

## CHAPTER VIII

### POSTMORTEM

THE world and all things in it vanished in a flash of blinding light.

The word "extinction" sang like a flying spark through the disintegrating brain of Mr. Parham. Darkness should have swallowed up that flying spark, but instead it gave place to other sparks, brighter and larger. "Another life or extinction? Another life or extinction?"

With a sort of amazement Mr. Parham realized that experience was not at an end for him. He was still something, something that felt and thought. And he was somewhere.

Heaven or hell? Heaven or hell?

It must be hell, he thought, surely, for it was pervaded by the voice of Sir Titus Knowles, if one could call that harsh, vindictive, snarling sound a voice. The very voice of Gerson. He!—and in the company of Sir Titus! But surely hell would be something fuliginous, and this was a clear white blaze.

The words of Sir Titus became distinct. "Got you!" he bawled. "Got you! There's the ectoplasm! There's the mighty visitant's face! Painted bladder, as I said. Clever chap, but I've got you."

## POSTMORTEM

Sham dead if you like for as long as you like, but I tell you the game is up."

It was the upstairs room in Carfax House, and Carnac Williams was lying in a dishevelled heap upon the floor. Hereward Jackson was bridling back Knowles, who was straining out his leg to kick the motionless body.

Mr. Parham staggered up from his armchair and found Sir Bussy doing likewise. Sir Bussy had the flushed face of one roused suddenly from sleep. "What the devil?" he demanded.

"I don't understand," said Mr. Parham.

"Exposure!" panted Sir Titus triumphantly and tried another kick.

"A foul exposure, anyhow," said Hereward Jackson and pushed him back from his exhausted victim. "Spare the poor devil!"

"Le' go!" cried Sir Titus. . . .

A manservant had appeared and was respectfully intervening between Sir Titus and Hereward Jackson. Another came to the assistance of Carnac Williams.

A tremendous wrangle began. . . .

"Gaw!" said Sir Bussy when it was all over.