

## THE AMETHYST CROSS

By Fergus Hume

Not that the evening was dull. On the contrary, as the mansion was filled with lively, well-bred people, it was quite a revelation to Lesbia in the way of enjoyment. Everyone seemed to be happy, and untroubled with care, which contrasted strongly with the incessant worry which went on within the four walls of Rose Cottage. These society people—outwardly, at all events—seemed as careless gods, happy, merry and gloriously irresponsible. Later in life Lesbia learned that sadness lurked under this frivolous, laughing exterior, but at this time she was quite deceived, and thought to herself, "How happy are the rich and high-placed!"

Lady Charvington's two daughters—not yet old enough to be presented—were very nice girls, although they were decidedly plain-looking. But they appeared to have none of their mother's jealousy regarding Lesbia's beauty, and made much of her. She found herself laughing and talking and entering into their girlish lives, quite as if she had known them for many years. Lord Charvington seemed particularly pleased that this should be so, and presided over the trio like a benevolent wizard. For the most part, Lesbia was with the two girls during her visit, in spite of the attentions paid to her by

sundry youths attracted by her beauty. Seeing this, Lady Charvington became much more gracious, and inwardly decided that Lesbia Hale knew her place at the way in which Charvington hovered round the pretty visitor. Not that she cared over-much for her husband, who was older than she was, nevertheless, she did not like to see him paying marked attentions to anyone else.

On the first evening there was a small dance after a very splendid dinner. Lesbia, in her simple white dress, attracted much attention, but preferred to talk to Agatha and Lena Hale, and to laugh at their father's mild wit-ticisms. During a lull in the dance there was some singing, and towards the end of the evening an excellent supper. Lesbia retired with her new girl friends to bed at midnight, and while yet the festivities were in full swing, she was at Lord Charvington's express wish, he did not approve of youth losing necessary beauty sleep. When she laid her head on the pillow and was falling asleep, Lesbia confessed that she had enjoyed herself very much. If George had only been present the evening would have been perfect.

Next morning Agatha and Lena woke her early and took her round the grounds. The girls exchanged confidences—chiefly about school life—ran races on the dewy sward, and entered into the joy of life to eat a surprisingly good breakfast. Lady Charvington was rather disgusted at Lesbia's appetite. So pretty a girl, she decided, should eat less and talk less. But Lesbia, although a fairy in looks, could not live on fairy food, and enjoyed to the full the very excellent food provided by the very excellent chef of her host.

"Horrid, gross, did not like it," thought Lady Charvington, who was all smiles and attention, "I am sure I shan't like her!"—quite a needless thought, as she already heartily disliked her visitor for other reasons than because she was pretty. But these reasons Lesbia did not learn for some months. Then they did not matter, as life had changed by that time for the better.

After breakfast Lord Charvington carried off his pretty little guest to a noble room lined with books, and placing her in a most comfortable arm-chair, took his own seat at his desk. "Now, my child, what is it?" he asked. "It is rather difficult to begin," faltered Lesbia, feeling if she had the fatal letter in her pocket. "Not with me, my dear. You know that you can trust me implicitly."

"Yes," said Lesbia, raising her clear eyes to the kind face. "Well, then, shall I begin from the time I gave George the amethyst cross?"

"What?" Charvington's ruddy face grew pale, and he pushed back his chair with considerable violence. "The amethyst cross?"

"Do you know anything about it?" asked Lesbia, astonished at his change of color and evident emotion. "It is lost, you know—stolen."

"Who stole it?" demanded the man, mastering himself with an apparent effort.

"Listen," said Lesbia, and related everything from the time George Walker had proposed to the moment of Lady Charvington's arrival at Rose Cottage. But for the moment she said nothing of the letter she had heard that Charvington had to say to the first part of her story. And it may be mentioned that Lesbia spared her father as much as possible, while explaining her difficulties.

