

From the New World

An Undeveloped Mystery

A Concise and Authentic History of a
Supposed Murder in Berlin, V.T.

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One of the most singular and mysterious affairs ever recorded in the annals of actual or supposed crime, has recently been made the subject of a judicial investigation at Montpelier, the capital of Vermont; and, although the investigation resulted in the acquittal of the one arrested, who, according to previous confession, was an accessory after the fact, it yet left the whole transaction more deeply than ever enveloped in mystery.

The facts, which appeared in the course of the examination, together with a few others of common notoriety, in the vicinity of the scene where the crime is alleged to have been committed are succinctly as follows:

There is, in the southern part of Berlin, a town adjoining Montpelier, a large fishing pond, lying very nearly in the form of the small letter g, the two parts being connected by a short strait called the Neck. On the eastern side of this pond about a quarter of a mile south of the neck, forming, between the water and the road, at the north of the intersection, a space about a mile in extent, covered almost wholly by a dark and nearly impassable cedar swamp.

Near the southern extremity of this body of water, and in a two story farmhouse on the road just named, lives a Mr. N., in whose respectable family, until recently, has resided a young man by the name of C., who is the personage who figures the most largely in the strange occurrence about to be described. C., who is now about twenty-two, though of not the most reputable extraction, has yet sustained a fair character for truth and honesty, and seems to have possessed the respect and confidence of the family by which he was early adopted. Sometime subsequent to the fall of 1839, however, Mrs. N. began to notice something peculiar in the young man's appearance, such as a general restlessness, occasional fits of dejection, and ill health, without any known causes. She also noticed, in common with the neighbors, that, with the most limited means, he always appeared to be well supplied with money. All this, for a while, she attributed to gambling, into which vice she feared he had become somewhere initiated. But a short time after she had settled on this conclusion, a young mechanic, who had been boarding in the family, and had become intimate with C., told her, as he was about leaving for a residence in the southern states, that she need harbor no unfavorable opinion of C., or suspect even if he had large sums of money when he become of age, that he came by it dishonestly; for he had innocently become possessed of a paper by which he could command as much money as he wanted. This enigmatical communication caused the lady great uneasiness, and led her to suspect that C. was knowing to some high crime in others, who were bribing him to secrecy. And she therefore took an opportunity to question him alone, asking him if he had a note of hand, on which he was expecting to receive large sums of money? He denied having any note, but finally confessed that

he had a paper with the signatures of two men affixed to it, which would command money enough, if he chose to extract it; but, he said, “the affair so much worried his mind, that he was tempted to destroy the instrument, and have no more to do with the disagreeable business.” He then, though refusing to explain any further, asked her to advise him whether he should give or retain the paper? Being now confirmed in her suspicions, that C. was concealing some great crime for others, who might some day seek his ruin to hide their own guilt, she advised him, by all means to retain the paper, for his own safety. After this, though deeply perplexed and distressed, the lady made no more attempt to draw the secret from the young man, who continued to reside in the family as before, and, as before, seemed always flush of money, to which he attached, apparently, but little value. And so the matter rested, until a Mr. B., a brother of Mrs. N., and a merchant of New Orleans, returning to Vermont, on a summer visit, came to spend a few days with his sister, the lady just named, who, making a confidant of the former, and relating to him what C. had told her, as well as her suspicions, which, not knowing where or how the consequences might fall, she dared to reveal to no one, and requested him to have a private interview with C. get at the bottom of the mystery, if he could, and give him such advice as he thought the circumstances required. In compliance with this request, Mr. B. in a few days, offered to carry C. to a neighboring town, where, a short time before, the latter had engaged as a clerk in a store. The proposal being gladly accepted, the two set out in a single wagon; and during the ride, while Mr. B. was thinking how he should broach the subject, C., after premising that he was in possession of a fearful secret, which destroyed all his peace of mind, and that he had looking for a confidant to whom he dare unbosom himself, and receive in return some competent advice, voluntarily proceeded to make the following startling disclosure, accompanied throughout with every appearance of sincerity, and even with obvious agitation and distress.

