

I've not even a hankering in my throat nor a desire in my mind. What do you make of it?"

"The same thought has come to me," said Garret Wisdom. "Except as I slept I have not gone without a drink of it for more than a half hour stretch, and now it has been hours since I've had a swallow, or wanted it."

"I never seem to have known there was a second line to the couplet, till we found it all written out on a piece of paper in Jane's old chest. Do you recollect it? '*Son's son can end it.*' I couldn't make any sense to it when I read it then, nor since, but it just came to me now that maybe you've done the thing that ends it, by sending the water to us again in our need. See! 'Twas by some one of us refusing it, in the first place, that started it, and now by giving it, and to your enemy, Garret, you've broken the spell! What do you think?"

"I suppose if we had stopped to think enough about it at any time we could have known it was foolish and needless, but it has been perpetuated from one to another, in speech and example. Even the strange 'thirst' itself, apart from any curse, could have been passed down by inheritance like any other instinct. For my own part I've dwelt upon it too much, with being away so long in lonely places, and of late being shut up by myself. Joan is for fighting it, and all the rest of the family failings besides, and I shouldn't wonder, now, myself, with other interests opening up, if we might be able to let it go by the board, and by degrees get clear of its spell. But there are other and graver matters to be spoken of now which concern others beside ourselves, and for this I must get back to the house, for I prefer to tell you of them in old Halfway itself."

So when he had been helped up over the difficult way, supported by Pelig's strong arm, but refusing outright all aid at the piazza steps, with stubborn force of will making his own mounting up them that he might return to Halfway as he had departed, of his own strength—there within the wing-rooms, upon his accustomed seat, he unfolded to Amsey Wis-