

## A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

*The Torquemada Puzzle Book* was published by Gollancz in 1934 and written by Edward Powys Mathers (1892-1939).

The author's *nom de plume* was Torquemada, a name linked to the Spanish Inquisition, for Edward Powys Mathers (known to his friends as Bill) believed that puzzles should be mind-bendingly difficult but equally rewarding when the solution was found. He introduced the cryptic crossword to England in 1924 through the pages of the *Observer* newspaper.

The British love a puzzle and grow very attached to crossword compilers, always looking forward to the next week's puzzle, and Torquemada had many loyal supporters. John Dickson Carr (author of *The Hollow Man*, voted the finest locked-room' murder mystery of all time) was a friend. He believed that 'there has never lived a man with such a wide knowledge of sensational fiction. Torquemada of the *Observer* read everything that was being written and was already familiar with everything that had been written. And he never forgot any of it.'

Powys Mathers was acknowledged as a brilliant translator and was responsible for an edition of *The Thousand Nights and One Night*, more commonly known as *The Arabian Nights*. The beautiful poem 'Black Marigolds' (a favourite of the UK's former Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy) was another of his contributions. He was also a critic specialising in reviewing crime fiction.

In 1934 he published a selection of his puzzles under the title *The Torquemada Puzzle Book*. As well as some gloriously difficult crosswords, the book contained spooner-istics, verbal games, telacrostics, triple cricket acrostics and anagrams - enough to keep a family occupied for weeks.

The final 100 pages of the book contain the novel-cum-puzzle *Cain's Jawbone*.