"After that first violent movement, Charvington listened in iron silence, and his color slowly returned. With his eyes averted, he heard the whole extraordinary tale, without interruption, and only when it was concluded did he speak. Then he gave but small comfort. I can understand what it all means," he said slowly. "I shall see Hale, and doubtless he will be able to explain matters. But have no fear, child; if you love George Walker, you shall marry him. I know Mrs. Walker, and I knew her husband. A wild fellow was Algernon Walker, but not without his good points."

"And you won't let my father have me watched again?" asked Lesbia, anxiously.

"Certainly not," cried Charvington, fiercely. "If I had known that I would have—well, your father owes me too much to disregard my wishes, and that he leaves you your full liberty and that he consents to your marriage with George. I hope he is worthy of you, my dear—George, I mean," he added, wistfully.

"Oh, yes. He's the dearest, sweetest, best."

"There, there!" Charvington smiled a trifle dryly. "I can see that your heart is set upon being Mrs. Walker. Very good. I shall see that George has an opportunity of earning money, so that you can marry him."

"And the cross?"

"Never mind the cross just now," said Charvington, hastily. "I shall have to see your father about that. Later on we can talk on the subject. But this Tait, he drummed anxiously with his fingers on the table. 'I knew Tait many years ago. He always was a scoundrel, although I did not think he would go so far as to join himself with professional thieves—'

"Oh!" Lesbia drew the letter of Canning from her pocket. "I forgot. Read this, Lord Charvington. It's a warning—only don't tell the police."

Her host mounted his pince-nez and read the missive in surprise. His face grew darkly red, and he muttered a word which Lesbia luckily did not overhear. Then he folded the letter and placed it in his pocket without remark.

"You won't tell the police," said Lesbia again and still anxiously.

"No," said Charvington rising, "from what Canning found out before, I believe Tait is in this business also. I don't want to make a scandal for several reasons connected with the man, although he deserves to be jailed for life. Still I shall take precautions by having the house watched. Also I must get my wife to put away her jewel-casket in the safe. She is very

careless about her jewels, and leaves the casket in her bedroom, sometimes in a drawer or wardrobe, but more often open on the dressing-table. The maid should put it away, of course, but she's a half-blind old creature who was my wife's nurse, and neglects things. But today is Wednesday and the burglary is arranged for tomorrow, evening when we dine. I shall see that my wife puts away her jewels tomorrow evening. I shall go to her room and see that they are safe before I go to dinner."

"But why not today also?" asked Lesbia, anxiously.

"The burglary is not until tomorrow evening, my child," said Charvington kindly. "They are safe until then, as they have been safe for years, in spite of my wife's gross carelessness and trust in her neglectful old nurse. No, my dear, you have given me a needed warning, so it is no use bothering your head further. Tomorrow I shall make all safe. When these two thieves find that the house is guarded they will not attempt the robbery."

"Will you warn Lady Charvington?"

"What, and have her fall into hysterics? No, I shall merely see that the jewels are locked up nightly after tomorrow, and have the house watched for a week or so. My wife need know nothing, my dear."

"I shall keep my own counsel," said Lesbia, rising to leave the room, "but I do wish you would have the jewels put away tonight, Lord Charvington."

"Well," he smiled again, "perhaps, as you are so anxious, I shall. But, as we know the time and date of the projected burglary, there is no need."

Lesbia went away, comforted to think that Charvington now knew all her troubles, and would help her when it was necessary. Doubtless he would procure George a good situation, and then she could marry her lover. But the emotion of Charvington, when the amethyst cross was mentioned, puzzled Lesbia greatly, and she appeared to be no reason for the same. However, she comforted herself with the reflection that—as he had promised—she would explain everything when the appointed time arrived, and went to her room for the night with a light heart. The enjoyment took the form of a picnic and a run down the river on Lord Charvington's steam launch.

When the two girls were out of the way, Charvington sought his wife and pointed out to her the folly of leaving jewels filled with jewels on her dressing-table. "They might be stolen, these jewels," he remonstrated.

