

He came slowly back to the sofa, at last and stood near it. "If any one had told me I could be fond of a child," he said, his harsh voice low and unsteady, "I should not have believed them. I always detested children—my own more than the rest. I am fond of this one; he is fond of me" (with a bitter smile). "I am not popular; I never was. But he is fond of me. He never was afraid of me—he always trusted me. He would have filled my place better than I have filled it. I know that. He would have been an honour to the name."

He bent down and stood a minute or so looking at the happy, sleeping face. His shaggy eyebrows were knitted fiercely, and yet somehow he did not seem fierce at all. He put up his hand, pushed the bright hair back from the forehead, and then turned away and rang the bell.

When the largest footman appeared, he pointed to the sofa.

"Take"—he said, and then his voice changed a little—"take Lord Fauntleroy to his room."

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Mr. Hobbs's young friend left him to go to Dorincourt Castle and become Lord Fauntleroy, and the groceryman had time to realize that the Atlantic Ocean lay between himself and the small companion who had spent so many agreeable hours in his society, he really began to feel very lonely indeed. The fact was, Mr. Hobbs was not a clever man nor even a bright one; he was, indeed, rather a slow and heavy person, and he had never made many acquaintances. He was not mentally energetic enough to know how to amuse himself, and in truth he never did anything of an entertaining nature but read the newspapers and add up his accounts. It was not very easy for him to add up his accounts, and sometimes it took him a long time to bring them out right; and in the old days, little Lord Fauntleroy, who had learned how to add up quite nicely, with his fingers and a slate and pencil, had sometimes even gone to the length of trying to help him; and then, too, he had been so good a listener and had taken such an interest in what the newspaper said, and he and Mr. Hobbs had held such long conversations about the Revolution and the British and the elections and the Republican party, that it was