

more natural? She told herself that she rejoiced in his strength of purpose, in his pluck, in his self-effacement. And yet the stupendous fact remained that he was gone, that he would never come back quite the same, that the old sweet order had passed away: the boy had put away childish things for ever—she looked at the curly-coated dog and sighed—he was now and henceforth concerned only with what appertains to the man.

Presently, Susan bustled up to say that Mrs. Heseltine wished to see her. Dorothy was tempted to send down an excuse, but she ended by receiving the small, bright-eyed little woman.

"Min told us everything," she burst out, "and indeed I had to come and tell you, what you know already, that he is one of the best, as my David says—one of the best."

"But he has gone."

"My dear, they all go."

"Your David did not leave you."

"He would leave me at a word from you."

"If I could have said that word——"

"My dear, I think I understand; and so does he. And we always knew, both of us, that you were the most wonderful creature. Dear me! Here is Mrs. Chatfield coming to call."

She rose, guessing the nature of Mrs. Chatfield's errand, but Dorothy, with slightly heightened colour, begged her old friend to remain.