

cause of his absence was, Loorany seemed to be satisfied. She went about as gay as a lark and as spry as a ground squirrel. John Wesley, too, continued to take things easy. He made no show of elation over the absence of Hildreth of Hall, and never inquired about it. He had never ceased his visits to the Parmalees, but he went no oftener, now that his rival had disappeared from the field, than he had gone before. As Mrs. Pruett remarked, he was the same old John Wesley in fair weather as he was in foul. Patient and willing, and good-humored, for all his seriousness, he went along attending to his own business and helping everybody else who needed help. Thus, in a way, he was very popular, but somehow those who liked him least had a pity for him that was almost contemptuous. John Wesley paid no attention to such things. He just rocked along, as Mrs. Pruett said.

It was the same when, one day in the spring of 1864, Hildreth of Hall came riding up the mountain driving a pair of handsome horses to a top buggy. He wore a gray uniform, and the coat had a long tail to it, — a sure sign he was an officer of some kind,