

heel. A door had opened, and he had heard the sound; indeed, had turned so promptly that he had evidently expected it. A tempestuous rustle of skirts followed the sound, and at that moment Rosa Dering, his only daughter, entered the room.

"Ah! there you are," she said with a light gaiety that almost made him groan. "You see I am back again," she continued, as one assured of welcome.

Sir John Dering took his daughter in his arms and kissed her.

"I am back again—yes," she went on hastily, "and, do you know, I am ever so glad. Trying as you are as a papa, I miss you. I wonder what you are doing without me, and begin to think you can scarcely get on at all. And so I come back, yet you sigh as if you were sorry." She pouted adorably at him. "Are you sorry," she asked; "and if not, why do you sigh?"

A smile on his pale face answered her gaiety.

"I miss my little one," he said, playfully pinching her ear. "Now you are back again, everything will go right."

She pounced on the phrase.

"Everything?" she asked. "Has anything been going wrong?"

Sir John slowly paced the room again.

"I have been foolish," he said at length.

She looked her quick alarm.

"Don't say foolish," she returned; "rather call it indiscreet. At least, it sounds better. Is it cards, or horses, this time?"

"Cards," he answered.