

THE CRACK OF DOOM

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The Crack of Doom by Robert Cromie

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ROBERT CROMIE

**THE CRACK OF
DOOM**

THE CRACK OF DOOM

BY

ROBERT CROMIE

Author of "A Plunge into Space," etc.

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE

THE rough notes from which this narrative has been constructed were given to me by the man who tells the story. For obvious reasons I have altered the names of the principals, and I hereby pass on the assurance which I have received, that the originals of such as are left alive can be found if their discovery be thought desirable. This alteration of names, the piecing together of somewhat disconnected and sometimes nearly indecipherable memoranda, and the reduction of the mass to consecutive form, are all that has been required of me or would have been permitted to me. The expedition to Labrador mentioned by the narrator has not returned, nor has it ever been definitely traced. He does not undertake to prove that it ever set out. But he avers that all which is hereafter set down is truly told, and he leaves it to mankind to accept the warning which it has fallen to him to convey, or await the proof of its sincerity which he believes the end of the century will produce.

ROBERT CROMIE.

BELFAST, *May, 1895.*



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CHAPTER I.

THE UNIVERSE A MISTAKE!

"THE Universe is a mistake!"

Thus spake Herbert Brande, a passenger on the *Majestic*, making for Queenstown Harbour, one evening early in the past year. Foolish as the words may seem, they were partly influential in leading to my terrible association with him, and all that is described in this book.

Brande was standing beside me on the star-board side of the vessel. We had been discussing a current astronomical essay, as we watched the hazy blue line of the Irish coast rise on the horizon. This conversation was interrupted by Brande, who said, impatiently:

"Why tell us of stars distant so far from this