

into the details of the proposed consolidation, and I saw him start up in alarm.

"It's only my girl," I said, smiling. "It's Margaret — my little one! She is the only person who would dare to batter on my door in that fashion."

Then I opened the door and admitted her, with some toy she had used to make the commotion. Behind her came her mother, with apologies for the unseemly intrusion.

"Mr. Lombard," said I, as he got to his feet, "I believe you have met Mrs. Broadhurst before."

"No," he returned; "you are mistaken. I met her a number of times as Miss Starrington, but not since."

"Well," said I, laughing, "I want to tell you a little story. After this deal we have just made, you are entitled to hear it. It was Miss Starrington who unwittingly sent me back to New York from Europe — when I was foreign manager for Langenbeck Brothers — and thus made possible the business I now own. I called on her in Paris and she said things, in a polite way, about men who give up the big opportunities in order to follow the easiest road. She knew I had been planning a business. I resigned my place with Langenbeck at once, Mr. Lombard, and began to climb the more difficult path. She was the inspiration — and she shall be the inspiration of the steep and arduous ascent I am about to begin."