



THE GRAVEYARD OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH—THE SCENE OF THE STORY.

By W. B. NORTHROP.

*Illustrated by H. H. Flère and by Photographs.*

**I**N the winter of 18— I acted as secretary to a distinguished London physician who had charge of one of the largest wards of St. Bartholomew's Hospital. In order to be near the scene of my occupations, I selected two rooms in a house situated in the very unprepossessing street known as Cloth Fair. This little street runs just north of the ancient church of St. Bartholomew the Great, and is very narrow and dingy.

A large window in my back room directly overlooked the graveyard belonging to St. Bartholomew's church, and I cannot say that the prospect of the multitudinous array of headstones, each leaning at a different angle, or that of the bare, leafless plane trees, locked, as if for support, in each other's branches, added greatly to the cheerfulness of the surroundings.

I had been in these quarters for about three weeks when I began to study very hard for an examination which I was most anxious to pass. As the final days for taking the "exam." drew near, I became much worried over the possible result. From anxiety and over-study, my intellect at times grew exhausted, and my memory became each day more and more unretentive. In consequence, I resorted to the taking of strychnia to keep me

awake, and to brighten my faculties. I at last "passed," but the strain left me in such a depleted condition that my health seemed about to break down. After the dosing I had indulged in, of course, came the reaction, and I began to suffer from most dreadful insomnia.

Night after night I lay awake in my room, watching the boughs of the trees in the dreary necropolis outside wave back and forth against the darkened sky. At length, morphine in small quantities, and then in large doses, became my crying need.

One night, when I had taken a large quantity of the opiate and retired (the hour, I think, approached midnight), my attention was attracted by what sounded to me like a conversation carried on in low tones immediately beneath the window overlooking the cemetery. I arose, stepped softly to my window, and looked out. I could see no one. The voices seemed to emanate from people very close to the wall of the house. In order to see who the speakers were it would be necessary to raise the sash of the window, which was down; and this sash being very old and not supported by cords, I had to procure something with which to prize it up.

As I stepped back into the room with a view to procuring some implement with which to open the window, I glanced into the front room, the folding doors being open; and, as I did so, it seemed to me I saw a tall woman walk past the window overlooking Cloth Fair. A light from one of the street lamps brightened the apartment, and her form was perfectly distinct.

is an element of doubt, I make it a rule to immediately investigate, by a close scrutiny of the suspicious object, in order to satisfy my misgivings. Without hesitation, therefore, I advanced through the folding doors into the adjoining room.

Just as I stepped across the threshold, I plainly saw a woman, with a scarf of light material thrown over her head

and shoulders, pass through the door leading out upon the landing. When I say she passed *through* the door, I mean literally through, for the door was locked and bolted.

I was shocked beyond measure. I managed to find a match, and with trembling hands succeeded in lighting my lamp. It is needless to say I kept the light burning brightly until daylight had well set in, employing myself in reading the while. As soon as I had breakfasted, I sent a telegram inviting one of my college chums to come down at once and spend a few nights with me. I had a haunting notion that I was about to be taken very ill, and I wished to have someone with me. I knew that he would come, as he had but a few days previously written me from Hull stating he intended coming to London, and asking if I could "put him up." He

only awaited my message in order to start.

I did not desire the presence of this friend for the sake of mere companionship. I knew him to be a confirmed "spiritist," as he called it. He was for ever experimenting with slate-writing, crystal-gazing, or something of the kind, and I felt that if there were any significance in the apparition



"AS I GLANCED INTO THE FRONT ROOM I SAW A TALL WOMAN WALK PAST THE WINDOW OVERLOOKING CLOTH FAIR."

As may be well imagined, I was greatly surprised at seeing someone in the next room, for I was positive of having locked my door. Besides, the lateness of the hour, and the fact that the intruder was a woman, and alone, made the presence of the stranger extraordinary. However, I am very near-sighted; and whenever I see anything, or imagine I see anything, about which there

which had honoured me with a visit, my friend would be the most likely person to sound the depth of the mystery.

When Banks arrived, I explained to him the nature of the experience through which I had passed. He looked, with scrutiny, at the pupils of my eyes, and then said: "Of course, you have been overtaxing your brain. Besides," he added, shaking his finger at me reprovingly, "you have been dosing yourself with morphine?"

I had to admit his accusation, and he immediately set about explaining to me that my "spook," as he was pleased to call it, was merely an hallucination, due partly to the overwrought condition of my nerves, but mainly to the influence of the drug.

