

Privately he was not nearly so much disgusted with earls and their mode of life as he had expected to be, and it is to be doubted whether his strictly republican principles were not shaken a little by a closer acquaintance with castles and ancestors and all the rest of it. At any rate, one day he uttered a very remarkable and unexpected sentiment :

"I wouldn't have minded bein' one of 'em myself!" he said—which was really a great concession.

What a grand day it was when little Lord Fauntleroy's birthday arrived, and how his young lordship enjoyed it! How beautiful the park looked, filled with the thronging people dressed in their gayest and best, and with the flags flying from the tents and the top of the Castle! Nobody had staid away who could possibly come, because everybody was really glad that little Lord Fauntleroy was to be little Lord Fauntleroy still, and some day was to be the master of everything. Every one wanted to have a look at him, and at his pretty, kind mother, who had made so many friends. And positively every one liked the Earl rather better, and felt more amiably toward him because the little boy loved and trusted him so, and because, also, he had now made friends with and behaved respectfully to his heir's mother. It was said that he was even beginning to be fond of her, too, and that between his young lordship and his young lordship's mother, the Earl might be changed in time into quite a well-behaved old nobleman, and everybody might be happier and better off.

What scores and scores of people there were under the trees, and in the tents, and on the lawns! Farmers and farmers' wives in their Sunday suits and bonnets and shawls; girls and their sweet-hearts; children frolicking and chasing about; and old dames in red cloaks gossiping together. At the Castle, there were ladies and gentlemen who had come to see the fun, and to congratulate the Earl, and to meet Mrs. Errol. Lady Lorredaile and Sir Harry were there, and Sir Thomas Asshe and his daughters, and Mr. Havisham, of course, and then beautiful Miss Vivian Herbert, with the loveliest white gown and lace parasol, and a circle of gentlemen to take care of her—though she evidently liked Fauntleroy better than all of them put together. And when he saw her and ran to her and put his arm around her neck, she put her arms around him, too, and kissed him as warmly as if he had been her own favorite little brother, and she said :

"Dear little Lord Fauntleroy! dear little boy! I am so glad! I am so glad!"