

# THE AMETHYST CROSS

By Fergus Hume

Notice.—Owing to a mechanical error, a column of this story was omitted from yesterday's installment. A portion of the latter is repeated today, with the missing section included, and should be read in connection with Monday's paper. Tomorrow's installment will open with chapter nineteen, a portion of which appeared yesterday out of place.

It was strange, a coincidence, in fact, that Lady Charvington's motor should stop on the afternoon of that very day at the gate of the Medmenham cottage. Never before had George's knowledge had his mother mentioned Lord Charvington's name, yet on the very day when it was on her lips because of the letter, the wife of the nobleman arrived to pay a visit. Why she should do so was not quite clear, and Mrs. Walker entered the drawing-room with a frown. She and her sister Kate had been school-girls together, and she had never approved of the lady. Her greeting was very cold.

"How are you, Helen," she said, extending the tips of her fingers; "it is a surprise to see you in my humble abode."

"I would have called before, only I

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knew that you did not wish to see me, Judith," said Lady Charvington, sinking gracefully into the nearest armchair, "but I have come on business." Mrs. Walker sat also and folded her hands on the lap of her black dress, with her usual grim smile. "Of course, I knew that you would not waste your valuable time in coming for nothing. But what business you can have with me I fail to see. We were never good friends, and you positively hated Kate because she was prettier than you."

"She never was," said Lady Charvington hotly, and glanced in the silver-framed hand mirror, which stood on the table at her elbow. "Kate had not my complexion, nor my hair."

"Nor your nasty temper," snapped Mrs. Walker, who felt extremely nasty herself; "but I don't know why we should talk of good looks at our age."

"I am not old, Judith. You are older than I am."

"Quite so, and I wear ever so much better. You look twice your age."

Lady Charvington made a face. "You were always a disagreeable girl," she pointed, "I dare say I am growing younger, but you never told me so. As to my looks, if you were as worried as I am you would not look your best, either. So I—who is that?" she inquired, as George, ignorant that his mother had a visitor, tapped at the French window of the drawing-room.

"My son George," said Mrs. Walker, rising to admit him.

"Oh!" cried Lady Charvington, vivaciously. "Lesbia's George?"

"My son, Lady Charvington," said Mrs. Walker, introducing the pair.

"George, this is an old friend of mine," Lady Charvington looked at the splendidly handsome young man, and secretly envied her hostess. Neither of her children were so good-looking, and moreover, what she always regretted, she had provided no heir to the title.

"So you are Lesbia's George," she said again, offering her hand, but putting up her forefinger. "Well, the girl has taste."

George colored under her impertinent gaze, and at the sudden mention of Lesbia, he no more expected Lady Charvington to mention the girl than he had expected she would arrive on the very day when her name had first been mentioned in the cottage—that is, her husband's name. "What do you know of Lesbia, Lady Charvington?" he asked, taking a chair.

said Mrs. Walker grimly, "and now you say that two thieves—"

"Lesbia was in league with them," George sprang to his feet. "That's wholly false, Lady Charvington. That is—"

"I am never mistaken," said the visitor in icy tones. "Your son has not very good manners, Judith."

"They are my manner," said Mrs. Walker, decidedly, "and they are my fault with them. He has only said what I intended to say, only more politely."

"Before Lady Charvington could snap out a reply, George, now very pale, intervened. "Perhaps, madam, you will explain upon what grounds you base this charge against Miss Hale."

"Oh, certainly," rejoined Lady Charvington sharply, "the whole world might know what I have to say, and the whole world would," she added, spitefully, "only my husband, who seems to have taken a fancy to this girl, has hushed up the matter."

"He has more sense than you have," muttered Mrs. Walker, badly as he treated—she checked herself with a side glance at George, "but that is neither here nor there. Go on, Helen, and explain."

Lady Charvington, in order to make George wince—for she saw that he loved Lesbia deeply, and resented the fact—was only too ready to give details of the robbery at the Court with all the venom of which her very bitter tongue was capable. She related everything that had happened from the hour of Lesbia's arrival, to the moment of her departure. "And in disgrace," ended the lady exultingly, "certainly, private disgrace, since for some silly reason Lord Charvington made me hold my tongue, but disgrace, nevertheless. Now what do you think?"

