

his companions. They took off saddles and bridles, made some halters out of plough lines, and gave their horses a heavy feed of fodder. Then they returned to the house, and found John Wesley sitting where they had left him, and in precisely the same position.

“Can we get dinner?” asked Hildreth of Hall.

“I reckon not,” replied John Wesley.

“Why?”

“Nobody at home but me an’ the tomcat, an’ we’re locked out. Maybe you can git dinner at Parmalee’s when the time comes. They’re all at home. But it hain’t nigh dinner time yit.” John Wesley slowly straightened himself out and came off the fence with an apologetic smile on his face. “Ef these gentermen here don’t mind, I’d like to have a word wi’ you, sorter private like.” He looked at Hildreth of Hall, still smiling.

For answer, Hildreth of Hall walked to a mountain oak a hundred feet away, followed by John Wesley. “What do you want?”

“I s’pose you’ve come up to marry the gal?” suggested John Wesley.

“I have not,” replied Hildreth of Hall.