

But I was rather an ass, and let the thing slip at the time—and then I couldn't pick it up again. Never got a chance!"

"Precisely. Just like a man! Men are so absurdly secretive with one another. They won't this and they won't that, until one is surprised at nothing. I quite see that you couldn't rake it up now, seventeen years afterwards."

"Seventeen years! Come—I say!"

"Cecily is sixteen in August."

"Well—yes—well!—I suppose she is. I say, Con, that's a queer thing to think of!"

"What is?"

"That we should have a girl of sixteen!"

"What can you expect?"

"Oh—it's all right, you know, as far as that goes. But she'll be a grown-up young woman before we know it."

"Well?"

"What the dooce shall we do with her, then?"

"All parents," said the lady, somewhat didactically, "are similarly situated, and have identical responsibilities."

"Yes—but it's gettin' serious. I want her to stop a little girl."

"Fathers do. But we need not begin to fuss about her yet, thank Heaven!"

"'Spose not. I say, I wonder what's become of those two young monkeys?"

"Now, you needn't begin to fidget about *them*. They can't fall into the canal."

"They might lose sight of each other, and go huntin' about."

"Well—suppose they do! It won't hurt you. But *they* won't lose sight of one another."

"How do you know that?"

"Dave is not a boy now. He is a responsible man of five-and-twenty. I told him not to let her go out of his sight."

"Oh well—I suppose it's all right. You're responsible, you know. *You* manage these things."

"My dear!—how can you be so ridiculous? See how young she is. Besides, he's known her from childhood."

The story does not take upon itself to interpret any portion whatever of this conversation. It merely records it.

The last speech has to continue on reminiscent lines, apparently suggested by the reference to the childhood of the speaker's daughter; one of the young monkeys, no doubt. "It does seem so strange to think that he was that little boy with the black