"Think," George, standing with a white face and clenched hands, took the words out of his mother's mouth. "I think that you are a very wicked woman, Lady Charvington, Lesbia is as innocent as a dove."

"I know nothing of the morals of thieves," retorted Lady Charvington, "but you seem to forget that I stated how this girl's father was one of the thieves. Who the other one was I cannot say, but Lesbia certainly recognized her father. Bertha, my maid, heard her exclamation, while she was lying half-stunned on the bed."

"I am not astonished," said Mrs. Walker bitterly. "Walter Hale is capable of all things, although I did not know that he would descend quite so low. I never liked him as you did, Helen."

"Leave the past alone," said Lady Charvington, with an angry gesture, "but you can see that this Lesbia creature was her father's accomplice."

"Speak more respectfully of Lesbia, if you please," said George, in a cold, white fury. "She is perfectly innocent and knew no more of her father's wickedness than—"

"Than you did, I suppose."

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"I do not, but he wrote to me, and I am to see him."

"Ah," drawled Lady Charvington, coolly, "perhaps knowing that you long for this wretched girl my husband intends to arrange that you shall marry her, and take her out of the country."

The young man restrained his anger by a violent effort. "Perhaps you are correct, madam," he said in a thick voice and breathing hard, "but I shall also ask Lord Charvington how the cross came to be in his possession."

"No!" Lady Charvington shrieked, and seemed much perturbed. "You must not do that."

"Madam," said George in a stately manner, and following up his advantage, "I am the owner of that cross, which was given to me by Miss Hale. I was assaulted on the towing path so that I might be robbed of it. As the thief did not find it on my person, he must have taken it from her. I have every right to ask Lord Charvington how he became possessed of it."

The visitor rose with rather a pale face, but quite composed, and shook perfume from her costly drapery, as she gathered up her belongings to depart. "Things are bad for Lesbia Hale as it is," she said composedly. "I advise you to ask no questions of my husband, or he may withdraw his protection from her. If he does, she is disgraced publicly."

"I don't believe it," said Mrs. Walker, crossing to the window and opening it. "You can leave my cottage by this way, Helen, and the sooner the better."

Lady Charvington swept towards the French window with a cold laugh, obviously forced. "I am only too willing to go," she declared. "I only came over to ask you to question Lesbia Hale as to what she has done with my amethyst cross."

"Miss, pardon me," said George firmly, and held the window open, "and you may be sure that I shall marry Lesbia, and protect Lesbia even against you who seem to hate her, heaven only knows why."

"Your mother knows," sneered Lady Charvington, "well, do what you like, only remember that I have warned you, and with these ominous words she took her welcome departure."

"What is next to be done?" asked Mrs. Walker, when the motor hummed away.

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December," are timely topics well treated; besides which there is a great variety of choice reading matter. The Travel Magazine is always well worth reading.

The Christmas number of Rod and Gun, published in Woodstock, Ont., by W. J. Taylor, has a well-written account (illustrated) of the recent trip in the woods taken by the Premier and surveyor-general of New Brunswick at the invitation of the organization of the "Importance of Taxidermy" will be found interesting by sportsmen generally, as will also the first of a series of articles on "Physical Culture at Home."

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A cablegram from Wellington, Australia, states that the prohibition vote in New Zealand has been largely increased. Prohibition has been carried in nine electorates and reduction facilities in five others. The prohibition party estimate that 150 public houses will be closed and a number of wholesale licenses cancelled.

Many people may have overlooked the fact that Ruskin loved the game of chess. Some of his letters reveal this interest. He was at one time a constant visitor to Maskelyne & Cooke's entertainment, where he once played a game with "Psycho."

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## Puzzle Sum

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WHAT ANIMAL DOES THIS SPELL?

**SOLUTION TO HORSE RACE PUZZLE PUBLISHED TUESDAY.**  
Three horses can finish in a race in thirteen different ways, as follows:  
A, B, C; A, C, B; B, A, C; B, C, A; C, A, B; C, B, A; A, in a dead heat; or A, B, A, C, or B, C, A, in a dead heat for the first place. Then, again, A first, with B, C in dead heat for second; or B first, with A, C second, or C first, with A, B second.