

BLACKER GROWS THE CLOUD OVER EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH.

Blanche Lamont's Body Found in the Belfry.

SHE WAS STRANGLER.

Durrant Believed to Have Killed Her and Minnie Williams.

ARRESTED AT WALNUT CREEK.

Minnie Williams' Purse in His Pocket—He Declares He is Innocent.

In the presence of the crimes which have been committed under the roof of the Baptist Emmanuel Church the hardest imagination recoils in dismay. Not one of the most terrible forms of degradation, brutality, cruelty and deception are found lacking in them. It is the story of the murder of two conspicuously bright, innocent and lovable girls, in which the hand of assassination seems to have been gloved by the most sacred things—love for a man, confidence in the loftiness and purity of Christian faith, and, possibly, reliance on the skill and honor of a physician. It was had enough that these elements seem to have been active in the case; worse that the very sanctuary of infinite compassion should have been chosen both as the shield and the scene, and incredible that tortures of so immeasurable cruelty should have been employed in the deeds.

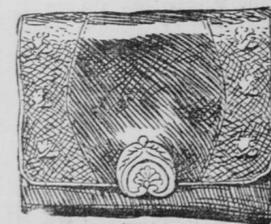
The hideous story opens with two girls upon whom no maternal guidance was laid. The first of these, Blanche Lamont, was a wholesome, healthy girl of a strong, well-filled frame. She was attending school, had romantic ideas and possibly all of a foolish girl's longing for strange adventures. On the 3d of April she suddenly dropped out of sight.

The second, Minnie Williams, was of a perfectly opposite type. She was of a very small and frail physique and was afflicted with organic disorders that likely would have made her life short. There was no girlish romance in her composition. She had witnessed the miserable causes that had separated her parents, had herself suffered the hard pangs which the discovery of a lover's duplicity had forced upon her, and had been driven from a position of comfort to perform menial service for a livelihood. Thus had she been made wise and hard beyond her years, and withal her character was firm and self-reliant. Yet this able girl, weak in body but strong of brain and will, was as helpless before this monstrous evil as was the one of a weak, romantic and confiding soul.

Last Saturday morning, ten days after the disappearance of Blanche Lamont, the body of Minnie Williams was found in the Baptist Emmanuel Church by some ladies who had gone thither to prepare the Easter decorations. She had been murdered with the most frightful atrocity. First she had been choked by hand, then a strip of cloth torn from her garments had been pushed down into her trachea with great violence, and a more bulky piece of cloth thrust into her mouth; then her wrists were hacked with a dull knife in a furious effort to open the arteries, and last a brittle silver-plated table-knife had been driven again and again into her breast, being broken to pieces in the effort.

Then the disappearance of Blanche Lamont was remembered, and the police began a search of the church. Away up in the belfry they found the body of the missing girl, with deep and vicious finger-marks in the throat. Her clothing, torn into shreds, was found hidden in the remote places of the tower. There are circumstances that lead to the belief that in each case a double crime had been committed.

The story then began to unfold itself under the shrewd, prompt and highly intelligent work of the police. The girls were both members of Emmanuel Church and were friends; both belonged to the same class in Sunday-school; both had received a lover's attention from Theodore Durrant, a medical student, living with his parents in this city.



Miss Williams' Purse, Found in Durrant's Overcoat Pocket.

The young man was the librarian of the church and assisting superintendent of the Sunday-school. He was familiar with the house and carried one of the few keys to its private door. In person he is a strong, well-made young man, of a pleasing and cheerful address, and devoted to his religious duties. It was remembered that he was the last person seen in Blanche Lamont's company on the day of her disappearance.

The police put forth a hand to seize him, but he had gone into the country with the Signal Corps, for which trip he had been preparing for a day or two. Yesterday he was arrested.

The circumstances which bear against him are these: He had a key to the church, was seen conducting Miss Williams into the private door of the church Friday evening, was late arriving at the Vogel residence, and upon arriving there showed a nervous condition and disordered attire. There is a rumor that there was blood on his hands.

