

AMERICAN
LITERATURE



LONG

AMERICAN LITERATURE

A STUDY OF THE MEN AND THE BOOKS
THAT IN THE EARLIER AND LATER TIMES
REFLECT THE AMERICAN SPIRIT

BY

WILLIAM J. LONG

'As a strong bird on pinions free,
Joyous, the amplest spaces heavenward cleaving,
Such be the thought I'd think of thee, America!'

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TO
FRANCES
MY LITTLE DAUGHTER OF THE
REVOLUTION

PREFACE

The aim of this book is to present an accurate and interesting record of American literature from the Colonial to the present age, and to keep the record in harmony with the history and spirit of the American people.

The author has tried to make the work national in its scope and to emphasize the men and the books that reflect the national traditions. As literature in general tends to humanize and harmonize men by revealing their common characteristics, so every national literature unites a people by upholding the ideals which the whole nation reveres and follows. Any book therefore which tends, as Lowell once said, to make you and me strangers to each other or to any part of our common country can hardly be considered as a true part of American letters. For there are no Mason-and-Dixon lines, no political or geographical divisions in the national consciousness. Bradford and Byrd, Cooper and Simms, Longfellow and Lanier, Hawthorne and Bret Harte are here studied side by side in their respective periods, not as representative of North or South or East or West, but as so many different reflections of the same life and the same spirit.

Though our Colonial and Revolutionary writers are but little known to modern readers, considerable attention has here been given them, and for three reasons : because they are well worth knowing for their own sakes ; because American literature did not begin with Irving or Franklin, as is often assumed ; and because our present literature and history have no vital significance if dissociated from the past. For two hundred years our

countrymen toiled obscurely and heroically in a great wilderness that was then called "the fag ends of the earth." Animated by a great love of liberty, and determined to secure it forever to their descendants, they sought first to create free states, and then to establish a free nation on democratic foundations. No greater work was ever undertaken by human hearts and hands; no single achievement of the ancient or the modern world was ever characterized by finer wisdom or courage or devotion. The men and women who did this work were splendidly loyal to high principles; "they steered by stars the elder shipmen knew"; and so deeply did they implant their moral and political ideals in the American mind that the man or the book that now departs from them is known, almost instinctively, to be untrue to his own country and people.

To know these men and women is to have the pride and the strength of noble ancestry; it is to have also a deeper love and veneration for America; and the only way to know them, the founders of our nation and pioneers of our precious liberty, is through their own writings, which furnish the human and intensely personal background of their history. This knowledge of our country, of the noble lives that were lived here, of the brave deeds that were wrought and the high ideals that were followed before our day,—this vital connection with the living and triumphant Past which comes from literature is the foundation of all true patriotism.

The general plan of this work is like that which the author followed, and which proved effective, in an earlier history of English literature. It divides our literary history into a few great periods, continuous in their development, yet having each its distinct and significant characteristics. Colonial literature, for example, is regarded as an expression of the fundamental moral and spiritual ideals of America, and Revolutionary literature as a reflection of the practical and political genius of the

nation. The study of each period includes : a historical outline of important events and of significant social and political conditions ; a general survey of the literature of the period, its dominant tendencies, and its relation to literary movements in England and on the Continent ; a detailed treatment of every major writer, including a biography, an analysis of his chief works, and a critical appreciation of his place and influence in our national literature ; a consideration of the minor writers and of the notable miscellaneous works of the period ; and at the end a general summary, with selections recommended for reading, bibliography, texts, suggestive questions, and other helps to teachers and students.

In the matter of proportions, it should be clearly understood that the amount of space given to an author is not in itself an indication of the relative amount of time which the student should give to that author's works. A trustworthy history of our literature will not fail to record and to appreciate the important work of Freneau, for instance, or of Charles Brockden Brown ; but very little time can be given to the reading of such authors, for the simple reason that their works are not available. In dealing with our early literature, very little of which is now accessible, a textbook must in some degree supply the place of a library, and the text has here been expanded with a view to presenting a faithful record of Mather and Edwards, of Hamilton and Jefferson, and of many others who in the early days exercised a profound influence on American life or letters. It is hoped that, by reading and freely discussing the text of the Colonial and Revolutionary periods, teachers and students may form a clear and just conception of the beginnings of our literature before taking up the study of Irving, Bryant, and other familiar writers of the nineteenth century.

