

Great cheer was held in all the tents at noon, and unlimited quantities of pie eaten—fit preparation for the afternoon services. The usual program of the evening, under the leadership of the moon, Brother Parker rose for the first time. A tall thin man, with a willow, tender face, and emotional, his sermon was unusually fervid. A certain thrill came over the assembly, and, at its close, a number of persons passed quietly and without excitement into the "anxious seat," as candidates for the prayers of the congregation. Some were parents, who carried their children thither; some members of the church, who felt that their faith had suffered a decadence. All were welcomed and rejoiced over by the good brethren, and mention was made of the fact that still there was room for others, further urgency being held in reserve for the next day.

It was, then, after two long and "searching" discourses that Brother Parker had "fixed" to have Lucy succumb. He came to her among the throng, and pleaded earnestly. He took her hand, and strove, with gentle force, to draw her to the front. To his surprise, she resisted. The girl had her own reserve of character, her own thoughts as to spiritual things. The small inclosure of rough boards, within which it seemed to him so important that she should kneel, was to her no sacred place. God had appeared nearer often—in the woods, on the hills, alone in her little room. Even the spectacle of her friends, Hapsey and Esther, kneeling, had not moved her. The "anxious seat," failed to move her; it cannot; it would not be honest. "Such was Lucy's creed; and her flower-like beauty concealed an undying strength, even as beneath the mountain slopes enameled with butter-cups spread the indestructible granite.

By the afternoon of the third day a widespread excitement had seized upon the camp. A crowd of reserved people like those of New England were more formidable when under the influence of unexpected emotion. The very novelty of sensation and expression attracted them. Strong men sobbed, women became hysterical; young girls rushed forward and fell upon their knees; the elders went to and fro among the crowd, exhorting, explaining, entreating. Over all rang at intervals the voices of the choir in wild, sweet snatches. A dark thunder-cloud for a moment hid the sun, and one low peal shook the air. Brother Parker stood again by Lucy; he held her hand. She was excited and in tears, but she was firm. Just then a stir took place near them. A young man with broad shoulders and a face past by two of the staiders. His face was hidden in his hands, but Lucy could not mistake. A sudden tide of emotion shook her soul. If Kane yielded—if Kane were going to that place—then she should go too.

Was not her place by him—in time and eternity? Brother Parker felt the fingers quiver in his grasp, the resistance slacken. Another moment he had led her forward. She was kneeling, kneeling by Kane's side; and this victory of an earthly affection, which was to him as a heavenly one, had power to bring tears like rain down the good man's cheeks. Sweetly sang the hymn over them, the cloud faded past, the clear sunshine streamed in, and bathed the place, and heaven seemed to smile upon the scene.

To our young lovers—who shall say? To some hearts God has revealed himself in this manner. "We may not dare to question," said with their deeper thoughts mingled the strange sweetening of being there side by side—the earthly blended with the unearthly, as it will do while we are sinners of earth. "Don't let her converse with any one," Sister Wilder said Brother Parker, as he restored the agitated Lucy to her friends. "Keep her about this evening. Let her vain conversation or gossiping disturb the impression on her mind. To-morrow we will talk with her further."

Oh, Brother Parker, had you noticed the hand-clasp, warm and moist, lingering then became those who had merely upon a spiritual platform, exchanged between your young converts? Did you hope to make matters worse for the late convert? Brother Parker, who shall guess or compute the moral blindness which Cupid can throw over even a good man's heart?

So Mrs. Wilder kept Lucy. Poor Kane hovering about the family group for chance of a word, found only downward looks on the part of his wife, and discouraging looks from the rest. Father, mother, brother Nathan, sister-in-law Ellen, and faithful Drury, all were determined there should be no "philandering" that night at least. So the flame in Kane's soul, thus repressed, burned more hotly than ever, and "Milk midnight" he was still trying, unable to sleep, and longing for the dawn, his eyes fixed on the fair head not a yard from him.

A slight movement showed him that Lucy too, slept not. In a moment, prudence and propriety alike forgotten, he had gently pushed his pillow some inches nearer.

"Lucy!"

Such a tiny whisper! Smothered by Deacon Allen's hearty snore, it would scarcely have caught the attention of Fine Ear, but Lucy heard.

She half turned, her face dyed with scarlet blushes as she saw that bold head so near. "Oh, don't sit so breathless," "somebody will hear!"

"They are sound as dormice," whispered Kane; "they won't wake. Do let me speak, Lucy. I shall die if you won't listen. Tell me, when I kneel there, you know, I said to God, O Lord, I will be a good man and a church member, with thy help; but how can I be anything good unless I have the girl I love to go along with me? Oh, let me have her, Lord! And just then, Lucy, your dress rustled, and you came and knelt down by me. I knew it in a moment, though I didn't open my eyes. And then I felt that the Lord was as good as saying, 'I will have my prayer, and I will have my prayer, and I will have my prayer.'"

"Yes, Kane."

"And for me?"

"Yes, Kane."

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