He asked to be permitted to wash himself. On leaving the party he passed the church again and went within. In his overcoat pocket the girl's missing purse, or a part of it, is said to have been found. He admits that he was in the church with his friend King Friday afternoon.

choked her to death, as she was very weak, and such an act would have been simple. That was the sole means resorted to in the case of Blanche Lamont, with whom it must have been a much more difficult task, as she was uncommonly strong for a woman. Again, as librarian he presumably had the key to the library, and yet the lock of the library door was forced. Even if she had been in the inside and resisting its opening she was so slight that he could have pushed open the door in spite of her. Further, the knife itself and the manner of its use would be altogether unexpected from a medical student.

Assuming that he made an assault upon her in the rear part of the church and that she fled to the library, happened to find the spring catch set back, released it and thus locked the door by closing it, she must have known that as librarian he had a key and that his superior strength would have been sufficient to overwhelm her. It might be wise to look further than Durrant, and as a beginning in that task we have the assurance that the body of Blanche Lamont could not have been carried by one man to the belfry.

As to the pastor's conduct in the matter, it is deserving of no attention.

W. C. MORROW.

The horror of the murder of Minnie Williams in the library of the Emmanuel Baptist Church was doubled yesterday morning by the discovery in the belfry of the same place of worship of the remains of the missing girl Blanche Lamont. She, too, had been the victim of a double



BLANCHE LAMONT, ONE OF THE MURDERED GIRLS. [From a photograph.]

crime, and the circumstances pointed to the fact that the same fiend had committed both atrocities. The body was terribly hacked, was nude and showed that her murder had occurred some days before that of Minnie Williams.

The mystery of the crimes yielded yesterday some more circumstantial evidence against young Durrant, the medical student, assistant superintendent of the Sunday-school and exemplary young man.

Durrant was arrested at the foot of Mount Diablo yesterday afternoon and is now behind bars at the City Prison. The police are certain that he is the fiend who committed the atrocious and revolting double crimes which caused the death of the two bright and respected young girls whose butchered remains were found respectively in belfry and library on Saturday. After his arrest last evening the prisoner made statements which contradict both each other and facts which have been learned elsewhere.

The evidence against Durrant remains circumstantial, and that circumstantial evidence almost wholly concerns Miss Williams. It is on this case that the police have been concentrating their efforts, and aside from the close acquaintance among Durrant, Miss Lamont and Miss Williams there is little to throw light on the death of Blanche Lamont except the natural and generally accepted theory that both girls were victims of the same murderous hand.

If young Durrant is not the criminal who committed those crimes of almost unparalleled atrocity within the sacred precincts of a sanctuary which was being bedecked for the glad Easter festival, he is just now the victim of a series of coincidences and circumstances which will make his case a notable if his innocence is established.

If he is the criminal he presents a rare study in crime. He is a young man of good family and was entering upon a promising career. In six months he would graduate from Cooper Medical College. He is a member of the National Guard, being trumpeter in the Second Brigade signal corps. He has always enjoyed a host of friends, who have esteemed him for his quite exemplary life and bright qualities.

His social standing in his circle was good, and his prominence in the affairs of Emmanuel Church and its Sunday-school gave him many social advantages. There has not yet come to light any important testimony reflecting on his character, as is generally the case when a criminal becomes known as one.

This is the fellow who knew well Blanche Lamont, who mysteriously disappeared some days ago, and who was at least a close acquaintance and an occasional escort of Miss Williams.

Many of the circumstances at once fastened on him a suspicion which increases each hour with the development of new circumstances. He denies any knowledge of the crimes, but his story is not complete and above-board as might be expected of an innocent man.

In the minds of the police the most damning evidence against him is his finding Miss Williams' empty purse in one of his pockets at home when the house was searched yesterday. To Chief Crowley he

said that he found it on a sidewalk on last Friday night, the night of Miss Williams' murder.

To the Chief of Police, to Detective Seymour and the reporters he has said warily that he happened to find it at Bartlett and Twenty-second, Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth streets. It is said that his story of the hour when he found it must be wrong. His whole story of finding the pocket-book is strange, to say the least.

He stated last night that he had not seen Miss Williams for three weeks, but there is already testimony that he was seen with her within two or three days before the murder.

When he got to Dr. Vogel's house at 9:30 Friday evening he was perspiring, excited and dirty. Then a young man and a young woman of the description of Durrant and Miss Williams were seen on Friday night near the church and going into it alone.

These are some of the points that developed yesterday in the most startling murder case that has ever horrified this city.