“One evening in November, four years ago this fall,” he said, “I went down on horseback to the tavern at Berlin-corner, to attend a meeting of the young men there, to choose managers, and make other arrangements for a ball. It was very late, about midnight, probably, before we broke up, when I started for home alone. While thinking over our arrangements for the ball, for which I had been chosen one of the managers, I reached the border of the great cedar swamp, when I caught a glimpse of two men carrying something on their shoulders, and hurrying along down an old overgrown timber road, which strikes in near the corner of the woods there on the right, and runs off southwesterly nearly to the Neck of the pond. Supposing them to be some of the young fellows of my acquaintance, taking this sly way to go down to the pond with a seine to make a haul of pickerel, which was then against the law, I thought I would follow them and take them by surprise. So I tied my horse to a tree, after I had rode fairly by the path, went back, entered the path, and cautiously proceeded on their track. After following a short distance, I came in sight of them, just as they were laying their burden (which I supposed was a large sein rolled up,) down on the ground to rest or listen. I then sprang forward to the spot where they stood, and, giving one of them a playful slap on the shoulder, exclaimed, in a tone between sport and earnest, ‘Now my lads, I’ve caught you!’ and at the same time I reached down to get a grasp on the supposed sein; when, instead of feeling anything like a sein, I caught hold of the stiff, cold hand of a dead man! I started back perfectly horror-struck; and, for several minutes, I had no power to stir or speak. The two men, also, seemed almost equally confounded, and stood as if they were rooted in their tracks, staring at me and each other. As soon as I recovered my faculties sufficiently to do it, I looked at their faces and dress, I could distinguish enough to know that they were none of those whom I had suspected, but two citizens of the village of —, who were known to me by

sight as, it seems, I was to them. My next thought was to try to retreat; and they probably saw something in me, that caused them to suspect my intentions; for one of them instantly grasped my collar, and in a sort of fierce whisper, said, 'You can't go—you have seen too much—you must die!' Still I did not, could not speak, nor scarcely struggle; and I thus stood nearly passive in his strong grasp, some moments, when the man who held me turned his head away and whispered a few seconds with his confederate. After this the man relaxed his hold a little, and they both seemed to hesitate, and one of them said to me, still talking in the same harsh, eager whisper—'If we were sure—if you would swear—swear by all that's sacred—and then we could be sure that we could trust you—perhaps.'

"A sense of my danger, if I did not do something now, gave me the use of my tongue, and I promised eagerly to swear to keep their secret, or to do anything, if they would not kill me. They then made me repeat over and over most solemn oaths never to let what I had seen be known, in any manner, to any human being, telling me that if I ever violated my oath, in the least, while I lived, my life should pay the forfeit. After this, they urged me to take some of the money they had got by the deed, or some of the articles of dress on the dead man. But I succeeded in putting them off in this; when, after telling me that they would see me again soon, and, if I was true, that they would give me at any time, as much money as I wanted, they at length consented to let me go.

"I then walked back nearly to my horse, when it strongly coming to my mind that it was my best policy to know what they did with the dead man, I turned about once more, and with careful and softly step, stole back to the spot where I left the men. They had taken up the corpse and departed; but on listening, I could hear their steps as they trod on dry sticks some distance ahead; and I could also once in a while get glimpses of them as they passed some light place among the trees. Being still determined to gain my purpose, I continued to follow them as cautiously as I could, moving when they moved, and stopping when they stopped, to prevent being heard. After awhile they left the road, and, striking off to the south, continued to make their way along a line running parallel with the shore of the pond, till they came abreast of the Neck, when they halted near a clump of white birch trees. Here there appeared to be a pit or hole formed by the turning up of the roots of a tree, and into this hole they dropped the dead body, and commenced throwing on it dirt and rubbish. I watched them till they filled up the hole, and were beginning to cover the place over with leaves and throw on brush wood, when I silently withdrew from the place, and with hasty and trembling steps, making my way back as best I could in that fearful swamp, I at length reached my horse, mounted, and rode rapidly homeward. When I had arrived there and put up my horse, I went directly my sleeping-room and threw off my clothes which I had just done as the clock struck two. I then got into bed, but never for one moment closed my eyelids through the rest of that dreadful night. This was Thursday night, and I heard nothing more of the affair, or of the men engaged in it, till the next Sunday, when one of the same men came along and requested me to get into his wagon, and take a ride with him to the tavern on south, I consented; but instead of keeping on the main direct road, he took me several miles round, over the hills, and approached the tavern from another direction. When we got to the tavern, he bespoke a room, under the pretense of doing some business without being disturbed; and having taken me into it, he locked the door, and here we remained together several hours, talking over the only subject that either he or I could think of. Here he renewed his offers of money, and promises of as much more as I, at any future time, should want or ask for. But I insisted on

having, in addition, some paper signed by him and his confederate, to secure me against them, lest they should be tempted to swear against me. And, after awhile, fearing to offend me, perhaps, he consented, and wrote a kind of instrument about in these words:

“If C.C. shall inviolably and forever keep a certain secret entrusted to him—this shall entitle him to any sum of money he shall demand. And we hereby exonerate him from having any hand in the transaction to which said secret refers.”

