



Crime Where the Nights are Long: Canadian Stories of Crime and Adventure from the Golden Age of Storytelling

David Skene-Melvin

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The period from the early 1880s through the First World War has been called "The Golden Age of the Storytellers." These were the writers who sought not to write great literature, but to entertain, spinning yarns to be printed and read, just as their predecessors, the minstrels and bards, recited and were listened to. Through their countless tales of adventure and derring-do they brought romance and colour to the lives of those who could do no more than dream. This was the age of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H. Rider Haggard, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, and H.G. Wells. Canadian writers contributed in no small way to the cornucopia of romance and adventure the reading public could find at the newsstands and bookstores. This is the period of which Messrs Roper, Beharriell, and Scheider in *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English* (2d ed., 1976) say "the Canadian fiction-writers between 1880 and 1920 were read more widely by their contemporaries, inside and outside Canada, than have been the Canadian fiction-writers - collectively - since." Literary historian David Skene-Melvin, the leading authority on Canadian criminous literature, has garnered from amongst the collections and magazines of the period a second anthology of stirring tales by Grant Allen, Robert Barr, Algernon Blackwood, W. H. Blake, Susan Carleton, William Henry Drummond, William Fraser, Harvey O'Higgins, Sir Gilbert Parker, Hesketh Pearson, Alan Sullivan, and others, some never before anthologized, guaranteed to set the blood a-racing and stimulate the imagination.

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