



that you understand what it is; I hope she understands also. And I hope she will listen to me, when I am able to speak to her, with as much kindness and sweetness as she has always shown both to me, whom she has never seen before, and to my dear cousin."

There was a rather long pause, during which the young man, evidently much excited, turned away and walked with the lawyer into one of the windows. Lady Lockington, having entirely recovered her self-control, and having recognized, without any shadow of doubt, that the star of the singing-girl was in the ascendant, and that friends ought to be made with her without delay, moved with a stately step towards that end of the room where Edna was still cowering, trembling and tearful, in her chair. Sitting beside her, the widowed Viscountess put her hand gently on the girl's arm, and said:

"Miss Bellamy, forgive me. I didn't understand. Now that I know how much you did for my dear husband, I thank you, and I am glad to learn that you have been as much appreciated as you deserve."

She was much too accomplished a woman of the world not to be able to say

you have been as much appreciated as you deserve."

She was much too accomplished a woman of the world not to be able to say this with kindliness which overwhelmed the inexperienced girl. And when she leant over her and kissed the girl's forehead, Edna sobbed out:

"Oh, you are very kind, very kind. Thank you with all my heart."

Edna could scarcely believe she was not dreaming, as the two gentlemen then discussed before her certain details of the strange story of the dead man's deception, and answered the questions of Lady Lockington, who remained beside the girl, holding her hand.

"I think," said Lady Lockington, "you might have taken more care to avoid gossip. A little dressmaker whom I employ when I am down here told me that Mr. Kage had set the people of the neighbourhood talking by his enthusiasm about Miss Bellamy."

"Well, it happens that this dressmaker is a great friend of my old housekeener."

about Miss Bellamy."

"Well, it happens that this dressmaker is a great friend of my old housekeeper," said Jack Lockington, "and she must have heard me express what I thought of the young musician at the Hall. It was I who recommended my cousin to engage a lady, preferably a young lady, to sing and play for his amusement. And, feeling myself responsible for her introduction, I took care to see her almost as soon as my cousin himself did, and to judge of the chances of her pleasing him with her music."

Edna, with a crimson face, sat up.

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"And was it you or Lord Lockington
who used to play the organ?" she asked,
suddenly.

"It was I. He sat listening to us both."

Shivering and feeling as if she could scarcely bear the whirl of feelings and of thoughts which seemed to be making tunult within her, Edna went quickly

out of the room.

She had not reached the staircase, however, when a hand was laid softly upon her arm from behind, and she stop-

upon her arm from behind, and she stopped, knowing that she could not escape.

"Miss Bellamy," whispered Jack, unsteadily, "I ought not to speak to you now; it's not fair, I know. But I must know whether you are going to stay here. It was my cousin's wish as well as mine. Dismiss from your mind any nonsense you may have been told that he was bad, or mad, or anything but unhappy and passionate. And believe that he wished you nothing but good."

"I've never had any such idea," said she, earnestly. "My only regret is that he wouldn't let me see him. He wouldn't have shocked me."

"You have seen him," said Jack Lock-

"You have seen him," said Jack Lockington, gently. "It was my cousin and not myself whom you saw lying, in a crazy fit of despair, on the grass in the park, by the entrance to the underground passage"

park, by the entrance to the underground passage."

Edna drew a long breath. "I'm glad of that," she said. "And—of course, I'll stay—if you wish it."

"I wish it, and I wish more than that," said he; and as he printed a kiss on her forehead, in spite of herself, he added, in a whisper: "I wish you to remain here for ever. I want you to be Lady Lockington. And my cousin wished it also. In his name as well as my own I shall ask you, when we have got over It shall ask you, when we have got over the sadness and sorrow of these first few days, to be my wife, Edna."

THE END.