“He then signed the paper with his own name, and that, also, of the other man, and delivered it to me, with a great many cautions about keeping it from every eye.

“We then had some conversation about the deed itself, and the man they had thus put out of the way. And, in the course of this conversation, I learned that the man was a foreigner and a Scotchman, and he having stopped in their village, they had brought him into the vicinity of the pond, to look at some valuable horses. I also gathered, that he had a trunk, which fell into their hands, containing about twelve thousand dollars, mostly in gold.

“After this, he having talked over the matter as much as he wished, and advised me how to shape my conduct, we left the tavern, and went home.”

C. having, thus far, gone on uninterrupted through the main part of his astonishing disclosure, Mr. B. now began to take a part in the discourse, and a long conversation, on the subject, ensued between them, in which C. further disclosed, that he had since frequently seen and conversed with these two men, and had received from them, at various times, toward a thousand dollars in money, which, together with goods, they always paid on the spot, or on a very short notice, when asked for. At one time, one of them took him to his room, and showed him the trunk, which they took from the murdered man, as well as a large, and richly-flowered silk vest, which, among other valuable articles, it contained, and which was now urged on his (C.'s) acceptance. At other times, one or both of these two men had urged him to take journeys with them to the cities, which they assured him should cost him nothing. This offer, however, he “dare not accept, lest they should contrive, when they got him from home, to have some accident happen to him.” He further stated, that they became, very soon, extremely uneasy about the paper one of them had given him, and were constantly importuning him to give it up, which he had as constantly refused to do, knowing that they would not dare use any other means than entreaty, to obtain it. He also told Mr. B. that this secret *“had been a perfect hell to him ever since the affair happened,”* and he feared it would wear him down till he did. It had already destroyed his health so far as to induce him to give up farming for the lighter business of store-keeping.

After finishing his revelations, C. offered to tell Mr. B. the names of the two men, whom history had so deeply implicated, and show him the paper which he had received from them, and which, he said, he had in a small packet, or bag, worn next to his skin. But Mr. B. telling him he did not wish to know who the men were, begged him not to keep both names and paper to himself. C., however, persisted so far as to give such descriptions of the men, as left no doubt, in Mr. B.'s mind, as to their identity.

The next question discussed between C. and Mr. B., was, what course, under all the circumstances, ought to be pursued? And as Mr. B. was strongly opposed to the punishment of death for crime, and as his sensibilities were touched at the thought of being the means of plunging the innocent families of these criminals into sorrow and disgrace, by bringing them to the gallows, for a crime so long ago committed, it was at length decided, that the affair should not be divulged, but be kept, as it had been, a profound secret from all who did not now actually know it. And by way of appeasing Mrs. N., whose suspicions, as before stated, had been aroused, it was agreed, that it should be hinted to her, that C.'s secret related to a crim, con, case, or something of the kind, which would not only ease her mind, but prevent her from pressing her inquiries.

When they reached C's destination, Mr. B. left him, and returned alone to his sister's residence, he remained till C. came back on a visit. And during this visit, the matter was made the subject of still further conversation, in which C. showed Mr. B. some hundred dollars, which, he said, was a part of the hush money he had received. He, also, at this time, proposed to Mr. B., that they both should go into the swamp, and he would show Mr. B. the spot where the corpse was buried, when they would dig down to the bones. Mr. B., however, declined going; when C. gave a minute description of the localities of the spot, and path, and courses to be taken, to reach it, so that Mr. B., if afterword disposed might go and find it alone. And Mr. B. *did*, once, after C. had left again for his store, conclude he *would* go, and actually took a hoe, and proceeded some distance toward the place; but feeling that he *knew* he should find the bones there, so that no additional information would be gained, and not knowing but his visit to the place might lead to inquiry, he finally turned about and went back, without entering the swamp.

