

SYNOPSIS

The quietness of the Errol family, consisting of Mrs. Errol and her son Cedric Errol, was disturbed by the coming of an English lawyer, Mr. Havisham. He had come to New York as an envoy of the Earl of Dorincourt. His purpose of coming was to claim Cedric Errol as the heir of the Dorincourt family in England. Therefore, the child had to come along to England in order to get a proper education which prepared him to be the family successor.

The incident not only shocked the family, but also Cedric's friends in one shabby neighborhood in New York, because to their knowledge, Cedric had no relation, not particularly British relation. The child's reaction towards the summons was not accepting it. Actually, Cedric was half-British, from his father's side. However, the marriage between the father to an American girl, Cedric's mother enraged the old Earl, the father of the Captain. In result, the Captain was alienated from his British family in England.

Learning about the reason, Mrs. Errol decided that Cedric should go to England because his late father, Captain Cedric Errol, would wish him did it. Therefore, the Errol family moved to England, leaving all their friends in their neighborhood.

In England the family led a different life. First, the mother and son had to live separately as the old Earl had arranged. This was because the Earl did not want to meet the boy's American mother as the Earl had a strong dislike towards America and Americans. Therefore, the boy was to live in the Dorincourt Castle with his grandfather. While the mother lived in the Court Lodge, a house near the castle. However, they were still allowed to meet each other sometimes. Next, it was for the first time that Cedric was to face the

fact that he would bear the noble name, which he inherited from his wealthy but bad-tempered grandfather. Fortunately, the good nature owned by the child together with the companionship of the mother to the child prevented him from being spoiled by the luxury provided by the old Earl.

Soon, the presence of this boy altered the condition in Dorincourt Castle. First of all it greatly affected the grandfather. The affectionate boy won his old, stubborn heart who had never been loved by anyone and who had never loved anyone but himself. The two generations became companionably closer. The close relationship between them had later influenced the old Earl to behave benevolently towards his tenants and other poor people, under the persuasion of the generous grandson.

Then, when things were gradually getting better in Dorincourt Castle, there was a strange American woman appeared, claiming that *her* son was the real heir of the Dorincourt family. Learning about this, the old Earl was very disappointed because he had already fallen in love with Cedric Errol. Deep in his old heart, he did not care about the claim made by the mercenary woman from America.

However, after a thorough investigation upon the real heir of the Dorincourt family, it proved that it was Cedric who was the *real* heir of Dorincourt. Hearing this, the old Earl got very happy. In the end, the Earl received Cedric's mother, and the three generations settled down happily at Dorincourt, which Cedric, the little Lord Fauntleroy, would inherit.

THE SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

FRANCES ELIZA HODGSON BURNETT (1849-1924). Novelist and children's writer, Hodgson Burnett's reputation lies on her three famous children's books Little Lord Fauntleroy, The Little Princess, and The Secret Garden.

Frances Hodgson was born in Manchester in November 24, 1849, on of five children of a well-to-do manufacturer. After the death of her father the family fell upon hard times and in 1865 they emigrated to America. Frances, however, was not to forget about her life in Manchester and her first novel, Lass o' Lowries (1877) tells of working-class life in Manchester.

She married Dr. Swan Burnett in 1873 and it was their second son, who was the original for the character of Fauntleroy in her famous book Little Lord Fauntleroy. The book was published to immediate success in 1886. Like *The Secret Garden* and The Little Princess it has proved to be continually popular and has been successfully dramatized many times.

Frances returned to England rich on the success of her book, but while there she suffered a run of ill fortune; her divorce from Dr. Burnett was followed by the failure of her second marriage (to Stephen Townsend), and, in 1890, the news of her elder son's death. One of the main themes of her work – the value of personal dignity and pride, however one is circumstanced – reflects her own remarkable strength of character.

After 1901 Frances lived in Bermuda and Long Island, occupied in turn by her interests in gardening, Christian Science, theosophy and spiritualism. The Little Princess was finally published in book form in 1905, having previously appeared in serial form and as a long-running play. It was while deciding on the lay-out for her garden at her home in Long Island that Frances conceived and wrote The Secret Garden (1911), probably her best and most enduring work. In it the garden acts as a means of health and as a symbol of the growing personality. She continued to write up until her death in October 29, 1924, a few weeks short of her seventy-fifth birthday.

Her works: Surly Tim's Trouble (1872), Lass o' Lowries (1877), Haworth's (1879), Louisiana (1880), A Fair Barbarian (1880), Through One Administration (1883), Little Lord Fauntleroy (1886), Esmeralda (October 1897), The First Gentleman of Europe (January 1897), The Lady of Quality (1896), Sara Crewe (1888), The Pretty Sister of Jose (1889), Little Saint Elizabeth (1890), In Connection with the De Willoughby Claim (1899), The Little Princess (1905), The Shuttle (1907), The Secret Garden (1911), T. Tembarom (1913).