FINDING THE BODY.

Detective Gibson Tells of the Discovery in the Belfry.

The body of Miss Lamont was found about 10 o'clock yesterday morning. It was absolutely nude and lay upon the hard floor of the belfry in the tower, where the sunlight never enters and through which the wind howls and whistles continuously. The belfry is immediately over the closet where Miss Williams' body was

found Saturday morning, and the spot where Blanche Lamont's body lay was about sixty feet directly above the library closet.

The discovery was made by Police Detective Ed Gibson and Officer Riehl. They were searching the church for evidence which would tend to reveal the identity of Miss Williams' assailant, and they little

thought that they were to bring to light a second tragedy as terrible as the first. Telling the story of the discovery of the body yesterday Detective Gibson said: "I left the Seventeenth-street station this morning at 9 o'clock accompanied by Officer Riehl. We had searched the entire church with the exception of the belfry last night at 1 o'clock. We could not get to the belfry; we were admitted to the church by the janitor, Saderman, and proceeded directly to the tower door off the gallery.

I asked the janitor to open the door. He tried, but did not succeed. He said that some one had been tampering with the lock, as the knob of the door was broken

off and the key refused to turn. I then kicked in the door.

"We went up the stairs to the top landing just under the place where the bell would hang if there was a bell. There lying in one corner we found the body of Blanche Lamont.

"The body was stark naked. There was not a stitch of clothing upon it or near by. The body was laid out on its back as if for burial, and no undertaker could have done it better. The arms were crossed upon the breast, the limbs had been placed close together and perfectly straight, and bits of wood placed between them to keep them in position, and the head lay straight, but with the face turned slightly to one side. A tiny pool of blood stained the floor below her mouth, and at her feet lay a glove, such as women wear. A large carpenter's hatchet also lay near by, but there were no blood stains upon it. The body had just begun to turn black and was beginning to decompose. The belfry is a cold place. The sun does not enter it and there is a draft through it which would tend to preserve the body. Judging from my past experience with dead bodies I should say it had been there ten days or more.

"Returning from the belfry, I left Officer Riehl on guard at the tower door with instructions not to allow any one under any circumstances whatever, to enter. I then went to the Seventeenth-street station, notified the Chief of Police and returned to the church with the patrol wagon.

"On my return I sent Officers Brown, McMurray and McGreavy to search for the girl's clothing among the rafters. Climbing up in the inside of the steeple they found it all except the hat and the shoes. It was torn to pieces and scattered all over. The corsets were tucked under the eaves of the steeple. The dress skirt was whole except that it was split from top to bottom. The waist was torn as if it had been unbuttoned and then torn from the body through impatience. One sleeve was turned inside out. The undervest was torn in three pieces as it was wrenched from the body. The drawers were torn in two and stained with blood. The mate to the glove found at the dead girl's feet was not discovered.

"I sent for Mr. Code and for Mr. Noble, the uncle of the dead girl, and took them up into the belfry. They identified the body as that of Blanche Lamont. Ladies of the church identified the clothing found as some which they had seen Blanche Lamont wearing in life.

"Detective Ben Eichen and John Moffitt, clerk to the Chief of Police, came out and looked over the ground for clues. In fact, the whole force is working on the case.

"Deputy Coroner Hallett came out with the Morgue wagon and removed the body to the Morgue.

"About 10 o'clock Dr. Gibson, pastor of the church, attracted by the crowd which had gathered, came over. Then he went to the residence of Blanche Lamont, Ladies' Twenty-second street, near Bartlett. I went over to see him, and sent George King, the organist, and J. Saderman, the janitor, to the Chief's office with Officer Riehl. The Chief's office was then because Gibson's statement, made yesterday, was unsatisfactory, and he said he had refused the officers the keys of the church the day before.

"The body of the dead girl lay on the floor of the belfry or tower-room formed by the uppermost platform of the steeple. Above rose the dark, rough rafters of the spire. On every side the room was open to the wind, but rough species of blind formed of heavy boards prevented the entrance of the rain. A wooden rail surrounded the narrow opening by which access was obtained from the rude steps below, and behind this railing in one corner of the tower lay all that was mortal of her who was termed, by her classmates in the High School 'the Juno beauty.'