Lady Charvington was not at all grateful. "You are always making a fuss over the jewels," she said impatiently. "I have left the case in my bedroom for years and I have never lost a single thing."

"That doesn't say you might not lose the lot," snapped Charvington, who found his wife trying even to his kindly nature.

"There's time enough to talk when I do lose them."

"Then it will be too late. I ask you to put them away every night in the strong-room. Berta can take the case there, when she has dressed you for dinner."

"Very well," said Lady Charvington, who was impatient to return to a very interesting book she was reading. "Till better, though I assure you the case is in my bedroom, she can look after it well enough."

"Fool! She's half-blind. Why don't you get a better maid?"

"Berta's been with me all my life and I shall keep her as long as I can. You have no heart, Charvington," she ended virtuously.

"She's past work now," said her husband, and walked from the boudoir.

Nothing more was said, but had Charvington been in the house on that Wednesday evening he would either have asked his wife if the jewels had been put away, or have attended to the matter himself. But during the day he suddenly decided to go up to London in order to see a private detective whom he had employed before on various delicate matters. It would be just as well, thought Charvington, to have this man in the house on Thursday evening. Then if the two thieves alluded to by Canning did arrive the man could lay his hands on them. Not that Charvington wished to make a public case of the matter, as for private reasons he was anxious to avoid scandal in connection with Tait, whom he shrewdly suspected of having a hand in this new piece of fiasco. For this reason he went up to London to engage his private detective, and remained there for the night. Next day he purposed coming back, and then the burglar could be settled quietly. Lady Charvington would not lose her jewels, and there would be no trouble—publicly, at all events—in connection with Mr. Michael Tait.

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To Be Continued.

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## PARIS MURDER MYSTERY

Madame Steinhilf Says Young Servant Slew Her Husband.

Paris, Nov. 26.—Madame Steinhilf, who last night confessed that she knew the murderer of her husband, and mother, drove to police headquarters at daylight today, awakened Chief Detective Hallard, and repeated to him the statement made previously to two newspapermen. She accused Alexandre Wolff, who is the son of a woman who is employed as cook in the Steinhilf household. Wolff, together with his mother, was at once arrested. Madame Steinhilf was accompanied to police headquarters by her daughter, Adolphe Steinhilf, her husband, and Madame Japy, her mother, were found strangled to death in their home in this city last May. The crime has been steeped in mystery, which the police of Paris seemed disinclined to clear up.

The statement of Madame Steinhilf has created a tremendous sensation in Paris, and it is said that it will be followed by still more sensational disclosures, which will throw light upon the reasons why the police have not solved the mystery. It may even entail a widespread national scandal.

Ever since the night of the crime Madame Steinhilf has been suspected of knowing who did the deed. Her first breakdown last night in the presence of the two newspapermen was exceedingly dramatic. It followed her collapse when she realized that the net in which she had entangled herself in her efforts to divert suspicion elsewhere was fast closing about her. She had been confronted with the damning evidence of the jeweller who, after the crime had been ordered to dismount the stones in the jewelry alleged to have been stolen from the Steinhilf residence, and melt down the gold mountings, and she lost her nerve.

She first admitted that she had placed a pearl in the pocketbook of the man named Couillard, with the idea of diverting suspicion to him, after which she broke down completely, and, between cries of anguish, sobbed out her confession.

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Male servants in the Argentine capital get 66 cents to \$2.20 a day and female help 40 cents to \$1.10.

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## TRAVELLERS' GUIDE

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY.

SARNIA TUNNEL TO SUSPENSION BRIDGE AND TORONTO.

