

# **AMERICAN LITERATURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649114177

American literature by Leon Kellner & Julia Franklin

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**LEON KELLNER & JULIA FRANKLIN**

**AMERICAN  
LITERATURE**



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*The American Books*

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AMERICAN  
LITERATURE

BY  
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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN  
BY  
JULIA FRANKLIN



WITH A PREFACE  
BY  
GUSTAV POLLAK

GARDEN CITY                      NEW YORK  
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY  
1915

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## PREFACE

IN HIS "Geschichte der Nordamerikanischen Literatur," published at Leipzig a year ago, Professor Leon Kellner undertook to acquaint Germans, in brief outline, with the characteristic features of the literature of our country. The verdict pronounced on the two little volumes by the press was so favorable that an English translation, for the benefit of American readers, has seemed justifiable. The author's knowledge of his subject, his broad outlook, and his incisive and independent judgments will, it is hoped, commend themselves to audiences able to compare his methods with literary canons generally accepted in this country and in England.

It had been intended to submit the English version to Professor Kellner's scrutiny, but the exigencies of the European war have made this impossible. The University of Czernowitz, in the Austrian crown land of Bukowina, where Doctor Kellner has filled the chair of English philology and literature since 1904, is closed, the

town itself during the last few months having been alternately occupied by the Russians and Austrians. I have attempted to learn the whereabouts of Professor Kellner, but have so far been unsuccessful. When I met him last summer in Vienna, shortly before the outbreak of the war, he spoke, with all the warmth of his enthusiastic nature, of his hope of visiting our country. Since then the fates have interfered with all his plans.

In accordance with Professor Kellner's general views on the subject, as gathered in my talks with him, I have permitted myself to suggest to the publishers of the present work the advisability of omitting the concluding portion of the book, which consisted in the main of a rapid survey of writers not elsewhere treated by the author, and was supposed to bring out the characteristics of the various states. In doing so, I have felt that I was but carrying out Doctor Kellner's intentions, since he expressed to me his earnest wish to make any changes in proof which were in the direction of greater accuracy in detail, and also requested me to indicate what, in my opinion, had better be omitted. It may likewise be proper to mention that Kellner's vivid characterizations of New England life have

been left untouched, even where the reader must make allowance for the fact that the conditions upon which the author comments are rather those of a bygone time than of the present day.

It will be seen that Professor Kellner's volume is not a history of American literature in any exhaustive sense. This he could not have written within the limits which he set himself, but he has succeeded in doing what no German writer before him has ever attempted—that is to say, in tracing briefly the main currents of our literature, in placing before the reader vivid sketches of our great literary figures outlined against an ample historical and philosophical background, and in introducing a mass of minor writers the characterization of whom, if only in a few rapid strokes, gives color and animation to the whole picture. American letters have hitherto received but scant justice at the hands of German scholars. Only a very few literary historians, such as Brunnemann, Knortz, and Engel, have aimed at giving a survey of the general aspects of the subject, while scholars like Hermann Grimm and Anton Schönbach have contented themselves with describing to their countrymen some one outstanding literary figure, such as Emerson and Hawthorne.