

# **THE AMETHYST BOX**

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The amethyst box by Anna Katharine Green

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**ANNA KATHARINE GREEN**

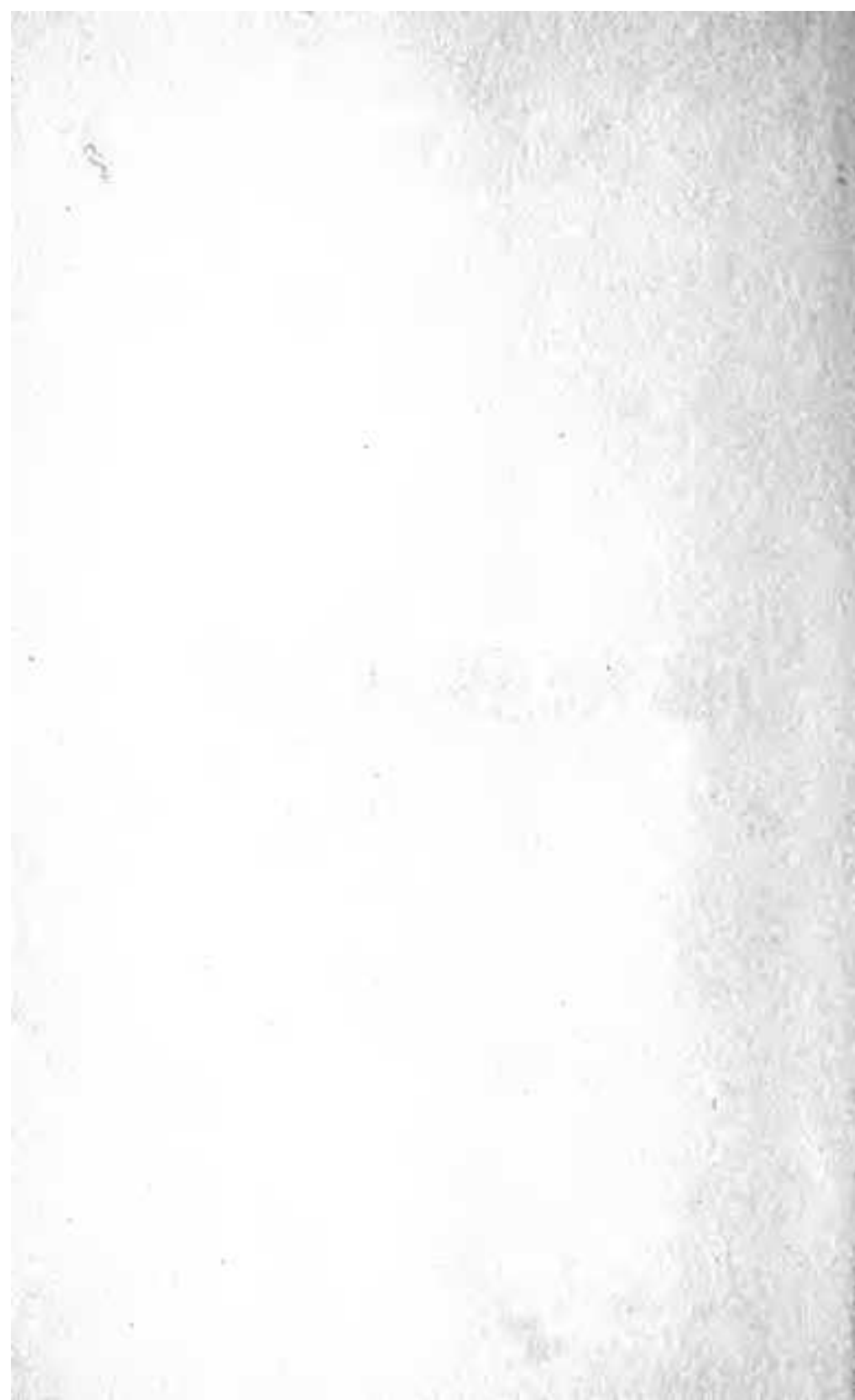
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*By*

ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

Author of  
The Millionaire Baby  
The House in the Mist  
The Filigree Ball, etc., etc.

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## THE AMETHYST BOX

### I

#### THE FLASK WHICH HELD BUT A DROP

It was the night before the wedding. Though Sinclair, and not myself, was the happy man, I had my own causes for excitement, and, finding the heat of the billiard-room insupportable, I sought the veranda for a solitary smoke in sight of the ocean and a full moon.

I was in a condition of rapturous, if unreasoning, delight. That afternoon a little hand had lingered in mine for just an instant longer than the circumstances of the moment strictly required, and small as the favor may seem to those who do not know Dorothy Camerden, to me, who realized fully both her delicacy and pride, it was a sign that my long,

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if secret, devotion was about to be rewarded and that at last I was free to cherish hopes whose alternative had once bid fair to wreck the happiness of my life.

I was reveling in the felicity of these anticipations and contrasting this hour of ardent hope with others of whose dissatisfaction and gloom I was yet mindful, when a sudden shadow fell across the broad band of light issuing from the library window, and Sinclair stepped out.

He had the appearance of being disturbed; very much disturbed, I thought, for a man on the point of marrying the woman for whom he professed to entertain the one profound passion of his life; but remembering his frequent causes of annoyance — causes quite apart from his bride and her personal attributes — I kept on placidly smoking till I felt his hand on my shoulder and turned to see that the moment was a serious one.

“I have something to say to you,” he whispered. “Come where we shall run less risk of being disturbed.”

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“What’s wrong?” I asked, facing him with curiosity, if not with alarm. “I never saw you look like this before. Has the old lady taken this last minute to —”

“Hush!” he prayed, emphasizing the word with a curt gesture not to be mistaken. “The little room over the west porch is empty just now. Follow me there.”

With a sigh for the cigar I had so lately lighted I tossed it into the bushes and sauntered in after him. I thought I understood his trouble. The prospective bride was young — a mere slip of a girl, indeed — bright, beautiful and proud, yet with odd little restraints in her manner and language, due probably to her peculiar bringing up and the surprise, not yet overcome, of finding herself, after an isolated, if not despised, childhood, the idol of society and the recipient of general homage. The fault was not with her. But she had for guardian (alas! my dear girl had the same) an aunt who was a gorgon. This aunt must have been making herself disagreeable to the prospective bridegroom, and