

"Ith a dog!" Pattie Batch exclaimed.

"Dog!" the outraged John Fairmeadow roared. "Nothing of the sort! No *ma'am*!"

Pattie Batch clasped her hands. "It ith, too!" she cried. "I thaw it move."

"It is *not*!"

"Ith a kitten, then."

"It is *not* a kitten!"

Thereupon—while the Shadow, by whom John Fairmeadow had been dogged that night, now peered with acute attention through a break in the frost on the window-pane—thereupon, without any warning save a second slight movement of the blanket, a sound—and not by any means a growl—the thing was certainly not a dog—a sound proceeded from the depths of the basket.

Pattie Batch jumped away.

"Well, well!" cried John Fairmeadow; "what's the row?"

Row, indeed! Pattie Batch was gone white; and she swayed a little, and shivered, too, and clenched her little hands to restrain her amazing hope. "Oh," she moaned, at last, far short of breath enough, "tell me quick: ith it—ith it a—a —"

John Fairmeadow threw back the blanket in a most dramatic fashion; and there, wrapped in the neglected fawn-skin cloak, all dimpled and smiling, lay —

THE BABY!