

32 CHRISTMAS EVE at SWAMP'S END

"By George!" screamed Pattie Batch; "it *is* a baby!"

"Your baby," John Fairmeadow whispered. "God's Christmas gift—to you."

Pattie Batch—adorable young mother!—reverently approached, and, bending with parted lips, eyes shining, and hands laid upon her trembling heart, for the first time gazed content upon the little face. She lifted, then—and with what awe and tenderness!—the tiny mortal from the warm basket, and pressed it, with knowing arms, against her warmer, softer young breast. "My baby!" she crooned, her lips close to its ear; "my little baby—my own little baby!"