Banks had come on Tuesday night. On the following Friday, shortly after midnight (my colleague had gone to the theatre, and, having probably stopped for supper somewhere, was late in coming home), I was sitting in the front room, when I again heard the low mutterings of voices under the window of the rear apartment. As I had, at an early hour of the evening, opened the window overlooking the graveyard—for the purpose of allowing the fumes of some nitrous oxide gas, with which I had been experimenting, to escape—the sash, on this occasion, was raised partly. So, as quietly as I could, I stepped into the back room, and peered out upon the graveyard.

It was a bright moonlight night, and objects could be plainly seen. I could distinctly hear the voices immediately beneath my window; but, look as closely as I would, I could see no one.

I called out, sharply, "Who's there?" The voices ceased instantly. At the same moment I felt a breath of cold air pass over my face, neck, and shoulders, as if an ice-chest had been opened in front of me.

The feeling sickened me somewhat, and I turned from the window back into the room. As I did so a fold of the drapery about the window fell against my arm. Looking suddenly to one side, as if drawn by some extraneous influence, I came face to face with a tall ethereal-looking woman, clad in some brocade material. Her head was covered with a thin scarf, one corner of which was torn away. Her eyes were closed as in sleep; or, rather—death!

She did not appear to notice me, but passed right through the curtain and the wall out into the graveyard. I had hardly recovered from my amazement, when I heard a heavy footstep downstairs. The next instant, the door of my front room quickly opened; and, in the over-excitement of intense expectation, I fell prone at the feet of—Banks!

He had come at so inopportune a moment that I anticipated seeing—I know not what.

"Hello! At it again!" he exclaimed. "Now, look here! This is all nonsense. If there are any spirits about here, why in thunder do they wait till I am gone out—"

He had not finished the sentence before there broke upon our ears a low, stifled cry, coming from beneath the window; and, as Banks stopped to listen, I saw the woman with the torn scarf over her head appear again close to the drapery. She

was more  
filmy in  
outline  
this time  
than



"I CALLED OUT, SHARPLY, 'WHO'S THERE?'"

she had been at first. I pointed to her. Banks looked, but could see nothing. He stepped to the window. As he did so, he passed, without knowing it, directly through the filmy form. I saw this, but stood as if

paralysed—unable to speak or move a muscle.

Banks looked out of the window as I had done, but could see no one.

Stepping quickly into the next room, he procured a slate from my table, and, placing a pencil in my hand, bade me sit quietly without attempting to write anything. He also took from my mantelshelf a crystal half-sphere, and directed me to hold it steadily in my left hand, next to the slate.

"Look into the crystal and describe what you see," he said, stepping back, as if not to inter-

make a tracing of the figure on the slate resting upon my knee, while I held the pencil in my right hand. Somehow my hand began to move across the slate, as if some strange power were impelling me to write.

"Observe carefully," said Banks, "and tell me all you see."

I gazed into the crystal: Presently I saw, creeping along the edge of a forest which skirted the green field in which the woman was walking, a huge gorilla. He carried a stout club in the right hand, and was watching the woman intently. I told Banks what I saw.

"Draw it, man; draw it," he said, excitedly, as if he were already acquainted with the series of events transpiring in the crystal.

I continued looking into the half-sphere. Another

figure came upon the scene. A tall, well-dressed man entered the lower edge of the crystal, so to speak.

He seemed to be about a quarter of a mile away from the girl—at least, from the scale of the figures, I would say this was about

his distance from her.

She was walking toward him, but a cluster of trees intervened between them,

and she evidently could not see him. Behind her crept the fierce gorilla, with a hideous grin upon his countenance. He seemed to be watching for an opportunity to spring upon her from the woods, his

dark form slipping in and out among the trees like that of some gruesome ghoul. Just as the man entered the woods which separated him from the girl, the animal sprang upon her, and, seizing her by the hair, felled her with the club, administering several quick blows about the face and temple. I nearly swooned when I beheld this, for I could not help but feel that the crystal scenes were actually occurring before my eyes, and I was utterly unable to render aid.

ferre with the operation of some power with which he seemed to think me possessed.

I was too dazed to do anything but his bidding, and immediately commenced to look intently into the crystal. As I gazed into its depths I distinctly saw the Scarfed Woman once more. She appeared to be this time in the country somewhere, for she was walking slowly, and as if expectantly, along the edge of a green field. I described the scene to Banks, speaking in a low voice.

"Can you draw it?" he asked, his tone denoting suppressed excitement.

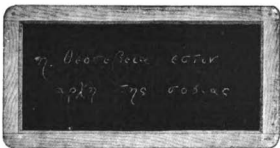
"I shall try," I answered, attempting to



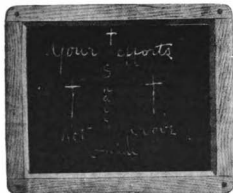
"I SAW IN THE CRYSTAL A GIRL, AND BEHIND HER CREPT A FIERCE GORILLA."

