

“I mean Loorany Parmalee,” said John Wesley, pulling a small piece of bark from the tree.

“It matters not to me who you mean,” remarked Hildreth.

“I just wanted to find out,” John Wesley went on, fitting the piece of bark between thumb and forefinger as if it were a marble. “I allers allowed you was a d—— dog.” The bark flew into the face of Hildreth of Hall and left a stinging red mark there, as John Wesley, with a contemptuous gesture, turned away.

Hildreth’s hand flew to his hip pocket.

“Watch out there!” cried one of his companions in a warning tone. “He’ll shoot!”

“I reckon not,” said John Wesley, without turning his head. “The fact of the business is, gentermen, they won’t narry one on you shoot. A bulldog’ll fight, but you let him foller a sheep-killin’ houn’ to the pastur, an’ a bench-legged fice can run ’im. You-all may n’t believe it, but it’s the fact-truth.”

But John Wesley would have been shot all the same if the thought had n’t flashed on Hildreth’s mind that the house was full of armed mountaineers. This stayed his