

# The Devil's Ribbon (A Hatton and Roumande Mystery)

D. E. Meredith



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A trail of beribboned murders. A ticking bomb. A city about to explode.

July, 1858: London swelters under the oppressive heat of the hottest summer on record, and trouble is brewing. Forensic scientist Professor Adolphus Hatton and his trusty assistant, Albert Roumande, have a morgue full of cholera victims. The dead are all Irish, the poorest of London's poor. They came in their thousands ten years ago, forced into the London slums by the terrible famine. Now they live segregated from the rest of Victorian society, a race apart in this heaving city who are at once everywhere and nowhere. But they are a close knit people, and deeply politicised. From the docks in Limehouse to the taverns of St Giles, Fenian groups are talking of violence and of liberation.

When a series of violent murders threatens to cause tensions to boil over, Scotland Yard calls on Hatton and Roumande to help investigate. The seemingly unconnected victims, who hail from all strata of society, are linked by the same macabre calling card: a bright Fenian green ribbon placed strategically about their corpses. While Hatton's search for clues leads him into the spell of a blindingly beautiful woman, a widow of one of the slain, rumblings of a bombing campaign led by an agitator priest and his gang of would-be terrorists build throughout the slums. As the orchestra of veiled motives, divided loyalties, and violent retribution reaches a crescendo, Hatton's skills are tested to the limit. With Roumande, he must race across London to an island with a shipwreck and a secret on a nail-biting race against time in this gripping, elegantly executed Victorian mystery in the tradition of *The Dante Club* and *The Somnambulist*.

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