Reading became an increasingly popular entertainment in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, Europe and America, reaching an ever wider spectrum of society as the cost of printing came down and levels of literacy rose. The novels avidly consumed in this period were not merely escapist fiction. Many of them drew attention to serious social issues such as slavery, child labour and other forms of exploitation that blighted the age of revolutions and empire, some were thinly disguised autobiographies, while others had clear educational aims: thus the line between fiction and non-fiction was a fluid one. Poetry too flourished across a wide range of genres, and the political and social agendas of the Romantic movement in particular led to its being read and appreciated at all levels of society. In this series, the Cambridge Library Collection offers the texts of fiction and poetry as these works were first published and received by an eager reading public.

The Thirty-Nine Steps
This spy story of 1915 by John Buchan (1875–1940) is an archetype of the genre, but may be better known today through its film and television versions (especially that of Alfred Hitchcock in 1935). Curiously, although all keep the theme of German espionage which will trigger a world war, none of them sticks at all closely to Buchan’s original plot. This is the first of five novels in which Richard Hannay, formerly a mining engineer in colonial Africa, now a patriotic gentleman of leisure, finds himself pitted against the enemies of the British Empire. Although the book is an exciting, if occasionally implausible, adventure story, it may be marred for a modern readership by the racism and anti-Semitism it expresses, though this was not exceptional for the period. The writing is also notable, however, for lyrical descriptions of the Scottish border country in which Buchan himself grew up.
Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library and other partner libraries, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection brings back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.
The Thirty-Nine Steps

John Buchan
The Thirty-Nine Steps
The
Thirty-Nine Steps

BY

JOHN BUCHAN

William Blackwood and Sons
Edinburgh and London
1915

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
TO

THOMAS ARTHUR NELSON,

LOTHIAN AND BORDER HORSE.

MY DEAR TOMMY,

You and I have long cherished an affection for that elementary type of tale which Americans call the “dime novel,” and which we know as the “shocker”—the romance where the incidents defy the probabilities, and march just inside the borders of the possible. During an illness last winter I exhausted my store of those aids to cheerfulness, and was driven to write one for myself. This little volume is the result, and I should like to put your name on it, in memory of our long friendship, in these days when the wildest fictions are so much less improbable than the facts.

J. B.
CONTENTS.

I. THE MAN WHO DIED . . . . . . 9
II. THE MILKMAN SETS OUT ON HIS TRAVELS . 36
III. THE ADVENTURE OF THE LITERARY INNKEEPER 51
IV. THE ADVENTURE OF THE RADICAL CANDIDATE 79
V. THE ADVENTURE OF THE SPECTACLED ROADMAN 105
VI. THE ADVENTURE OF THE BALD ARCHAEOLOGIST 126
VII. THE DRY-FLY FISHERMAN . . . . . . 161
VIII. THE COMING OF THE BLACK STONE . . 186
IX. THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS . . . . . . 204
X. VARIOUS PARTIES CONVERGING ON THE SEA . 221