

contrast with Lady Fauntleroy ; and this one had so sweet a face and voice, and a pretty dignity when she spoke or moved. Very soon, through the quiet magic of these influences, he began to feel less gloomy, and then he talked still more.

"Whatever happens," he said, "the boy shall be provided for. He shall be taken care of, now and in the future."

Before he went away, he glanced round the room.

"Do you like the house?" he demanded.

"Very much," she answered.

"This is a cheerful room," he said. "May I come here again and talk this matter over?"

"As often as you wish, my lord," she replied.

And then he went out to his carriage and drove away, Thomas and Henry almost stricken dumb upon the box at the turn affairs had taken.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF course, as soon as the story of Lord Fauntleroy and the difficulties of the Earl of Dorincourt were discussed in the English newspapers, they were discussed in the American newspapers. The story was too interesting to be passed over lightly, and it was talked of a great deal. There were so many versions of it that it would have been an edifying thing to buy all the papers and compare them. Mr. Hobbs read so much about it that he became quite bewildered. One paper described his young friend Cedric as an infant in arms, — another as a young man at Oxford, winning all the honors, and distinguishing himself by writing Greek poems ; one said he was engaged to a young lady of great beauty, who was the daughter of a duke ; another said he had just been married ; the only thing, in fact, which was *not* said was that he was a little boy between seven and eight, with handsome legs and curly hair. One said he was no relation to the Earl of Dorincourt at all, but was a small impostor who had sold newspapers and slept in the streets of New York before his mother imposed upon the family lawyer, who came to America to look for the Earl's heir. Then came the descriptions of the new Lord Fauntleroy and his mother. Sometimes she was a gypsy, sometimes an actress, sometimes a beautiful Spaniard ; but it was always agreed that the Earl of Dorincourt was her deadly enemy, and would not acknowledge her son as his heir if he could help it, and as there seemed