

AMETHYST JONES GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS AMOURS

By Frederic P. Ladd.

A Thrilling Story of His Varied Experiences In New York.

WHEN a man reaches the versatile and accomplished age of 27," said Amethyst Jones, picking a long hair from his coat, "he is likely to think that he knows all about love. But he may yet be taught. I was 27 when I first knew Lucie De Lorme. Lucie was a French governess. The business of a governess is to teach. The French possess a particularly facile mode in teaching, as in all other fine arts. From the first moment I knew that Lucie was a superb governess. Her looks, and her manner, were all in her favor.

"We were each of us more or less alone in New York. New York is a city in which one may readily feel the pangs of loneliness. Lucie and I resided in contiguous apartments. I was a bachelor and she was a bachelor belle. I shall never forget the occasion of our first meeting. She stood in helpless dismay vainly trying to open the door of her apartment. The key was so bent that it resisted all efforts to open the door.

"Lucie's pretty blue eyes—she was of the most exquisite French blonde type—were filled with tears. She drew her lissome figure to its full height, and stamped the daintiest foot which the gods ever made, and lifted her face in appeal to me. The heart of Amethyst Jones was touched. I opened that door for her inside of one hour.

"The early stages of the acquaintance thus begun were marked by a friendliness on the part of Lucie so fine that I must have responded had I been far, far more prosaic than I have ever been in my present incarnation. Lucie used frequently to ask me in to join her in a cup of tea, with lemon in it. One day Lucie fell ill.

I believe it was an attack of grip. When Lucie sneezed, my own eyes wept! Ah, she was so young, so fair, so far from home!

"I obtained proper nursing and medical attendance, and she was soon well. Her gratitude to Amethyst Jones, I may remark, was profound. She sat one day, I remember, in a dove-colored teagown and looked into my eyes, and offered to instruct me in French literature. 'Hang the literature!' said I; 'teach me the language!' And she did! Never before had I learned so much of the beauties of the French language as I learned in those

golden hours with Lucie De Lorme. She was well born, and spoke only the purest Parisian French. Parisian French is magnificent.

"Lucie manifested a tender interest in my lonely bachelor condition which deeply affected me. She had a charming way of picking a stray thread or fleck of dust from my coat lapel when she saw one there. One day she discovered a fine, long, dark hair upon my coat sleeve. Never shall I forget her chagrin. She removed it, held it to the light, and looked sorrowfully into my eyes. 'Lucie,' said I, 'mille pardong—I sat next to a lady in the elevated train—Believe me—I will never do it encore!' "

"Can you believe me when I say that from that hour Lucie gave her heart to me? She gave it unreservedly—I have never known a love less Reserved. There is, Gentlemen, a slight strain of Gallic blood in me, and I was able to understand and appreciate the truly noble frankness of Lucie De Lorme with all my soul. Every time I thought of my dear dead ancestors in faraway Normandy my heart throbbed for Lucie.

"It will be possible for you to understand that with Lucie's duties as day governess, there were positively hours at a time when I could not see her. But aside from these hellish periods of separation, New York was no longer a lonely city. When I consider the wonderful hours I salled for France, and Paris. Though I spent with Lucie, when I recall, over and over again, the rare and unalloyed beauty

of our courtship, when I remember her sweetness and gentleness and charm, and when I dream, and see in fancy her glorious eyes looking into mine—I know that the Life of Amethyst Jones has not been wholly in vain—"

"In vain?" we asked.

"Every man's past must be to himself an open book," continued Amethyst Jones; "and every man's future may hold some glad surprise!"

"But—Lucie?" we queried.

"That glorious Spring of twenty-one years ago, Lucie and I expected to be married the coming Fall. In July, Lucie

shall live to be many thousands of years old, in experience and memories, I may not forget the Fondness of that Farewell. It is, and must ever be, the most noteworthy in a life of many tender farewells. We began saying good-bye days before Lucie went on shipboard. Those last evenings together were models of what evenings should be, when one is to part from one whom one loves.

"There was no evasion on the part of Lucie. She admitted that when the ocean between us rolled her heart would be broken. Tears unrestrainedly ran down her cheeks. Her arms held me so fast that the inmost yearnings of my own heart found expression so eloquently that—I confess it—my own tears were mingled with those of Lucie. When, finally, the hour of parting was come—then it was that the beautiful sweetness of Lucie's nature, and the ardor of her deathless affection for Amethyst Jones, were most wonderfully evidenced. Such a passion of devotion and regret as she bestowed upon me—Ah, I cannot tell you. You have not known Lucie.

"Though the years have fled I still can see the figure of Lucie as she stood upon the deck of the heartless ship that was to bear her away. As the great craft moved Lucie threw me a thousand kisses. And then—disappeared. I knew she had gone to her stateroom to weep."

Amethyst Jones mused a while. His face looked a little like that of a Madonna.

"Do you know," he said at last; "do you know, in regard to that farewell which was so impressive, I have sometimes thought that Lucie more than half suspected she might be detained in France longer than our fond hearts could have wished? You see, her return to New York has been delayed, thus far."