Entrance to the tower is obtained through a door off an uncarpeted and un-used gallery of the church. Its interior is unfinished and the huge rough beams stand forth in all their ugliness. From one side a primitive stairway, scarcely two feet wide, leads its crooked course upward, and along this stairway the dead body of Blanche Lamont was undoubtedly carried by her murderer. It was an awkward task and a difficult one and the man who placed the corpse where it was found must have been a giant. Yesterday two of the strongest of the Coroner's deputies, with all their improved appliances, could scarcely bear the body down the narrow stairs, and they contend that no one man could have borne it up aloft.

There is evidence, too, that the assassin became exhausted at his gruesome task. Half way up the stairway is a great pool of blood, which has soaked through between the tread and riser of the staircase and dripped in big blotches on the floor below. There, doubtless, the murderer rested the body till he recovered from his fatigue. He was a long time recuperating, for the amount of blood there left is much greater than the pool found beneath the dead girl's head.

The search for the clothing showed the extreme care taken by the murderer to conceal the identity of his victim. Doubtless he thought that in that deserted tower the body would waste away and decom-

pose till scarcely recognizable as human. The winds would dispel whatever of odor would result, and when at last the remains should be discovered the absence of clothing would render identification almost impossible. Yesterday the officers tore portions of the clothing hidden in the rafters of the spire, fully thirty feet above the level of the belfry floor, and it was a dangerous as well as difficult undertaking to secure them.

GUARDED BY POLICE.

Extra Precautions to Prevent a Possible Lynching.

An imposing police reception masked

fallen out of a purse. I put it in my overcoat pocket. I reached home at ten minutes to 12. I did a little writing, and then went to bed.

"I got up next morning about 5:30 o'clock. I got my things together as quick as I could, and had to go to the horse-draw at the corner of Bartlett and Twenty-third streets, to get my horse. About twenty minutes past 7 I rode down to the armory. We took the creek boat at 8 o'clock and I was with my corps since then till I was arrested."

"When was it you last saw Miss Williams?"

"I last saw her about three weeks ago," replied Durrant.

"Now, now, that will do," interrupted his attorney. "He has made a plain state-

ment of facts, and that is enough. I won't allow him to answer any more questions."

He said: "About Blanche Lamont I will explain my movements on the day she is said to have disappeared, Wednesday, April 3. I understand, I left home about 8 o'clock that morning, intending to go to the house of a friend, George King, to ask him to assist me in a little electrical work I was to perform in the afternoon."

"On my way down I met Blanche on the corner of Mission and Twenty-first streets. I had known her since September last. As she knew that I was attending college and we were going the same way, she said: 'You had better come along with me.' I couldn't very well refuse, so I got into the car with her. We got talking, and one subject we were both much interested in was literature. I was reading a book, 'The Newcombes,' and I promised to take her that book that evening to the prayer-meeting in the church."

"I did not get to the prayer-meeting, but next morning I met her aunt, Mrs. Capp, and told her to tell Blanche I would call and give her the book on my way to the hospital on Friday morning. That morning I walked down Twenty-first street to Mrs. Noble's house. I asked Blanche's sister, Maud, if she was in. Maud said: 'No; she had gone to school.' I left the book and went away."

"Going back to the Wednesday, the day of her alleged disappearance, I went to the church between 4 and 4:30 o'clock to go ahead with my electrical work. I took off my coat and hat, went upstairs to the belfry, turned on the gas and fixed the electric light all right. When I began to climb down I felt squishiness from the effects of the gas. When I got down I heard some one playing the piano, and saw it was George King. I told him I felt sick with inhaling the gas, and he went out and brought back some bromo-seltzer. I then assisted George to carry the organ downstairs, and both it and the piano were to be used for the Easter entertainment. Then we went along Bartlett street to Twenty-second, and I left King at Capp street."

"Now about Minnie Williams. Last Friday evening I left home about five minutes to 8 o'clock. I walked down to Twenty-fourth and Guerrero streets to speak to Dr. Perkins, the first sergeant of our signal corps, as to getting a blue flannel shirt of mine which I had left in the armory. I had to get the key to the locker. We walked down Twenty-fourth street to Valencia, down Valencia to Twenty-third, and stood talking till Dr. Perkins' car came along."