Among these later writers also the amount of space which each receives is no sure indication of the present value of his

work or of the amount of time which one may profitably spend in his company. For authors are much like other folks ; some are to be known as familiar friends, and it is enough for certain others if we know about them. It is often assumed that, because a text devotes five pages to one poet and ten to another, the latter must be regarded as more important than the former ; but the assumption is without foundation, since there must enter into the history of an author many considerations besides the literary merit of his work. Poe and Whitman may serve us as excellent examples. In comparison with Longfellow, who has an unfailing charm for young people, comparatively few works of Poe or Whitman will be read ; but that is no reason why either poet should be slighted in a just history of our literature. One must not forget that Longfellow is our loved household poet ; that it is a simple matter to do justice and render generous tribute to his work, since his place is secure and his merit well recognized. Poe and Whitman, on the other hand, are the most debatable figures in our literature, and whatever critical estimate one may make of either will almost certainly be challenged. It has seemed desirable, therefore, to give such authors ample treatment in order that the student may understand not only the spirit of their work but something also of the critical controversy which has so long raged around them.

To those who may use this book in the classroom the author ventures to state frankly his own conviction that the study of literature is not a matter of intellectual achievement, but rather of discovery and appreciation and delight, — discovery of the abiding interests of humanity, appreciation of the ideals that are as old and as new as the sunrise, and delight in truth and beauty as seen from another's viewpoint and colored by his genius or experience. One might emphasize the fact that literature is not history or science or criticism or college English, or anything else but its own lovely self. Literature is the winsome reflection

of life, which is the most interesting thing in the world; and the study of such a subject should never be made a task but a joy. It might be advisable, therefore, to forget for the nonce our laboratory methods and to begin and end our study of American literature with the liberal reading of good books, with the joyous appreciation of the prose and poetry that reflect the brave American experiment in human living. "The interests that grow out of a meeting like this," said Emerson, "should bind us with new strength to the old, eternal duties."

WILLIAM J. LONG

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GENERAL REFERENCES

The authorities and references named in this book are arranged in two main divisions. In this first list are general works in literature and history that will be useful throughout the entire course of study. This will be supplemented at the end of each chapter by a special bibliography of works dealing with the period under consideration. There are four of these special bibliographies, which include also the most available texts and the best selections for reading.

American Literature. There is no complete or authoritative history of the subject. One of the best general surveys is Richardson, *American Literature, 1607-1885*, 2 vols., or Students' edition, 1 vol. (Putnam, 1888). This is a critical work and contains no biographical material. Two other general histories, each containing a small amount of biography interspersed with critical appreciation, are Trent, *American Literature, in Literatures of the World series* (Appleton, 1903), and Wendell, *A Literary History of America*, in the Library of Literary History (Scribner, 1900). There are also nearly a score of textbooks dealing with the same subject. Pleasant for supplementary reading is Mitchell, *American Lands and Letters*, 2 vols. (Scribner). A brief but excellent outline is given in White, *Sketch of the Philosophy of American Literature* (Ginn and Company).

Periods and Types of Literature. The only complete and scholarly work dealing with any period of our literary history is Tyler, *History of American [Colonial] Literature*, 2 vols., and *Literary History of the Revolution*, 2 vols. (Putnam).

Critical Appreciations. Brownell, *American Prose Masters*; Burton, *Literary Leaders of America*; Vincent, *American Literary Masters*; Vedder, *American Writers of To-day*.

Poetry. Stedman, *Poets of America*; Onderdonk, *History of American Verse*; Collins, *Poetry and Poets of America*; Otis, *American Verse, 1625-1807*.