Mr. B. now soon returned to N. Orleans, and a correspondence between him and C., was commenced relating, principally, to the murder, and matters growing out of it. In all his letters—and he wrote several—which were received, C. steadily, and with no inconsistency of statement, persisted in affirming all he had communicated to Mr. B. while in Vermont. In one of these letters, of a late date, he expressed great anxiety respecting the fate of two letters, which, he said, he had previously written, but which, it appears, he had just been informed, had never reached their destination, saying, that “these letters contained enough, if made public, to ruin him.” He also, in this, or a still later communication, informed Mr. B. that, agreeably to his former advice, he had settled off matters which the two men whose secret he was keeping; that he had received from them one thousand dollars, and intended going with it to settle at the west, that he might get away from everything that reminded him of the affair that had cost him so much unhappiness. After this, he again wrote Mr. B. that the store, in which he had been engaged, had been burned; and that his thousand dollars, and his talismanic paper, which he had retained after the settlement, and which, with the money, he had secreted in a chink in the cellar wall, had been destroyed. And in consequence of this he had given up his intention of going west, and had obtained a place in a store, in a village in the northern part of Vermont.

Here ends that part of our account which relates to the confessions of the unhappy young man. But how, asks the reader, by this time, was all this brought to light? It is that which remains to be told; though, were we writing a tale of fiction, we should almost hesitate, through fear of incurring the charge of improbability, to present such an incident as the one which exact truth now compels us to relate.

In June, 1841, Governor Jenison, the late worthy chief magistrate of Vermont, received a letter from a Mr. W., then residing in New Orleans, propounding sundry extraordinary questions. The principal of these inquiries were “whether there was a large fishing pond in the town of Berlin, Vermont; and if so, whether a stage-road ran by it, and whether a thick swamp was situated between the pond and the road; and whether also, there was a two story house on the pond, south or east of the swamp. And still further, whether, four or five years before, a man had been missing in that vicinity? The writer then stated, that if these questions were answered in the affirmative, a communication would be made of a matter which would demand the action of the public authorities; and he closed by referring his Excellency, for inquiries relative to his character, to a gentleman of high standing, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to which place this Mr. W. said he belonged—his residence in New Orleans being a temporary one.

The Governor, having been apprised, through his Secretary, that all the above questions could be answered in the affirmative, except that relating to a man being missing—with regard to which nothing definite could be ascertained—returned an answer to Mr. W. accordingly; while, at the same time, his Excellency dispatched another letter to the gentleman in Cincinnati, to whom he had been referred. To both these letters, in due time, he received replies. The one from the gentleman in Cincinnati, assured the Governor that Mr. W., the man concerning whose character inquiry had been made, was a person on whose word and judgment the most reliance could be placed. The one from Mr. W., proceeded to unfold a tragedy, of which his Excellency, forewarned, as he had been, by the ominous import of W.’s former letter, was little prepared to hear. The writer, after stating his belief, that a high-handed murder, yet unrevealed to the public, had been committed, some years ago, in the town of Berlin, Vermont, went on to give, in substance, the following relation of the manner of obtaining the information he was about to communicate, which, for interest and singularity, as before intimated, finds few parallels in the most ingenious of romance; but which, nevertheless, is in strange keeping with the rest of this most strange transaction.

He, one day, in the month of April last, went out, by invitation, to dine with a friend in the city, and at this house, he met another invited guest—a Mr. B., formerly from Vermont. In the course of this visit, the conversation turned on the St. Louis murders, when he (Mr. W.) stated that he did not believe that a murder was ever committed that was not, sooner or later, brought to light. From this opinion, Mr. B. wholly dissented, expressed a decided opinion to the contrary, but evaded, or declined giving any reasons for that opinion. This statement of Mr. B. together with the positive manner in which it was made, soon led Mr. W. to suspect that Mr. B. must, himself, be knowing to some case of unrevealed murder. And, having reasons of his own, wishing to know where the crime—if crime there had been—had been committed, he determined to follow up the slight clue thus obtained. With this secret object in view, he, within a few days, exchanged his boarding house for that in which Mr. B. and his family were then residing. He cultivating an acquaintance with the family in question, and with a servant girl in the city, who, as he had first ascertained, had formerly lived with them, he at length succeeded in fishing out, from Mrs. B. and this girl, without making them aware of his object, or even conscious what they had done, all the leading features of the affair, which had been disclosed to Mr. B., as before related, on his visit to Vermont the preceding summer.

Mr. W. then proceeded in his letter to detail the circumstances of the murder as gathered by him as above stated, closing the account by informing the governor, that the young man, who had this secret so long in keeping, had come out west and was then residing in Cincinnati, to which place he himself expected in a few days to repair, and that Mr. B. and family had already left New Orleans for the same place or its vicinity.

