

how he joyed in the ownership and to dwell therein, was swept off her feet with the fulness of a renunciation, and giving Lisbeth a nod as if a signal between them, the two sprang forward to his chair.

"O, you blessed Uncle Garret," she cried. "You don't have to give up Halfway, for there isn't any will, now."

"I do not understand you, Jo-ann—We will not trifle over so serious a thing," said he, the masterful ring coming quick again to the old voice that had been sounding only sad or tender notes during his recital.

"Uncle Garret," said Lisbeth, her dark eyes with their soft sunshine meeting his own as she spoke the unusual word, spoke it so longingly and fondly that his own heart warmed with love at her surrender. "Uncle Garret, Joan is right about there not being any will. We burned it up."

"Burned it up! What do you mean?"

"All to ashes," said Joan, "up in the loom-room, the very place where I found the bad old thing. And now it's all done with, forever!"

"I assume that Jo-ann did the burning, it sounds like one of her ways of settling things. But the mere destruction of the will does not do away with its provisions, since we are all well acquainted with them."

"Joan did think of it first," said Lisbeth, "for she always knows such lovely things to do, but I was just as glad to have it done as she was, and we each put a match to it together. We don't want Halfway, and we won't take it, for our own. We couldn't, Uncle Garret."

"You see if we were what Uncle Amsey called the only claimants," urged Joan, "then we had a right to do what we pleased with the will; and that did please us, so, Uncle Garret. It's just another of the old spooks gone; the cloth was one, and the water-pipes two"; checking them off upon her small fingers, "the 'thirst' is going to be three, for we can all knock it off now because not one of us has got left a 'carking care or a dark deed to brood over' like old Jem said