AMETHYST JONES GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS AMOURS

By Frederic P. Ladd.

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 mistaken. I shall tell you—first—of a woman who first knew Lucile De Lorme. Lucile was a French governess. The business of a French governess is to teach. The Frenchwoman possesses a particularly facile mode in teaching, as in all other fine arts. From the first moment I knew that Lucile was super-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—Lucile 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 small that it resisted all efforts to open the door.

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

"The early stages of the acquaintance thus begun were marked by a friendship. Lucile took part of Lucile so fine that the guests that had been far, far more prosaic than I have ever been in my present incarnation. Lucile used frequently to ask me to join her in a cup of tea. One day Lucile fell ill—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—"

"Is that all?" 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—Lucile!" we queried.

"That glorious Spring of twenty-one years ago, Lucile and I expected to be married the coming Fall. In July, Lucile 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 worthy in a life of many tender farewells.

We began saying good-bye days before we sailed for the shipboard. One last evening together was models of what evenings should be, when one is to part our hearts. Our own tears, broken, unrestrainedly ran down her cheeks. Her arms held me so fast that the innocent young life of an own heart found expression so eloquently that I confess it—my own tears were mingled with those of Lucile. When, finally, the hour of parting was come—then it was that the beautiful sweetness of the tenderest and the adorable of that 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 Lucile.

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

Amethyst Jones missed a while. His face looked a little like that of a madonna."

"As I knew," he said at last; "do you know, in regard to eyes looking into mine which was so impressive, I have sometimes thought that Lucile more than half suspected she might be detained in France longer than our fond hearts could bear. You see, her return to New York has been delayed, thus far."

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