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This is the first book about the relationship between the development of forensic science in the nineteenth century and the invention of the new literary genre of detective fiction in Britain and America. Ronald R. Thomas examines the criminal body as a site of interpretation and enforcement in a wide range of fictional examples, from Poe, Dickens, and Hawthorne through Twain and Conan Doyle to Hammett, Chandler, and Christie. He is especially concerned with the authority the literary detective manages to secure through the scientific "devices" – fingerprinting, photography, lie detectors – with which he discovers the truth and establishes his expertise, and the way in which those devices relate to broader questions of cultural authority at decisive moments in the history of the genre. This is an interdisciplinary project, framing readings of literary texts with an analysis of contemporaneous developments in criminology, the rules of evidence, and modern scientific accounts of identity.

RONALD R. THOMAS is Professor of English and Vice President at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. He is author of *Dreams of Authority: Freud and the Fictions of the Unconscious* (1990) and of numerous articles on the novel, photography, and film.

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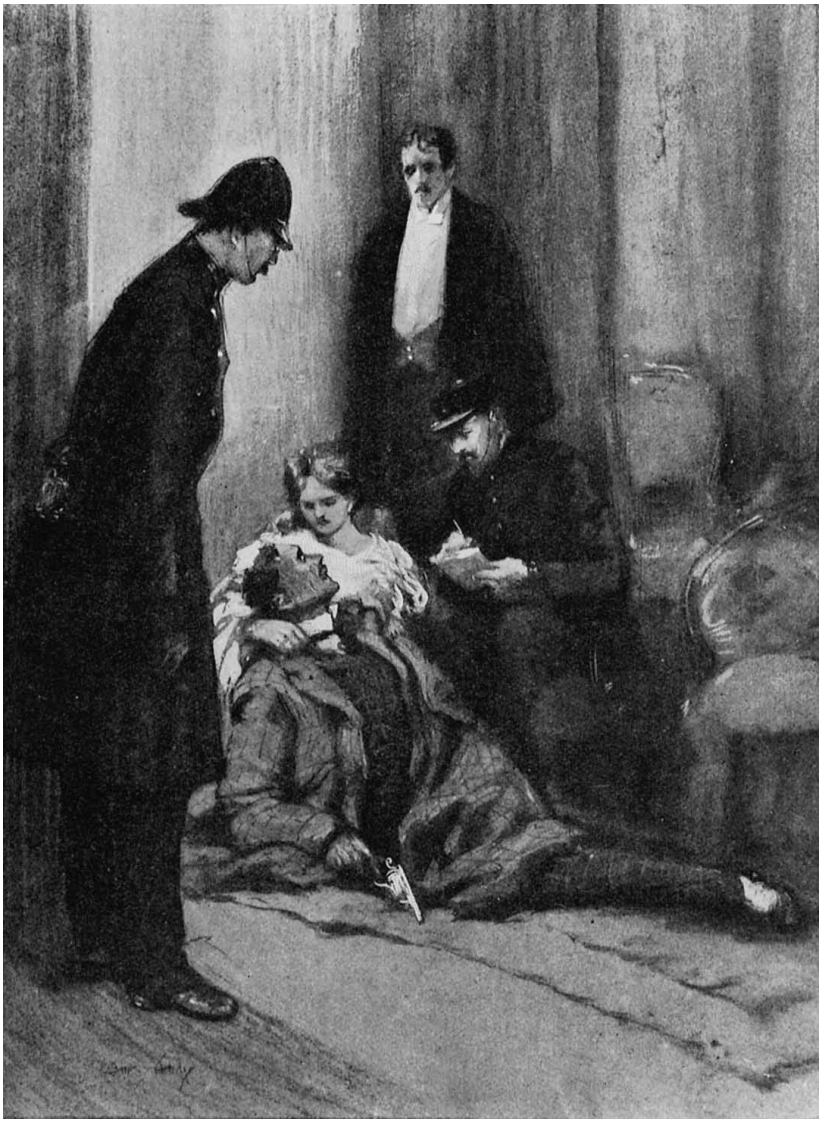

Illustration by Dudley Hardy for E. Phillips Oppenheim's "The Restless Traveller," as it appeared in the June 1910 issue of the *Strand Magazine*.

