Acknowledgments

Although it was a sensation in its day and is regarded as a classic Victorian crime, the Manning case has never before been the subject of a full-length study. My effort to piece together the facts and social setting of the case turned into a project in criminous archaeology in which I could not have succeeded without the assistance and guidance of a large number of libraries and institutions and their staffs. I acknowledge my particular indebtedness and gratitude to the Bodleian Library; the British Library; the Cleveland Public Library; the Cuming Museum (Southwark); Dickens House Museum; Freiberger Library of Case Western Reserve Library; the Guildhall Library; Madame Tussaud's Limited; the Metropolitan Police (New Scotland Yard); the New York Public Library; and the Public Record Office, London.

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In most cases, the help I received was the result of courtesy and professionalism; but in at least one instance it was due to the British passion for murder cases (see chapter 6). One gray day in London my wife and I hailed a taxi and set off across the river for Bermondsey to photograph the scenes where the Manning melodrama played itself out. Our driver was reasonably polite but we detected a trace of grumpiness that perhaps reflected the unsmiling weather. We stopped at Weston Street and my wife (who is better than I at photography and many other things) began to take pictures of the housing project that has replaced the murder house. Curiosity finally got the better of our driver and he could not help asking what we were doing. When we told him that a famous murder had been committed there a century and a quarter ago, his eyes were suddenly agleam; he leapt from the cab, suggested camera angles to my wife, and proposed that we return at night to quiz the customers at the neighborhood pub. He was sure that their families had lived near Weston Street since time immemorial and that they would know all about the murder. Although we never got back to the pub, my final expression of thanks is to that taxi driver.