

If I have gone beyond this and seemed in several instances to attempt to read the thoughts and motives of witnesses, and to explain in some cases the emotions that swept over them in peculiar circumstances—well, God forgive me if I have mis-judged any! I will only vouch that I have given a truthful account of how matters appeared to me, a totally disinterested spectator as far as one could be.

Doubtless some will not be able to believe this narrative—so true it is that truth is stranger than fiction. That a perfectly sane man and a man of brilliant parts and of high principles, as I maintain, like Mr. Ashton, should have marked out for himself the seemingly unnatural course he did—that he should have had the courage and heroism to pursue his plan relentlessly for nearly a score of years, with many unfortunate results at first, but with a noble success in the end—will seem to multitudes unbelievable.

And what shall we say of the cowardly crime and the events that followed thick and fast—events that seemed to us at the time too wonderful for fact, though we saw the evidences of their truth before our eyes. I shall blame no one for disbelieving this narrative—for I even doubted my own senses at this stage of affairs.

And then again many will question the truthfulness of Mr. Jaffery's psychic method of investigating crime and tracing criminals. Heaven knows there are mysteries here so deep and vast that I shudder at the thought of touching them in my narrative. "I make no pretense of explaining anything in this part of my story," I frequently said to my wife and to my minister. "I only attempt to give the result of Mr. Jaffery's work. No one shall budge me from this resolution. I shall never, never attempt to explain his work."

That 'the course of true love never runs smoothly' is an old adage, and the reader will find in this story proof both of the rule itself and of the exception that proves the truth of the rule.

I have had some help, I confess, in making the framework of the story out of my personal knowledge of the events, the newspaper reports, the diary of Mr. Molson, and the narratives kindly furnished by the various