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/978-0-521-653039

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First published 1999
Reprinted 2000, 2001, 2002
First paperback edition 2003

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Thomas, Ronald R., 1949–
Detective fiction and the rise of forensic science / Ronald R. Thomas.
p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in nineteenth-century literature and culture, 26)
ISBN 0 521 65303 7 (hardcover)
1. Detective and mystery stories, English – History and criticism.
2. Detective and mystery stories, American – History and criticism.
3. Literature and science – Great Britain – History. 4. Literature and science – United States – History. 5. Forensic sciences – History.
I. Title. II. Series.
PR830.D4T53 1999
823'087209–dc21 99–11713 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-65303-9 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-52762-0 Paperback

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Acknowledgements

Like a convoluted mystery story involving a number of equally culpable suspects, responsibility for this book is shared by many – even if blame for its shortcomings belongs to me alone. It all began with a graduate seminar I taught at the University of Chicago in 1990, which examined representations of the criminal body in nineteenth-century detective fiction. That seminar involved an extraordinary group of graduate students who mixed probing responses to the course material with the right amount of critical suspicion of it. A year later, the seminar turned into the beginnings of a book project thanks to a one-year residency at Harvard, made possible by the generosity of an Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellowship in the Humanities. A subsequent Faculty Research Grant from Trinity College and a Summer Stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities allowed the plot of the book to thicken and prompted me to incorporate into my investigations of the nineteenth-century literary detective an inquiry into the technologies of forensic science invented during the same period.

The role played by my students and colleagues at Chicago, Harvard, and especially at Trinity in developing this project from classroom material to book manuscript has been immeasurable. Katie Pilcher, Christa Rozantes, and Jocelyn Jones were particularly helpful in the practical effort of preparing the manuscript and tracking down arcane sources and references. I am indebted to my colleagues at Chicago (especially Jim Chandler and Bruce Redford) and at Harvard (especially Philip Fisher) for offering perspective, encouragement, and insight along the way. Here at Trinity, Fred Pfeil and Jan Cohn showed themselves to be true friends as well as valuable colleagues by offering careful readings of and penetrating commentaries on the manuscript as it was being written, acquitting it of its most egregious crimes and conspiring with me to make it a much better book. Pablo Delano offered his keen eye and impeccable sense of timing in preparing the artwork

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and photography. I am also grateful to the editors and publishers of *ELH*, *Criticism*, *Novel*, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, and *The Victorian Visual Imagination*, who published preliminary treatments of some of the research I was working on for the book and allowed me to present revised versions of that material here. And I am appreciative to such outstanding colleagues in nineteenth-century studies as Ian Duncan, Helena Michie, Richard Stein, Alan Trachtenberg, and my friends at the Dickens Project who offered valuable commentary (and encouragement) on early drafts of various sections of the book in progress.

I cannot say enough about my editors at Cambridge University Press, Josie Dixon and Linda Bree, whose professionalism and commitment are unmatched. They nurtured the project from the time they received it, and were both rigorous and just in helping me cut the manuscript down to size, sharpen its focus, and make its case more cogently. I am also grateful to Gillian Beer and the anonymous readers of the manuscript for the Press who offered shrewd appraisals and contributed significantly to my final revisions.

Finally, I want to thank Mary, my partner in life if not in crime. As I drafted the final chapter of this book on the roof-top garden of our hotel during a busman's holiday in Venice in October of 1997, Mary was at my side reading detective novels as I was writing about them. She has, to my great benefit, been beside me (and behind me) from the first page to the last, keeping me honest and keeping me going. Mary is one whose truth is free of any device.

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