



Lord Lockington

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"I have never seen him since that acci dent, and even his valet never has either. His Lordship lives in a suite of rooms by himself, in the oldest part of the mansion, and never comes out. When his rooms are done each morning he locks himself into one of them until all the others are ready, when he goes into one, leaving the last for the housemaid. There, that is the whole story, except that, being passionately fond of music, he sometimes has the organist to come and play to him on the great organ he has had built in the Hall. And that his medical man, having found his Lordship suffering from melancholy, suggested the engagement of a permanent musician. Lord Lockington won't have a man about the house in that capacity, so he directed dent, and even his valet never has either. Lord Lockington won't have a man about the house in that capacity, so he directed me to come up to London for a week, and to try, at the various agencies, to find a young lady with a sweet voice and a knowledge of music, who could play for his pleasure as often as he liked."

Mrs. Bellamy heard this account with interest, but remarked with some doubt, when it was ended: "There were stories about Lord Lockington some twenty about Lord Lockington some twenty, years ago. And—he lives apart from his wife. I feel rather doubtful about the propriety of sending my niece to a house where the husband and wife live apart."

Mrs. Holland smiled grimly. "Would you like to come with her yourself.

Mrs. Holland smiled grimly. "Would you like to come with her yourself, ma'am?" she asked. "There will not be the slightest objection to that, I know. On the contrary, his Lordship would be glad, I think, to feel that the young lady was coming with the approval of her friends. He has no very strong wish about this engagement; it was his physician who insisted, and who suggested that the lady engaged should be young and attractive. The fact is, ma'am, that although his Lordship is never seen, he comes out in the gallery of the hall when the organist comes to play, and goes in again because poor play, and goes in again because poor Mr. Gibson—that's the organist—used to throw himself into such contortions over the instrument that his Lordship couldn't bear the sight of him."

Mrs. Bellamy nodded with comprehension

Mrs. Holland went on: "The doctor says it's most important that his Lordship should have diversion, and if he won't listen to the organist's playing because he looks repulsive, the only thing to be done is to get someone to play whose looks are more pleasing."

"And you are sure he won't come down and frighten her?"

Mrs. Holland looked grave. "If you knew what I know," she said, lowering her voice, "about the awful sight his face is, you would know, as we all know, that it's impossible his Lordship should ever show his face again to a living son! besides the doctor. And his Lordship hates the doctor, because the poor man has h d to see him!" Mrs. Holland emphasized her words with an emphatic emphasized her words with an emphatic

Mrs. Bellamy looked doubtful again.
"But if she should see him by accident,
the sight might have a serious effect
upon her!"

"There's not the very slightest fear of that. But, of course, if you won't believe me, I can say no more, and I must look out for another lady to take the post," said the housekeeper, beginning to grow weary of the difficulties unnecessarily thrown in her way.

The salary, however, was too tempt

necessarily thrown in her way.

The salary, however, was too tempting a one to be lightly given up.

"Well," said Mrs. Bellamy, with a sigh, "there are drawbacks, but I suppose there always must be to any situation for a very young and pretty girl' And you will be answerable for her—in all respects?"

"I will answer for her safety, but I won't answer for it that she won't be bored to death," rejoined Mrs. Holland, rether toutly. rather tartly.

It seemed to ner that altogether too much fuss was being made about a matter which might have been settled at once. Here was a girl, pretty, poor, fairly accomplished, ready to accommodate herself to a country life. And here was a post ready for her which any girl in such a position might be glad to girl in such a position might be glad to have.

Mrs. Bellamy saw that she might lose