

**AMERICAN WRITERS  
OF THE PRESENT  
DAY. 1890 TO 1920**

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American Writers of the Present Day. 1890 to 1920 by Hoagson Burnett Rankin

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**HOAGSON BURNETT RANKIN**

**AMERICAN WRITERS  
OF THE PRESENT  
DAY. 1890 TO 1920**



# American Writers

OF

## The Present Day

1890 to 1920

BY

T. E. RANKIN

PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Second Edition, revised and enlarged

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1920

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By T. E. RANKIN

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## Preface

We cannot all agree with Brunetiere that in art and literature the beginning of wisdom is to distrust what we like. But there is no division of opinion about what is the kind of books to which the majority of readers today devote themselves,—it is only the kind that they "like." No one of good sense any longer believes that we ought to deny ourselves anything which gives us pleasure simply because it gives us pleasure; but it is not the aim of this book to give aid and comfort to those who read for the sake of emotional excitement alone. "Our heritage as Americans is independence, originality, self-reliance, and sympathetic energy animated by a strong ethical instinct, and these are the forces which can produce a higher and broader civilization than the world has yet seen if we choose to have it so." We shall not be choosing to have it so, if, in feeding the mind, as the mass of people do chiefly by reading, we overlook the books which touch moral truth and human passion with largeness, sanity, and attractiveness of form.

And so what we shall try to do in the following pages is to keep ourselves in contact with only those books which amid the deluge of publication within the last thirty years are most worth while finding and

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keeping for companionship,—books that satisfy not first and foremost the demand for novelty, but the cry for truth.

I am glad to acknowledge that I am indebted to Professor R. W. Cowden for expert advice in reading the proof for this book.



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