As I looked, the gorilla dropped the club beside the woman, and, wrenching from her head a handful of hair and a portion of the scarf, he made off into the woods.

In a few moments the man emerged from the cluster of trees. I plainly saw the look of horror upon his face as he suddenly beheld the murdered woman. He seized the club, and looked about in a frenzied way. He then fell



THE WRITING ON THE SLATE IN GREEK.



"I HAD WRITTEN, 'YOUR EFFORTS SHALL NOT PROVE VAIN.'"

upon his knees beside the woman, and, covering his face with his hands, began to sway his body back and forth in a distracted, grief-stricken manner.

While he knelt in this posture, several men came suddenly from the woods near by, and seized him. At this point, a white smokiness obscured the scene in the crystal, and I could make out no more of the tragic pantomime.

Banks appeared to be in the greatest excitement. "I knew Frank was innocent—I knew it all along," he said, laughing loudly, almost hysterically. "I must return to B—to-morrow."

To my great surprise, he stated that his most intimate friend had been tried and convicted of the murder of his betrothed, and sentence of death had been passed upon him at B—. The atrocious murder had been bruited throughout the land. I had, of course, read of it some time previously, but I did not know that Banks was in any way associated with the murderer, or the supposed murderer. No one had thought the man innocent for a moment, as he had been caught "red-handed," and

all the circumstantial evidence pointed to his guilt. The absence of motive had been pleaded by the defence, but a recent quarrel between the man and the woman was proved; and, though it was only a "lovers' disagreement," of course it was magnified by the crime. I shall not here rehearse the details of this evidence, as my narrative has more to do with my own experiences than with the facts in the case.

"The drawing you have made will be of the greatest assistance," said Banks, as he took the slate from my hands.



"AS I LOOKED IN THE CRYSTAL THE FACE OF THE SCARFED WOMAN APPEARED. SHE WAS BEHIND ME."

To our disappointment and chagrin, we found no drawing at all, but merely a few words written in Greek. Banks fairly raved, saying there was some fiendish power interfering with the saving of the life of an innocent man. He insisted upon my again gazing into the crystal; but the vision did not at this time repeat itself, and my hand on this occasion wrote nothing.

Being very deficient in the knowledge of Greek, it was a matter of great surprise to me that I should have written in this language. Banks explained this by saying that I had nothing whatever to do with what I wrote when "under the influence of the power"; that I would have written Sanscrit, had the spirit moved me so to do.

We sat up far into the night discussing the affair. In thinking the matter over, we could not understand how a gorilla of such size could prowl about an English village without being noticed. It occurred to Banks that, perhaps, the events I beheld in the crystal had taken place in some foreign land where gorillas are found. He thereupon decided upon trying another experiment in reference to the apparition of the Scarfed Woman.

Placing my camera in a certain position, he requested me to sit beside the window overlooking the churchyard, and be prepared to write anything I should feel myself influenced in writing, or drawing—insisting that I give myself up entirely to the power which might move my hand. At the same time, he provided me with the crystal. He then desired that I should supply him with a portion of magnesium powder.

His preparations complete, he extinguished the light.

"How am I to see crystal-pictures in the dark?" I inquired.

"It will not be dark all the time," he said, significantly; and this mysterious statement was all I could extract from him.

For an hour we sat in silence, and then, suddenly, the low murmurings I have already described began under the window. Sitting there in the dark, I felt that the Scarfed Woman must be about the room somewhere, as her presence was always announced by the sound of the voices outside.

I peered into the crystal, which, though dark, was still visible. I could make out a portion of the reflection of trees outside, and some of the drapery about the window. I saw the high back of the chair in which I was sitting, and the edge of a majolica vase near by.

As I looked at the reflection of the back of the chair, the face of the Scarfed Woman suddenly appeared in the crystal. She was standing immediately behind me, looking over the top of the chair. At the same moment, I felt the chilly air on my face and neck. I began to shake violently, and felt that some strange power had begun to exert its influence upon me. I tried to call out to Banks, but my voice failed, and my tongue refused to articulate.

Suddenly, there was a blinding flash, as of lightning. I dropped the slate and the crystal, the latter rolling with a dull reverberation across the floor, and sounding like the peal of thunder which follows the lightning's flash. I cried out in alarm.

Banks laughed. The flash was only that of the magnesium light.

When we picked up the slate, we found upon it this strange message—

"Your efforts shall not prove vain."

The next morning, before Banks left for B—— he was engaged in developing and printing the negative of a picture. He showed it to me, and, though the statement is hardly a credible one, the photograph given on the previous page, which he took by flash-light in my room, turned out to be a photograph, to the very life, of the murdered girl!

