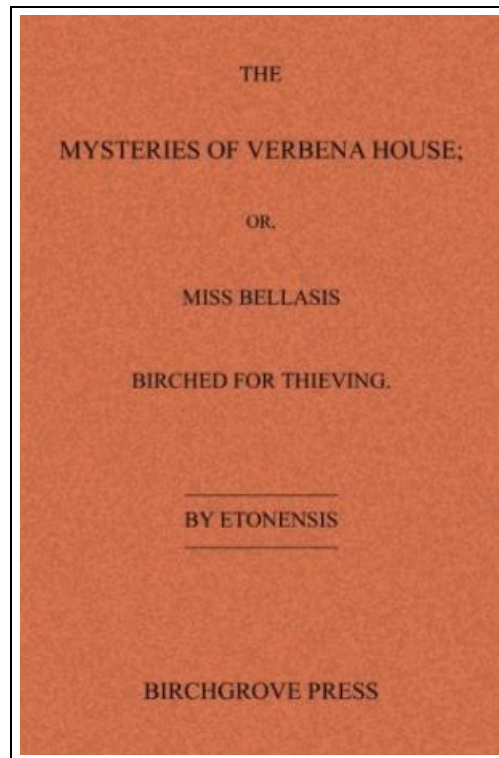


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Birchgrove Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 148 pages. Dimensions: 8.4in. x 5.4in. x 0.6in. A superb example of Victorian erotica focusing on sexual flagellation, *The Mysteries of Verbena House*, by Etonensis, was first published as two volumes in one in 1882. Only 150 copies were issued, probably by William Lazenby, at the price of four guineas. The first volume was issued in 1881 under the half-title: *Birched for Thieving, or the Punishment of Miss Bellasis*. The second volume and the full title appeared in 1882. As in most flagellant erotica, the plot is rather slim. *Verbena House* is a fashionable school for young ladies in Brighton. Miss Montes, a student from Cuba, is robbed of two golden doubloons. The nominal mystery centres on the discovery of the culprit: Miss Catherine Bellasis, the beautiful sixteen year old daughter of a Chancery barrister. During the hunt for the stolen coins, a number of other offences are detected: Miss Hatherton possesses an obscene book, John Clelands *Fanny Hill*, and Miss Hazeltine has hidden a bottle of gin. The girls are condemned to be flogged by the headmistress, Miss Sinclair. Volume I is taken up with the narration of these events. Volume II is primarily concerned with the castigation of the culprits. Up until the detection of her students misdemeanours, Miss Sinclair, the headmistress, has been averse to corporal punishment. After deciding that the girls are to be beaten, she seeks the advice of the schools spiritual advisor, the Reverend Arthur Calvedon, on the appropriate disciplinary procedure. A devotee of the rod, he becomes Miss Sinclairs lover. In the process, and during the course of the girls chastisement, Miss Sinclair undergoes a remarkable conversion: she is transformed from a maid-mistress into a lewd votary, registering a vow to become a fearless heroine of the...



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