

no wonder his going left a blank in the grocery store. At first it seemed to Mr. Hobbs that Cedric was not really far away, and would come back again; that some day he would look up from his paper and see the little lad standing in the door-way, in his white suit and red stockings, and with his straw hat on the back of his head, and would hear him say in his cheerful little voice: "Hello, Mr. Hobbs! This is a hot day—isn't it?" But as the days passed on and this did not happen, Mr. Hobbs felt very dull and uneasy. He did not even enjoy his newspaper as much as he used to. He would put the paper down on his knee after reading it, and sit and stare at the high stool for a long time. There were some marks on the long legs which made him feel quite dejected and melancholy. They were marks made by the heels of the next Earl of Dorincourt, when he kicked and talked at the same time. It seems that even useful earls kick the legs of things they sit on;—noble blood and lofty lineage do not prevent it. After looking at those marks, Mr. Hobbs would take out his gold watch and open it and stare at the inscription: "From his oldest friend, Lord Fauntleroy, to Mr. Hobbs. When this you see, remember me." And after staring at it awhile, he would shut it up with a loud snap, and sigh and get up and go and stand in the door-way—between the box of potatoes and the barrel of apples—and look up the street. At night, when the store was closed, he would light his pipe and walk slowly along the pavement until he reached the house where Cedric had lived, on which there was a sign that read, "This House to Let;" and he would stop near it and look up and shake his head, and puff at his pipe very hard, and after a while walk mournfully back again.

This went on for two or three weeks before any new idea came to him. Being slow and ponderous, it always took him a long time to reach a new idea. As a rule, he did not like new ideas, but preferred old ones. After two or three weeks, however, during which, instead of getting better, matters really grew worse, a novel plan slowly and deliberately dawned upon him. He would go to see Dick. He smoked a great many pipes before he arrived at the conclusion, but finally he did arrive at it. He would go to see Dick. He knew all about Dick, Cedric had told him, and his idea was that perhaps Dick might be some comfort to him in the way of talking things over.

So one day when Dick was very hard at work blacking a customer's boots, a short, stout man with a heavy face and a