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CRIMINAL SKETCHES.

CHAPTER I.

A REMARKABLE CRIMINAL.

DURING the month of August, 1879, there died, in the city of Toronto, in Canada, a noted thief and pick-pocket, whose varied career of crime would form an interesting addition to the calendar of criminal romance.

This man was James Kern, or as he was more generally and familiarly known, Jimmy Papes.

But little is known of his early history, except that during his minority he was apprenticed to a prominent printer, for the purpose of learning "the art preservative of all arts." Possessed of a restless, roaming disposition, the restraints of business soon became irksome and onerous, and he sought relief in the company of profligate companions, whose influence soon manifested itself.

He became loose in his habits, frequenting gambling-saloons, and in a short time he had sufficiently progressed upon the downward track, and, becoming a pickpocket, attained quite a celebrity for the dexterity with which he could relieve the unsuspecting of their valuables.

Once started upon the dangerous plane of criminality, the pace he travelled was a fast one, and the incidents of his life were a rapid succession of daring adventures, successful operations, alternate wealth and poverty, and continuous excitement.

He was a spendthrift by nature and disposition. Having no idea of the value of money, it slipped through his fingers like sand. He lived upon the best fare that could be obtained, and displayed a lavishness in his expenditures that bespoke a liberal heart and a generous mind.