

He paused a moment, almost unconsciously, to look into her uplifted eyes. They were so like the big, affectionate, childish eyes he had seen uplifted to his own so often every day during the last few months, that they gave him a quiet curious sensation.

"The boy is very like you," he said abruptly.

"It has been often said so, my lord," she replied, "but I have been glad to think him like his father also."

As Lady Lorridaile had told him, her voice was very sweet, and her manner was very simple and dignified. She did not seem in the least troubled by his sudden coming.

"Yes," said the Earl, "he is like—my son—too." He put his hand up to his big white mustache and pulled it fiercely. "Do you know," he said, "why I have come here?"

"I have seen Mr. Havisham," Mrs. Errol began, "and he has told me of the claims which have been made ——"

"I have come to tell you," said the Earl, "that they will be investigated and contested, if a contest can be made. I have come to tell you that the boy shall be defended with all the power of the law. His rights ——"

The soft voice interrupted him.

"He must have nothing that is *not* his by right, even if the law can give it to him," she said.

"Unfortunately the law can not," said the Earl. "If it could, it should. The outrageous woman and her child ——"

"Perhaps she cares for him as much as I care for Cedric, my lord," said little Mrs. Errol. "And if she was your eldest son's wife, her son is Lord Fauntleroy, and mine is not."

She was no more afraid of him than Cedric had been, and she looked at him just as Cedric would have looked, and he, having been an old tyrant all his life, was privately pleased by it. People so seldom dared to differ from him that there was an entertaining novelty in it.

"I suppose," he said, scowling slightly, "that you would much prefer that he should not be the Earl of Dorincourt."

Her fair young face flushed.

"It is a very magnificent thing to be the Earl of Dorincourt, my lord," she said. "I know that, but I care most that he should be what his father was—brave and just and true always."

"In striking contrast to what his grandfather was, eh?" said his lordship sardonically.

"I have not had the pleasure of knowing his grandfather," replied Mrs. Errol, "but I know my little boy believes ——" She stopped short a moment, looking quietly into his face, and then she added, "I know that Cedric loves you."