Fiction. Erskine, *Leading American Novelists*; Perry, *A Study of Prose Fiction*; Smith, *The American Short Story*; Canby, *The Short Story in English*; Matthews, *The Short Story: Specimens illustrating its Development*; Baldwin, *American Short Stories*; Howells, *Criticism in Fiction*; James, *The Art of Fiction*; Loshe, *The Early American Novel*.

History, Humor, etc. Jameson, History of Historical Writing in America; Payne, Leading American Essayists; Haweis, American Humorists; Payne, American Literary Criticism; Sears, History of Oratory; Fulton and Trueblood, British and American Eloquence (lives of twenty-two orators, with selections); Seilhamer, History of the American Theatre, 1749-1797, 3 vols.; Roden, Later American Plays, 1831-1900; Smyth, The Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors; Hudson, Journalism in the United States; Thomas, History of Printing in America (1810).

Literary Essays. One of the most significant features of our later literature is the number of books of literary essays and reminiscences, such as Lowell's *My Study Windows*, and *Among my Books*, Howells's *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*, Trowbridge's *My Own Story*, Woodberry's *Makers of Literature*, Higginson's *Cheerful Yesterdays*, and many others. These will be referred to in the special bibliographies.

Sectional Works. National Studies in American Letters, edited by Woodberry, is a series of volumes each dealing with a group of authors: Higginson, *Old Cambridge*; Swift, *Brook Farm*; Addison, *The Clergy in American Letters*; Nicholson, *The Hoosiers*; etc. (Macmillan). Baskerville, *Southern Writers*, 2 vols.; Holliday, *History of Southern Literature*; Moses, *Literature of the South*; Lawton, *The New England Poets*; Venable, *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley*.

Biography. Several series of extended biographies are available, the most complete being the *American Men of Letters* (Houghton). A few of our leading authors are found also in *English Men of Letters*, in *Great Writers* series, and in the brief *Beacon Biographies*. The best of these works will be referred to in the special bibliographies. Biographical collections are Adams, *Dictionary of American Authors* (Houghton, 1897); Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, 6 vols. (Appleton, 1886-1889); Allibone, *Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors*, 6 vols. (Lippincott, 1858-1891); Mary Howes, *American Bookmen* (Dodd, 1898); Fields, *Biographical Notes and Personal Sketches* (Houghton, 1881); Tuckerman, *Personal Recollections of Notable People*, 2 vols. (Dodd, 1895).

Bibliography and Chronology. A very useful book of reference is Whitcomb, *Chronological Outlines of American Literature* (Macmillan, 1906). Wegelin, *Early American Poetry*, 2 vols., *Early American Fiction*, *Early American Plays*; Foley, *American Authors, 1795-1895* (privately printed, 1906). For a list of historical romances see the second volume of Baker, *History in Fiction*, 2 vols. (1907), or Nield, *Guide to the Best Historical Novels and Tales* (1902). The best guide to periodicals is Poole's *Index to Magazine Literature*.

Books of Selections. General: A single volume covering the entire field of American prose and poetry is *Readings in American Literature*, edited ✓

by Miss MacAlarney and Miss Calhoun (announced, 1913, Ginn and Company); Stedman and Hutchinson, *Library of American Literature*, 11 vols. (Webster, 1888-1890); Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia of American Literature*, 2 vols. (revised 1875, Scribner); Bronson, *American Poems*, 1625-1892 (University of Chicago Press, 1912); Lounsbury, *American Poems* (Yale University Press, 1912); Stedman, *An American Anthology*, 1787-1900 (Houghton, 1900); Carpenter, *American Prose* (Macmillan, 1898); Harding, *Select Orations Illustrating American Political History*, 1761-1895 (Macmillan); Johnson, *American Orations*, 3 vols. (Putnam); Kettell, *Specimens of American Poetry*, 3 vols. (1829); Griswold, *Poets and Poetry of America* (1842), *Prose Writers of America* (1847), *Female Poets of America* (1848).