On receiving this information, the governor considered it his duty to institute an investigation of this mysterious affair; and accordingly he dispatched his secretary on a journey to Ohio, provided with all the papers and powers necessary to procure the arrest and delivery of C., that he might be brought to Vermont under charge of being an accessory to the murder, and then made what is commonly termed a states evidence, or in other words, a witness against the actual perpetrators of the alleged crime.

When the secretary reached Cincinnati, he caused the young man, described by the informant W., and by him erroneously designated as a nephew of Mr. B. to be brought before the mayor of the city; when all soon became satisfied that he knew nothing of the affair in question. Believing that the right man was still to be found somewhere, (although it was evident that Mr. W., who was now absent from the city, had made a mistake as regarded this person) the secretary pushed on into Indiana, where he understood Mr. B. had taken up his summer residence. On arriving at his destination, he found Mr. B. greatly unmanned by the alarming sickness of his family, but illy prepared to resist the pointed questioning of his visitor. But owing to this circumstance, (as he afterward said,) and the complete surprise at which he was taken by the announcement of certain facts relating to the murder, which he supposed was still a secret to all but the perpetrators, young C. and himself, Mr. B. soon admitted "that he knew all about it," and proceeded to detail at length, all that young C. had disclosed to him, personally in Vermont, and afterward by letter as before narrated. After going through this detail, Mr. B. informed the Secretary that young C. whom Mr. W. had somehow mistaken for his nephew, had not come to the west, but was in a store in a village in the northern part of Vermont. And it may be as well here to add, that Mr. B. who is not a person to deceive or overcolor, or easily be duped himself, expressed his thorough conviction of the entire truth of all that young C. had revealed to him. He *knew*, even, that the spot where the victim was carried could be found, and that the bones were still there, as C. had told him in one of his letters, (which, with the signatures cut out, had been left in New Orleans) that he had been to the place, dug down and found the remains all there—an item in the confession which we omitted to state while on this part of the subject.

The Secretary, having no power to take M. B. out of the state as a witness, now left him and returned rapidly to Vermont: when a warrant for the arrest of C. as an accessory, was put into the hands of a sheriff, who, with an assistant, an acquaintance of C., set out for the village where the latter was residing. They reached the place late in the night, and put up at the village inn; and having ascertained that C. slept in the store in which he was employed, the assistant repaired to the building and soon succeeded in awakening the object of his search, who came to the door; when, after the ordinary salutations on recognition, his first question was, "*What's the news—has anything broke out in Berlin!*" Having evaded this question, or answered it in a manner that seemed to allay the fears of C., the assistant asked him to go over to the tavern to do some business, when they two proceeded to the room purposely taken by the sheriff. As soon as they were in the room together, the assistant announced the true business on which he and the sheriff

had come, when C. became greatly agitated, stared wildly, threw up his hands with a spasmodic tremor, and retreating backward, sank nearly fainting into a chair in the corner of the room.

It was a long time before they could get him into a situation to speak. But at length succeeding in calming him down, in some measure, they pressed him, for his own safety, to make a clean breast of it and divulge the whole story. He replied that he *would* tell all the facts, but could *not* give up the names of the perpetrators; but he then went on and related, with little or no variation, the same story which he related to Mr. B. and said he could go to the spot where the murdered man was buried, giving a description of the localities, which well agreed with the one that had been furnished by Mr. B. for the Secretary, before starting for home.

The sheriff and his assistant then renewedly pressed him to give up the names of the perpetrators, and, after a while, he mentioned the names of two individuals, who were not the persons described to Mr. B., and whose characters were such as to render it highly improbable that they could have had any connection with the transaction.

After this the three started for Montpelier, C. being in custody of the officer,—During the first part of the journey, and indeed, till they had reached their last halting place, at an inn about eight miles from M., C. persisted in his story, adding from time to time, as they went on, numerous little particulars, all of which appeared consistent with what he had before related. But at this inn the sheriff took him aside and told him they now wished to know what they were to depend on, in regard to his story—that he and his assistant were satisfied that he (C.) had lied to them, as far as related to the names he had given, and they wished to know whether his whole story was likewise false?