The day subsequent to Banks' departure, I received a message asking me to come to B—— at once. He had obtained a stay of proceedings through some technicality, and the life of his friend was spared some short time.

On investigation, he had ascertained that, some months previously, corresponding to the time at which the murder of the woman occurred, a gorilla had escaped from a travelling show; which, being in financial difficulties, had not been able to remain at B—— long enough to effect the capture of the beast. Banks received from the manager of the show the following letter:

"Dear Sir,

"The animal of which you speak was very docile when with me, and I do not think him capable of any harm. The only trouble I ever had with him was once when, being enraged, he seized a club and struck a woman on the head. Nothing serious came of the affair, however. If you have captured the gorilla, I shall pay you a suitable reward if you will keep him until my agent arrives.

"(Signed) EDWARD BARRINGER, Mgr."

This was sufficient. In a few days we had hundreds of men scouring the country. We were about to give up the search, when one of the party came upon the dead body of the gorilla behind an old mill. The side of the face was mutilated. He had evidently hidden in the deserted mill, the machinery of which had begun to work during a flooding of the river, and had crushed him. He had managed to drag himself outside to die. The most important fact was that, in the animal's right hand, and wrapped about his wrist, was found a quantity of hair. It corresponded to that upon the head of the murdered girl. There were also bloodstains upon the hands and arms. These, examined chemically and microscopically, gave all the tests for human blood.

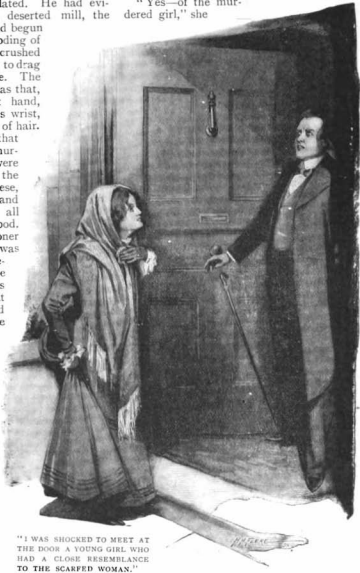
The sentenced prisoner was pardoned. But it was too late. He died before he could leave prison, first losing his intellect. The great strain of the trial, and the knowledge that he was innocent of the crime, had preyed upon his mind after the sentence of death had been passed. This was another instance of the danger of convicting by circumstantial evidence alone.

After this signal triumph of "spiritism," I once more returned to the Cloth Fair house, Banks accompanying me. We did not see the Scarfed Woman again; but, about a month after the events I have narrated, one morning, as I was coming from my rooms, I was met at the door by a young woman whose close resemblance to the apparition gave me one of the greatest shocks I have ever

received. Her head was thrown a scarf, which added greatly to the resemblance. She asked if Mr. Banks were in. I called him.

When he saw the girl, he almost fainted. "You are the sister of the——" he began.

"Yes—of the murdered girl," she



"I WAS SHOCKED TO MEET AT THE DOOR A YOUNG GIRL WHO HAD A CLOSE RESEMBLANCE TO THE SCARFED WOMAN."

interrupted. "She appeared to me recently," continued the girl. "We stopped here in this house last year just before her death, and——"

"What!" exclaimed Banks, looking at her in amazement, "she lodged here?"

"Yes," replied the girl, "and even then she felt that something terrible was going to happen to her. For, two nights before she left for the country, she told me she heard low mutterings under the window in the back room. Looking out, she saw a young woman, dressed exactly like herself, walking in the graveyard. It worried her very much. We moved away in a day or two. Last night she appeared to me and said she was happy, because Charlie was with her."

("Charlie" was the man betrothed to the girl, and who had died in prison.)

"Did she say anything else?" inquired Banks.

"Yes," replied the girl, breaking down and beginning to weep. "She said I would die in this house in a few days."

At these words the girl grew faint, and we brought her into the house, and carried her into the back room, placing her upon a couch. I stepped into the front room to get some restoratives, while Banks dashed water in her face. To our utter consternation, however, and despite all our efforts

to revive her, in a few minutes she died, thus verifying the ominous prediction of the apparition.

A few days after this I was taken very ill. The strain of the remarkable events through which I had passed unbalanced my reason, and for some time I was down with "nervous prostration." On my recovery I had to renounce the medical profession, as the doctors said that any difficult study would be fatal. I gave up the Cloth Fair apartments and moved to more cheerful surroundings.

Not long ago, I was not a little surprised to learn that the house in which these strange events transpired belonged originally to the grandparent of the two girls whose tragic deaths I have described. I also learned that an old manuscript had been found in the house, which to a nicety foretold the exact manner of their deaths. This manuscript I have never seen; but I cannot say I altogether doubt its existence; for, after what occurred to me in connection with this affair, I cannot but assert my belief in agencies supernatural.

