

**INTRODUCTION TO THE
STUDY OF AMERICAN
LITERATURE**

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Introduction to the Study of American Literature by Brander Matthews

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BRANDER MATTHEWS

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AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE STUDY OF
AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY
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To my Friend and Colleague
NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER
DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY
IN COLUMBIA COLLEGE
1934





PREFATORY NOTE

THIS book is intended as an introduction to the study of American literature. Although the chapters on the separate authors are wholly distinct, they have been so planned that each of them prepares the way for its successor, and that all of them together outline the changing circumstances under which American literature has developed. An attempt has been made to show how each of the chief American authors influenced his time, and how he in turn was influenced by it; and also to indicate how each of them was related to the others, both personally and artistically.

Bearing in mind the fact that the student needs to have his attention centered on vital points, all dates and all proper names, and all titles of books not absolutely essential, have been rigorously omitted. Interest has thus been concentrated on the literary career of each of the greater writers and on their practice of the literary art, in the hope and expectation that the student will be encouraged and stimulated to read their works for his own pleasure. After the consideration of these more important authors, one by one, the writers of less consequence have been discussed briefly in a single chapter; and in like manner a single chapter only has been devoted to a summary consideration of the condition of our literature at the end of the nineteenth century.

To arouse the student's interest in the authors as actual men, the illustrations chosen have been confined to portraits and views, and to facsimiles of manuscripts. To enable him to see for himself the successive stages of the growth of American literature, and to let him discover how the authors sometimes came one after another and sometimes worked side by side, there has been appended also a chronological table of the chief dates in our literary history.

As mere text-book instruction can never be an adequate substitute for the student's own acquaintance with the actual works of the authors discussed, there have been annexed to every chapter bibliographical notes calling attention to the editions most suitable for the student's reading, and also to the best biographies and to a few of the most suggestive criticisms.

The thanks of the author and of the publishers are due to Miss Alice M. Longfellow, Professor Norton, Mr. H. G. O. Blake, Mr. Edward W. Emerson, Mr. Walter R. Benjamin, and Gen. J. G. Wilson, for kindly furnishing the original manuscripts herewith reproduced; to Mr. F. D. Stone, for aid in making a facsimile of Franklin's "Almanac"; and to Dr. Chas. H. J. Douglas of the Brooklyn Boys' High School, for preparing the most of the questions appended to every chapter—questions intended to be suggestive only and by no means exhaustive.

B. M.

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