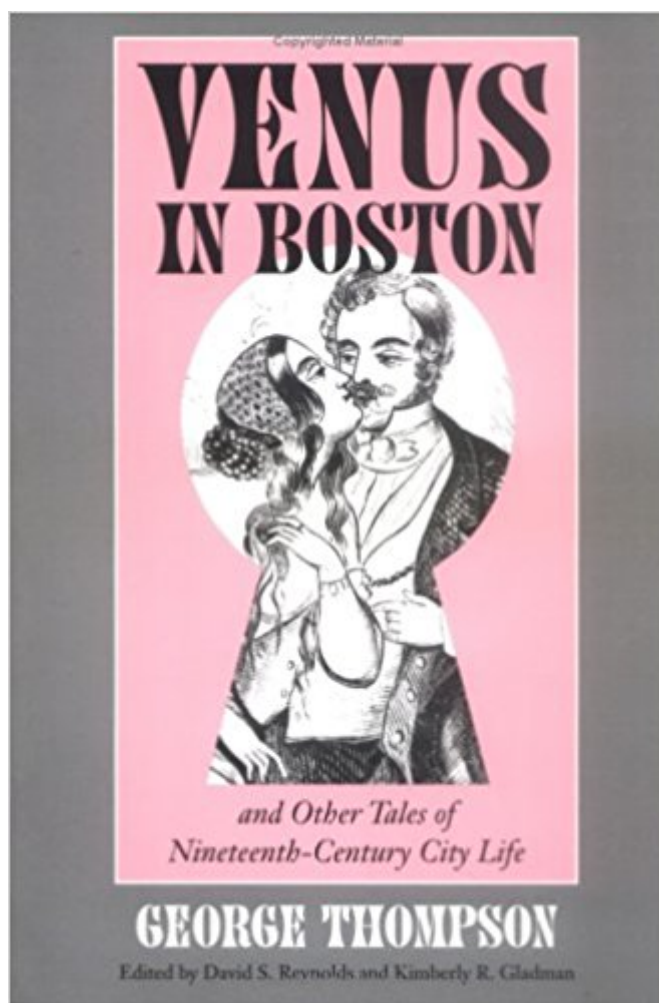


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"Venus In Boston" And Other Tales Of Nineteenth-Century City Life



Synopsis

This book reprints for the first time since the 1850s three short works by George Thompson (1823–c. 1873), one of antebellum America's most successful and prolific authors of sensational fiction. Beginning in the 1840s, he wrote stories for sporting papers like *Life in Boston* and *New York*, edited the humorous New York weekly *The Broadway Belle*, and contributed regularly to the sexually explicit *Venus' Miscellany*. He also published dozens of novels, most of which were set in Northeastern cities. His writing blends entertainment and social protest, combining commentary on such issues as urbanization, poverty, race, and class with some of the era's most shocking depictions of sex and violence. The three works in this volume offer a rich representative sample of Thompson's writing. The two novels—*Venus in Boston* and *City Crimes*—depict the American city as a place of dark mystery, bawdy humor, and near-universal corruption peopled with con artists and criminals of all kinds. In each novel, a complex narrative structure interweaves multiple stories of exploited labor, abuse of power, seduction, intrigue, and crime. Thompson's autobiography, *My Life*, presents the author's life in terms nearly as lively as his fiction. Thompson's zestful, unconventional writings fly in the face of the stereotypical view of Victorian America as straitlaced and sentimental. Ideal for use as a classroom text, this new edition includes a scholarly introduction and an extensive bibliography.

Book Information

Paperback: 448 pages

Publisher: University of Massachusetts Press (September 30, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1558493263

ISBN-13: 978-1558493261

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 1.1 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #183,854 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #57 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Short Stories & Anthologies > Short Stories #264 in Books > Literature & Fiction > United States > Classics #692 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Biographical

Customer Reviews

"I can think of no antebellum author more deserving of recovery than George Thompson. This is a

book that scholars, students, and teachers need to be reading. It will be welcomed by both critics and historians alike as an important and unique peek into the darker recesses of the antebellum underworld. The introduction to the volume constitutes the most thorough, accessible, and useful account of Thompson's life and work to date. The editors carefully reconstruct the author's world and do a remarkable job of bringing his books to life."â •Leon Jackson, University of South Carolina, Columbia

Writings by one of America's earliest and best-selling authors of sensational fiction.

I had to read the second story in this book, *City Crimes*, for a college class in 19th century American literature focusing on antebellum literature. Although it is not canonical it is important and interesting to know about popular fiction from certain time periods which this provides. I enjoyed the second story so much that I want to read the rest of the book. Brought up a lot of different class discussions that were very interesting. Not well documented stories, so this is a very good source to learn about an American author that is not studied often. The third section of the book is his autobiographer. Parts of stories can be grotesque in nature, but that is the kind of popular literature at the time. Fun read!

These two samples of Nineteenth Century popular fiction make for lurid and thrilling, if somewhat violent reading. "City Crimes" especially would be a film far more gripping than "Gangs of New York", although not for the faint-hearted. Most of the works of this genre exist only on reels of microfilm and hopefully one day will become more accessible.

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