

R H MOTTRAM

THE CRIME AT
VANDERLYNDEN'S

A CLASSIC NOVEL OF THE
FIRST WORLD WAR

“The most significant work of its kind”
- The Times Literary Supplement



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Fired up by patriotic duty, Stephen Doughty Dormer joins the Army soon after the Great War begins.

Instead of defending his homeland, he is ordered to France, where he soon discovers that being a clerk in the war is hardly different from being one at home, only dirtier and more dangerous.

Promoted to Captain, he finds even this supposedly more prestigious position involves little more than endless waiting.

He is simply clerking in uniform.

Still, Dormer is a man who knows little of life outside of office hours and is content enough to simply get on with his duties until peace comes, or the war simply runs out of men – whichever comes first.

Then one day, a claim for damages done to a Flemish billet by a British soldier is received by Divisional Headquarters. And Dormer is assigned the seemingly simple task of investigating what exactly happened.

He soon discovers that the whole affair rests on a mistake and a misunderstanding between cultures. Even so, follows orders to track down the soldier who committed the ‘crime’ at the Spanish Farm.

Every time Dormer thinks he has put the ridiculous affair to rest, the claim for damages makes its way back to him and plagues him further.

Along with the endless waiting of the war, the constant demand for reparation for a crime that was never committed threatens to drive Dormer to distraction.

‘Crime at Vanderlynden’s’ is part III in the ‘Spanish Farm Trilogy’, which is widely acknowledged as one of the great classics of World War One fiction, ranked alongside ‘Goodbye To All That’ and ‘The Secret Battle’.

‘The most significant work of its kind’ - The Times Literary Supplement

R H Mottram served in France from 1914 to 1919. The Spanish Farm was first published in 1924 and won the Hawthornden Prize. Mottram wrote some sixty books altogether and in 1966 he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by the University of East Anglia. He died in 1971.

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