

water might astonishingly improve—and, in fine, this little boy might—

"Mithuth Limp," said Pattie, looking that lady straight in the eye, "I'll give you twenty-five dollarth for thith here baby. By George, I will!"

The astonished mother jumped out of her chair and her lassitude at the same instant.

"Not another thent!" Pattie craftily declared. "Here—take your baby."

Mrs. Limp did not quite *take* the baby. That would be but a pale indication of the speed, directness and outraged determination with which she acted. She snatched the baby away, with the precision of a brisk woodpecker after an escaping worm; and she hugged it until it howled for mercy—and she hushed it—and she crooned endearment—and she kissed the baby with such fervour and persistency that she saved its puckered face a washing. And then she turned—in a rage of indignation—in a storm of scorn—in a whirlwind of execration—upon poor little Pattie Batch. But Pattie Batch was gone. Discreet little Pattie Batch didn't need to be *told*! Her little feet were already pattering over the trail to Swamp's End; and she was crying as she ran.

But Pattie Batch's wish for a baby went back to the very beginnings of things. Ask Ginger-