

LONDON'S UNDERWORLD

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London's Underworld by Thomas Holmes

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THOMAS HOLMES

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UNDERWORLD**

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BY

THOMAS HOLMES

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UNIV OF
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PREFACE

I AM hopeful that some of the experiences given in the following chapters may throw a little light upon some curious but very serious social problems. Corporate humanity always has had, and always will have, serious problems to consider.

The more civilised we become the more complex and serious will be our problems—unless sensible and merciful yet thorough methods are adopted for dealing with the evils. I think that my pages will show that the methods now in use for coping with some of our great evils do not lessen, but considerably increase the evils they seek to cure.

With great diffidence I venture to point out what I conceive to be reasons for failure, and also to offer some suggestions that, if adopted, will, I believe, greatly minimise, if not remove, certain evils.

I make no claim to prophetic wisdom; I know no royal road to social salvation, nor of any specific to cure all human sorrow and smart.

But I have had a lengthened and unique experience. I have closely observed, and I have deeply pondered. I have seen, therefore I ask that the experiences narrated, the statements made, and the views expressed

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in this book may receive earnest consideration, not only from those who have the temerity to read it, but serious consideration also from our Statesmen and local authorities, from our Churches and philanthropists, from our men of business and from men of the world.

For truly we are all deeply concerned in the various matters which are dealt with in "London's Underworld."

THOMAS HOLMES.

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LONDON'S UNDERWORLD

CHAPTER I

MY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES

THE odds and ends of humanity, so plentiful in London's great city, have for many years largely constituted my circle of friends and acquaintances.

They are strange people, for each of them is, or was, possessed of some dominating vice, passion, whim or weakness which made him incapable of fulfilling the ordinary duties of respectable citizenship.

They had all descended from the Upper World, to live out strange lives, or die early deaths in the mysterious but all pervading world below the line.

Some of them I saw, as it were, for a moment only; suddenly out of the darkness they burst upon me; suddenly the darkness again received them out of my sight.

But our acquaintance was of sufficient duration to allow me to acquire some knowledge, and to gain some experience of lives more than strange, and of characters far removed from the ordinary.

But with others I spent many hours, months, or years as circumstances warranted, or as opportunities permitted. Some of them became my intimates; and