Colonial and Revolutionary: Trent and Wells, *Colonial Prose and Poetry*, 3 vols. (Crowell); Cairns, *Selections from Early American Writers* (Macmillan).

National Period: Page, *Chief American Poets* (Houghton); Sladen, *Younger American Poets*, 1830-1890 (Crowell); Knowles, *Golden Treasury of American Songs and Lyrics* (Page); Crandall, *Representative American Sonnets* (Houghton).

War and Patriotism: Eggleston, *American War Ballads and Lyrics*, 2 vols. (Putnam); Moore, *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution* (1856); Sargent, *Loyalist Poetry of the Revolution* (1857); Moore, *Songs of the Soldiers*, 3 vols. (Putnam, 1864); Brown, *Bugle Echoes*, Northern and Southern songs of the Civil War (White, 1886); Matthews, *Poems of American Patriotism* (Scribner); Nellie Wallingford, *American History by American Poets*, 2 vols. (Duffield); Stevenson, *Poems of American History* (Houghton); Scollard, *Ballads of American Bravery* (Silver).

Sectional: Trent, *Southern Writers: Selections in Prose and Verse* (Macmillan); Mims and Payne, *Southern Prose and Poetry* (Scribner); Louise Manly, *Southern Literature* (Johnson).

Miscellaneous: *The Humbler Poets: Newspaper and Periodical Verse*, first series, 1870-1885, edited by Thompson; second series, 1885-1910, edited by Wallace and Rice (McClurg); Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (Sturgis); Barton, *Old Plantation Hymns* (Boston, 1899).

On the Study of Literature. Woodberry, *Appreciation of Literature*; Harrison, *The Choice of Books*; Stedman, *The Nature and Elements of Poetry*; Caffin, *Appreciation of the Drama*; Perry, *Study of Prose Fiction*; Gayley and Scott, *Introduction to the Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism*. A useful little book for students and teachers preparing for college-entrance English is Trent, Hanson and Brewster, *An Introduction to the English Classics* (1911, Ginn and Company).

Texts and Helps. Before beginning the study of literature the teacher or student should write for the latest catalogue of such publications as the Standard English Classics (Ginn and Company), Riverside Literature Series (Houghton), Maynard's English Classics (Merrill), Pocket Classics (Macmillan), Lake Classics (Scott), Everyman's Library (Dutton), etc. Almost every educational house now publishes an inexpensive series of texts devoted to the best works of English and American authors. Many of them are well edited and arranged with special reference to class use. In studying the major writers these handy little volumes will be found much more satisfactory than the cumbersome anthologies. (References to the various school series will be made in "Selections for Reading" at the end of each chapter. Standard texts of complete works will be listed in the special bibliographies.)

American History. Textbooks: For ready reference the student should have at hand a concise, reliable text, such as Montgomery, Student's American History; Muzzey, American History; Channing, Student's History of the United States; Elson, History of the United States; etc. For more extended reading the following are recommended:

General: The American Nation, edited by Hart, 27 vols. (Harper), is the most complete history of our country. American History Series, 6 vols.: Colonial Era, by Fisher; French War and the Revolution, by Sloane, etc. (Scribner). Epochs of American History, 3 vols.: The Colonies, by Thwaite; Formation of the Union, by Hart; Division and Reunion, by Wilson (Longmans). Narrative and Critical History of the United States, edited by Winsor, 8 vols. (Houghton); McMaster, History of the People of the United States, 1784-1860, 8 vols. (Appleton). An especially valuable reference work for the student of our early literature is American History told by Contemporaries, edited by Hart; 4 vols. (Macmillan).

Social: Low, The American People, a Study in National Psychology, 2 vols. (Houghton, 1909, 1911).

Political: Stanwood, History of the Presidency to 1896, a revised edition of the same author's History of Presidential Elections (Houghton); Johnston, American Political History, 2 vols. (Putnam); Gordy, History of Political Parties in the United States, 2 vols. (Holt), covers the period from 1787 to 1828.

