



THE GOLDEN GONG and Other Night-Pieces

Thomas Burke

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'My encounters in this city of all souls have been amusing, stimulating, ludicrous, beautiful, disturbing, and queer.' Thus wrote Thomas Burke (1886–1945), referring to the people, places, and things of London; or, more specifically, the area of London known as Limehouse, which in Burke's youth was the haunt of sailors, dock-workers, and Chinese immigrants. It was a world of sights and sounds that entranced and enthralled the young boy, who would wander at will through its crowded streets, welcomed by the inhabitants and drinking in their language, customs, and traditions. In 1916 he published LIMEHOUSE NIGHTS, a collection of tales based on his experiences in the district; but he was saddened to find that the world of which he had written had already, for the most part disappeared.

Burke was always fascinated by the dark underside of life, and this found expression in many of his tales, which feature the uncanny, the outré, and the grotesque. In *THE GOLDEN GONG*, Jessica Amanda Salmonson has gathered together twenty-one of Burke's tales of the weird and the supernatural, including such classics as 'The Hands of Mr Ottermole' and 'The Hollow Man'. Also included is a reminiscence of publisher Grant Richards, who recognised the brilliance of LIMEHOUSE NIGHTS after it had been turned down by several other publishers; and in an extensive introduction, Salmonson looks at the colourful, and sometimes contradictory, life of Thomas Burke.



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