a preventative of the evils they feared. A grove, abounding in springs of water, was selected as their first place of meeting, and necessity has taught us, from time to time, to increase our conveniences, until we have arrived at a systematic arrangement of our tents and equipage.”

“I think you account well for their commencement—but do you not think they occasion a great deal of error?”

“Every thing may be perverted to evil, and a camp meeting is certainly no exception to the rule; but I know not that any more evil is done at one of them than at any other public meeting; nor would I dare to say that the great Being who has promised to be with all his sincere worshippers, wherever they are assembled, may not be found as well in temples of his own creation, as in houses built by human hands. Look! Miss Winthrop, and tell me if you think a nobler or more acceptable temple could be found than this, for the worship of the Almighty?”

Emily gazed from the open door of the tent, and her eyes beamed with delight, as she beheld the lovely scene before her. The unnumbered varieties of foliage, reflecting the prismatic colours from the sparkling gems of dew that yet lingered on their surface, and chequering with their waving shadows, the smooth grass, with a thousand fanciful forms of light and shade—the groups of people assembled under the stately trees for conversation, or wandering, in deep contemplation, towards the thick groves that skirted the encampment, and the throngs that were hurrying to and from the Stand;—all were objects of admiration.

“Yet, papa,” cried Frances, as if in reply to her father’s last remark, “yet lovely as it is, Emily intends tearing herself away from it today.”

“Are you already tired of it?” he asked.

“I confess I am unwilling to expose myself to a repetition of the scenes of yesterday, and would prefer returning today; at the same time, I must entreat that no one else be influenced by my movements.”

“But if I, also, am inclined to return home,” asked the Colonel, smiling, “am I prohibited?”

“By no means, I merely meant!”—