

Why in the world did not Mr. Butler just sit down and tell the really pretty and interesting story every now and then cropping up through the dullness of *Domesticus* without such an absurd beclouding of it in a satire? Why did he not call his "Prince" and "Princess" Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, "Contrabandus" a black servant, "the Palace" on "Via Quinta" number so-and-so Fifth Avenue, the "Curator" a policeman, the "Princess Gloriosa" Mrs. Jones, and the "Sisterhood" the anti-slavery party? His book would have been then flesh and flesh, and its dart far more trenchant. The allegorical treatment is simply nonsense. It is only when we forget it for a moment that we enjoy the book; conscious, too, that the very relapses from it which give us our only pleasure in it are inartistic, and show of what stuff the basis of the satire is made. A morality of the sort aimed at in *Domesticus* must either be graceful or dignified. If no allegory had been attempted in *Domesticus* it would have possessed both grace and dignity. As it is, we find neither in it; and little but a misconception of what a satire of to-day, social or any other, ought to be. As we read between the lines of its nearly three hundred pages of high keyed, unnecessary artificiality, we are the more keenly disappointed, because, as we have said, we see everywhere the material for a charming and natural story of human nature and New York life absolutely spoiled. (New York: Scribner's.)

....Col. William Allen Butler will long be remembered as the author of a society pasquinade, the wit and truth of which exceeded modest dimensions. If his poem "Nothing to Wear," were reprinted, say as a gift-book, to-day, it would be circulated far more rapidly than many a new skit, and strike home quite as pointedly as on the day it left his pen. Mr. Butler has waited a long time before writing his first novel. It lies before us—*Domesticus: A Tale of the Imperial City*. We can only give it brevet rank as a novel. It is predominantly a social satire, with New York before and during the Civil War as its scene, and the incidents of home, commercial and political life there as its material. Condensed, it tells how a rich merchant married a charming, resolute little wife; how she had great trouble in getting servants or making them efficient; how he lost his estate and became a ruined man; and last how the shipwreck of his fortune (which he recovers in the end) opened the eyes of the pair to the hollowness and artificiality of fashionable society, drew the household closer together, and taught them that human hearts are worth more than coronets. Unluckily, by enwrapping this fiction quite hopelessly under the guise of allegory, Mr. Butler has ruined his book, and given us a labored, turgid, artificial thing, fantastic without grace, and pompous without dignity. The worst of it is that we plainly see that a very good book has been spoiled in *Domesticus*.