Biography: Lives of important historical characters in the American Statesmen series (Houghton); other biographical series are the Makers of America (Dodd), Great Commanders (Appleton), and the so-called True Biographies (Lippincott). Individual biographies, collections, and autobiographies will be listed in the special bibliography at the end of each chapter.

Bibliography: Channing, Hart and Turner, Guide to the Study and Reading of American History (revised 1912, Ginn and Company); Andrews, Gambrill and Tall, Bibliography of History (Longmans).

CONTENTS

	PAGE
GENERAL REFERENCES	xviii

CHAPTER I. THE COLONIAL PERIOD	I
--	---

Introduction—the Spirit of our First Writings. Beginnings of American Literature. Why the Colonists wrote Few Books. Why study Colonial Records?

Colonial Annalists and Historians. Bradford. Winthrop. Some Old Love Letters. Sewall. Byrd. Various Chronicles of Colonial Days. Satire and Criticism. Histories. Indian Narratives.

Colonial Poetry. *The Bay Psalm Book*. Characteristics of Early Poetry. Anne Bradstreet. Wigglesworth. Godfrey.

Theological Writers. Cotton Mather. Edwards.

Summary of Colonial History and Literature. Selections for Reading. Bibliography. Questions. Subjects for Essays.

CHAPTER II. THE PERIOD OF THE REVOLUTION	86
--	----

Historical Outline. Social Development. The Stamp Act and what followed. The Revolution. The Constitution.

Literature of the Revolution. General Tendencies. Revolutionary Poetry. Revolutionary Prose. Citizen Literature.

Transition from Colony to Nation. Benjamin Franklin.

Orators and Statesmen of the Revolution. Typical Speeches. Otis. Patrick Henry. Revolutionary Statesmen. Washington. Permanent Political Parties. Hamilton. Jefferson.

The Poetry of the Revolution. Songs and Ballads. The Hartford Wits. Barlow. Dwight. Trumbull. Beginning of Romantic Poetry. Freneau. Miscellaneous Verse.

Various Prose Works. Thomas Paine. John Woolman. Beginning of American Fiction. Charles Brockden Brown.

Summary of the Period. Selections for Reading. Bibliography. Questions. Topics for Research and for Essays.

CHAPTER III. THE FIRST NATIONAL OR CREATIVE PERIOD

169

* The Background of History. National Unity. Expansion. Democracy. Industrial Development.

Literature of the Period. General Characteristics. Poets and Prose Writers. Irving. Bryant. Cooper. Poe. Simms.

Minor Fiction. Catherine Sedgwick. Susanna Rowson. Melville. Dana. Kennedy.

Minor Poetry. The Knickerbocker School. Willis. Drake. Halleck. The Orators. Clay. Calhoun. Everett. Webster. The Historians. Miscellaneous Works. Juveniles.

Summary of the Period. Selections for Reading. Bibliography. Questions. Subjects for Research.

CHAPTER IV. THE SECOND NATIONAL OR CREATIVE PERIOD

270

History of the Period. General Outlines. The Age of Agitation. The War.

Literary and Social Movements. National and Sectional Literature. Mental Unrest. Communistic Societies. Brook Farm. Transcendentalism. General Characteristics of the Major Literature.

The Greater Poets and Essayists. Longfellow. Whittier. Emerson. Lowell. Holmes. Lanier. Whitman.

Minor Poetry. Lyrics of War and Peace. Southern Singers. Timrod. Hayne. Ryan. Singers East and West. Taylor. Stoddard. Joaquin Miller. Various other Poets.

Novelists and Story-tellers. Hawthorne. John Esten Cooke. Harriet Beecher Stowe. Bret Harte. Typical Story-tellers.

Miscellaneous Prose Writers. Thoreau. The Historians. Motley. Parkman.

Summary of the Period. Selections for Reading. Bibliography. Questions. Topics for Research and for Essays.