To this C., at this time made no reply.—But as they were about to resume the journey, he called the assistant out of the room, told him *the whole story was one of his own making, and was all false!*

He was then questioned as to his motives in telling such a tale. And he finally said, that at the time and place he had given in his story, he did, indeed see two men enter the swamp, with something on their shoulders, which he took, upon a moment's consideration, to be a log of light-wood, to be split up into torches for fishing; and that, though startled at first, he yet soon perceived that there was nothing about wrong about the matter.—But on riding along home, he began to suppose a case, like the one which, for the first instant, he thought this to be. And, in a few days after, wishing to know whether his friend (the young mechanic before mentioned) could keep a secret, he hinted his knowledge of such a deed as the above-mentioned circumstance had suggested. And when his friend had told Mrs. N., and she questioned him about it, he thought he must patch up a story to prevent in being detected in a falsehood and thus he had continued to do, till he got it into the shape in which he told it to Mr. B. He also said that the money he showed Mr. B. as pretended hush-money, was some which at the time had been entrusted to him by the store keeper with whom he lived, to hand over to a certain Mr. D. But to the question why he offered to show Mr. B. the bones, as well as some others, he did not attempt to frame a reply. Such was the strange and unsatisfactory explanation which he now gave for his conduct through the whole affair.

After the party had arrived at Montpelier, it was thought advisable to keep C. under arrest, and defer the Court of Inquiry a day or two, in order to see if any testimony, not already in possession of the government, could be obtained. With this view a party went and visited the cedar Swamp, so often named in this account, but made no discovery. The next day they went again, and took C., with his keeper, along with them; and on reaching the swamp, they desired him to show them the place he had described to Mr. B. He pretended to do so, and finally came to a spot which he said was the one.—But there was no appearance of grave, pit, or mound near the place; and those present who were acquainted with the swamp, giving it as their opinion, that C. had not taken the course, or pointed out the spot, he had before described, the officer was desired to take him away. A further search was then made, but no further success. It was also, during these days of unofficial inquiry, ascertained that C.'s favor, that about the time of Mr. B's visit, the storekeeper before named *did* entrust the young man with some hundred dollars to pay over to Mr. D., who received it accordingly. But it likewise was discovered, on the other hand, that C. had, at different times, told, in confidence, so much of his first story as related to his possession of a paper by which he could always command money, to four individuals, beside Mr. B. and Mrs. N. Among these individuals was a brother of C., which brother admitted that C. not only told him about the paper, but several times offered to let him have some of the money obtained by it.

It being now useless to think of making C. a witness against others, since he refused to implicate anyone, nothing remained but to proceed with the Court of Inquiry on the charge, on which he had been arrested—that of accessory after the fact, to a murder resting on his own allegation. The court was accordingly holden, but as we have fully anticipated all that appeared during the examination then had, the result is all that need be stated. The sitting magistrates, though they considered the young man's conduct wholly unaccountable, and his explanations of it unsatisfactory, believed, nevertheless, that as no murder had been established, they were not authorized to bind the respondent over for trial, and he was consequently discharged. A few days later he was brought before the Grand Jury of the county, put upon his oath, and examined in relation to the alleged crime. But he here also persisted in his last story, and though most of his examiners felt themselves rather baffled than satisfied, they were yet compelled to let him depart, without being made any the wiser for their attempt; and he then immediately left town and returned to his residence in the village from which he had been taken.

Thus ends our account of this remarkable case—a case for which, as regards its most prominent features, a parallel will scarcely be found in the history of criminal jurisprudence. If we assume as a fact, that a murder was here actually committed, we have just glimpses enough of the dark transaction to see that it stands invested with all the romantic horrors which the pen of a Radcliffe or Monk Lewis could have imparted to it, while at the same time all further light respecting the crime, or its cold-blooded perpetrators, seems impenetrably closed to our view. If, on the contrary, we take the ground which the self-constituted accessory has taken by his last story, that no murder was committed, we find it almost utterly impossible to reconcile the young man's conduct with any known principle of human action. That he might have invented such a story, and told it to one person one day, and proclaimed it in joke the next, or even, that, for some object, he might have had the disposition and skill to make a credulous person believe it for months, we can conceive of. But that, with only ordinary capacities and tact, he should, or could, invent, with all its minutiae, this revolting tale,—give direct clues to it to four or five

individuals—tell it, in all seriousness and apparent anguish of feeling, to a keen business man, and find implicit credit, offer to show him the bones, and thus commit an act which must necessarily detect him in falsehood, and then reiterate the same story through a long correspondence—that he should apparently pine away under a story of his own invention; and lastly that, when first called up at night by the arresting officer’s assistant, his thoughts should instantly fly to that subject, and when the true business of the officer was announced, that he should be seized with a terror and agitation that deprived him of the power to speak and stand—and all for a fictitious story, is indeed difficult, extremely difficult wither to believe or account for; and yet, we are compelled to leave the subject, and call it, as the excited and dissatisfied community to whom a knowledge of it has come, have done—an *unfathomable mystery*.

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