"Knowing I would have little time to get my horse shod I concluded, when I got to Mission street, to take a Mission-street car to go to the armory at Page and Gough streets, and got on the car but concluded it would make me too late for the meeting at Dr. Vogel's house. I got off the car between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets, walked down to Howard street, walked to Nineteenth street, and then thought it was no use to take a car, so I walked to Dr. Vogel's house, getting there about five minutes to 9 o'clock, and Dr. Vogel made the statement that I was a little behind-hand."

"After the party broke up, at 11:25 o'clock, a number of us walked as far as Twenty-fourth street, on Howard. Three went down Twenty-fourth, and three up the street. I was with Miss Merian Lord and Almer Wolf. We walked as far as Capp street, where they turned down. I walked straight up Twenty-fourth to Guerrero."

"As I was crossing Bartlett street I saw something glisten on the sidewalk. I gave it a kick, and something shining fell out of it. I picked it up and saw it was a small mirror, and then saw it had

fallen out of a purse. I put it in my overcoat pocket. I reached home at ten minutes to 12. I did a little writing, and then went to bed.

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ment of facts, and that is enough. I won't allow him to answer any more questions."

He said: "About Blanche Lamont I will explain my movements on the day she is said to have disappeared, Wednesday, April 3. I understand, I left home about 8 o'clock that morning, intending to go to the house of a friend, George King, to ask him to assist me in a little electrical work I was to perform in the afternoon."

"On my way down I met Blanche on the corner of Mission and Twenty-first streets. I had known her since September last. As she knew that I was attending college and we were going the same way, she said: 'You had better come along with me.' I couldn't very well refuse, so I got into the car with her. We got talking, and one subject we were both much interested in was literature. I was reading a book, 'The Newcombes,' and I promised to take her that book that evening to the prayer-meeting in the church."

"I did not get to the prayer-meeting, but next morning I met her aunt, Mrs. Capp, and told her to tell Blanche I would call and give her the book on my way to the hospital on Friday morning. That morning I walked down Twenty-first street to Mrs. Noble's house. I asked Blanche's sister, Maud, if she was in. Maud said: 'No; she had gone to school.' I left the book and went away."

"Going back to the Wednesday, the day of her alleged disappearance, I went to the church between 4 and 4:30 o'clock to go ahead with my electrical work. I took off my coat and hat, went upstairs to the belfry, turned on the gas and fixed the electric light all right. When I began to climb down I felt squishiness from the effects of the gas. When I got down I heard some one playing the piano, and saw it was George King. I told him I felt sick with inhaling the gas, and he went out and brought back some bromo-seltzer. I then assisted George to carry the organ downstairs, and both it and the piano were to be used for the Easter entertainment. Then we went along Bartlett street to Twenty-second, and I left King at Capp street."

"Now about Minnie Williams. Last Friday evening I left home about five minutes to 8 o'clock. I walked down to Twenty-fourth and Guerrero streets to speak to Dr. Perkins, the first sergeant of our signal corps, as to getting a blue flannel shirt of mine which I had left in the armory. I had to get the key to the locker. We walked down Twenty-fourth street to Valencia, down Valencia to Twenty-third, and stood talking till Dr. Perkins' car came along."

"Knowing I would have little time to get my horse shod I concluded, when I got to Mission street, to take a Mission-street car to go to the armory at Page and Gough streets, and got on the car but concluded it would make me too late for the meeting at Dr. Vogel's house. I got off the car between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets, walked down to Howard street, walked to Nineteenth street, and then thought it was no use to take a car, so I walked to Dr. Vogel's house, getting there about five minutes to 9 o'clock, and Dr. Vogel made the statement that I was a little behind-hand."

"After the party broke up, at 11:25 o'clock, a number of us walked as far as Twenty-fourth street, on Howard. Three went down Twenty-fourth, and three up the street. I was with Miss Merian Lord and Almer Wolf. We walked as far as Capp street, where they turned down. I walked straight up Twenty-fourth to Guerrero."

"As I was crossing Bartlett street I saw something glisten on the sidewalk. I gave it a kick, and something shining fell out of it. I picked it up and saw it was a small mirror, and then saw it had

fallen out of a purse. I put it in my overcoat pocket. I reached home at ten minutes to 12. I did a little writing,