CHAPTER V. SOME TENDENCIES IN OUR RECENT LITERATURE

447

Impossibility of a History of the Present Age. Reminiscent Writings. Hale. Curtis. Higginson. Mitchell. Discovery of American Literature.

The Poetry of the Present. The New Folk Songs. Stedman. Aldrich. "America Singing."

Our Recent Fiction. Romance and Realism. Representative Realists. Howells. Modified Types of Realism and Romance. The Modern Novel. Mark Twain. Joel Chandler Harris. Conclusion.

INDEX

473

FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
POE'S COTTAGE AT FORDHAM	Frontispiece
<i>From the etching by Charles F. W. Mielatz</i>	
TITLE-PAGE OF THE "DAY OF DOOM".	50
<i>By Michael Wigglesworth, 1715. Courtesy of the Lenox Library</i>	
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN	106
<i>From the portrait by Duplessis</i>	
THE TORY'S DAY OF JUDGMENT	136
<i>An illustration from John Trumbull's "M' Fingal," New York, 1795. Courtesy of the Lenox Library</i>	
THE EDICT OF WILLIAM THE TESTY	186
<i>Knickerbocker's "History of New York." From the painting by Boughton; property of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>	
RIP VAN WINKLE	192
<i>A portrait of Joseph Jefferson as Rip Van Winkle, by Marion Swinton</i>	
STATUE OF WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT, NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY	202
WASHINGTON IRVING AND HIS LITERARY FRIENDS AT SUNNYSIDE	250
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	270
<i>Pen etching by R. M. Chandler. From a photograph made in 1864</i>	
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW	284
<i>From an engraving after the portrait by Lawrence</i>	
THE PARISH PRIEST	292
<i>From "Evangeline," edition of 1882. Engraved by F. O. C. Darley. Courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Company</i>	
RALPH WALDO EMERSON	318
<i>From an unfinished portrait by Furness. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia</i>	
THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, D.C.	448

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
The Settlement of Jamestown. <i>From a print in the Congressional Library, Washington</i>	8
Governor Bradford's House. <i>From a print owned by the Lenox Library</i>	11
A Portion of the Bradford MS. "History of Plimoth Plantation"	13
Old Fort, Plymouth. <i>From an old engraving</i>	15
John Winthrop. <i>From the Van Dyke portrait</i>	19
Samuel Sewall. <i>From an old engraving</i>	27
William Byrd. <i>From the portrait at "Brandon," Virginia</i>	33
Westover, Virginia—Home of the Byrds	38
John Eliot. <i>From a portrait in the possession of the family of the late William Whiting</i>	43
Title-page of " <i>The Bay Psalm Book</i> ." <i>The first English book printed in America. Courtesy of the Lenox Library</i>	44
Illustration from the <i>Doctrina Christiana</i> , printed in Mexico City by Juan Pablos in 1544. <i>The first book printed in America that contained cuts to illustrate the text</i>	45
Title-page of the " <i>New England Primer</i> ," <i>First Edition, 1727. Courtesy of the Lenox Library</i>	52
Cotton Mather. <i>From the Peter Pelham portrait. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.</i>	57
Harvard College in 1726. <i>From a print by Paul Revere</i>	60
Title-page of the " <i>Magnalia Christi Americana</i> ." <i>London, 1702</i>	65
Jonathan Edwards. <i>From a portrait that was owned by the late Eugene Edwards</i>	71
— Benjamin Franklin. <i>From a print by Ritchie, after the drawing by C. H. Cochin, 1777</i>	99
Title-page from " <i>Poor Richard's Almanac</i> ." <i>From the third impression of 1733</i>	105
Franklin's Printing Press	110
Patrick Henry. <i>From the portrait by Thomas Sully</i>	113
George Washington. <i>From the Athenaeum portrait by Gilbert Stuart</i>	115
Alexander Hamilton. <i>From the Trumbull portrait. Courtesy of the New York Public Library</i>	118
Early View of King's College (Columbia). <i>From an old engraving</i>	119