



"Venus in Boston" and Other Tales of Nineteenth-Century City Life

George Thompson

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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.

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