

"My dear Mr. Fairmeadow," said she, "that child will simply catch its *death* of cold!"

There was something handy, however—something of silk and fawn-skin—and with this enveloping the baby John Fairmeadow swung in a roar with it to the bar—and held it aloft in all that seething wickedness—pure symbol of the blessed Christmas festival. And there was a sensation, of course—a sensation beginning in vociferous ejaculations, but presently failing to a buzz of conjecture. There were questions to follow: to which John Fairmeadow answered that he had found the baby—that the baby was nobody's baby—that the baby was his baby by right of finders keepers—that the baby was everybody's baby—and that the baby would presently be somebody's much-loved baby, *that* he'd vouch for! The baby, now resting content in John Fairmeadow's arms, was diffidently approached and examined. Gingerbread Jenkins poked a finger at it, and said, in a voice of the most inimical description, "Get out!" without disturbing the baby's serene equanimity in the slightest. Young Billy Lush, charging his soft, boyish voice with all the horrifying intent he could muster, threatened to "catch" the baby, as though bent upon devouring it on the spot; but the baby only chuckled with delight. Billy the Beast incautiously approached a finger near the baby's stout abdomen; and the baby—with