Arrive from the east—\*3:40 a.m., 10:56 a.m., \*11:12 a.m., \*11:23 a.m., \*6:30 p.m., \*8:00 p.m., 10:10 p.m.  
Arrive from the west—\*12:09 a.m., \*3:35 a.m., \*11:28 a.m., 1:10 p.m., \*4:10 p.m., 6:25 p.m.  
Depart for the east—\*12:14 a.m., \*3:40 a.m., 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., \*11:38 a.m., 2:05 p.m., \*4:25 p.m., \*6:53 p.m. (Eastern Flyer)  
The trains leaving at 7:30 a.m. and 2:05 p.m. stop at all stations.  
Depart for the west—\*3:50 a.m., 7:40 a.m., \*11:18 a.m., \*11:35 a.m., 1:40 p.m., \*3:18 p.m.  
The 7:40 a.m. and the 1:40 p.m. trains stop at all stations.

LONDON AND WINDSOR.  
Arrive—10:25 a.m., 4 p.m., \*6:50 p.m. (Eastern Flyer), 11 p.m.  
Depart—6:25 a.m., \*11:27 a.m., 2:20 p.m., \*8:10 p.m. (International Limited).

STRATFORD BRANCH.  
Arrive—\*3:25 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 1:32 p.m., 6:45 p.m., 11:25 p.m.  
Depart—6:00 a.m., 10:26 a.m., 2:45 p.m., 4:55 p.m.

LONDON, HURON AND BRUCE  
Arrive—10:10 a.m., 6:10 p.m.  
Depart—8:30 a.m., \*4:50 p.m.  
Trains marked thus \* run daily. Those not so marked run daily except Sunday.

PERE MARQUETTE RAILWAY.  
Depart—5:40 a.m., \*7:10 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 2:30 p.m., \*3:40 p.m.  
Arrive—8:45 a.m., \*12:20 p.m., 1:50 p.m., 4:40 p.m., \*9:20 p.m.

To and from Walkerville without charge. Trains not \*starred\* do not stop at Walkerville.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.  
Arrive—From the east \*11:30 a.m., 8 p.m., \*10:52 p.m. From the west—\*4:20 a.m., \*8:35 a.m., \*5:30 p.m.  
Depart—For the east—\*4:40 a.m., 8:45 a.m., \*5:28 p.m. For the west—\*11:38 a.m., \*8:50 p.m., \*11:00 p.m.  
Trains marked thus \* run daily. Those not so marked run daily except Sunday.

MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILWAY.  
Arrive—6:55 a.m., 11:10 a.m., 5:10 p.m., 9:50 p.m.  
Depart—7:15 a.m., 2:20 p.m., 5:35 p.m., \*10:25 p.m.  
\*Runs through to Waterford.

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New York—Queenstown—Liverpool.  
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New York and Boston—Mediteranean.

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E. DE LA HOOKE, SOL. AGENT.

**AMERICAN LINE.**  
N. Y.—Plymouth—Queenstown—Shannon.  
Philadelphia—Queenstown—Liverpool.  
Atlantic Transport Line.  
New York—London Direct.

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TO MANITOBA, SASKATCHEWAN AND ALBERTA—The attractive route is via Chicago and St. Paul, Minneapolis or Duluth.  
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The Wabash has now on sale round trip winter tourist tickets at very low rates, from all stations, to points in the south and southwest, including Texas, Old Mexico and California. Tickets are good going and returning via all direct routes, with stopover privileges.  
See your nearest ticket agent for tickets, time tables and other information, or address J. A. RICHARDSON, district passenger agent, No. 63 Yonge Street (Traders' Bank Building), Toronto, Ont. St. Thomas, Ont.

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**The Wolverine to and From New York and Eastern Points**

Leave London 5:35 p.m., arrive New York 9:03 a.m. Grand Central station. New York 4:30 p.m., arrive London 6:55 a.m. Most modern equipment, dining-car service, library-smoking cars, through sleeping-cars, at city office, leave Toronto 10:30 p.m., arrive London 6:55 a.m. Full information, at and from St. Thomas, S. H. PALMER, D.P.A., St. Thomas, O. W. RUGGLES, G.P.A., Chicago.

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