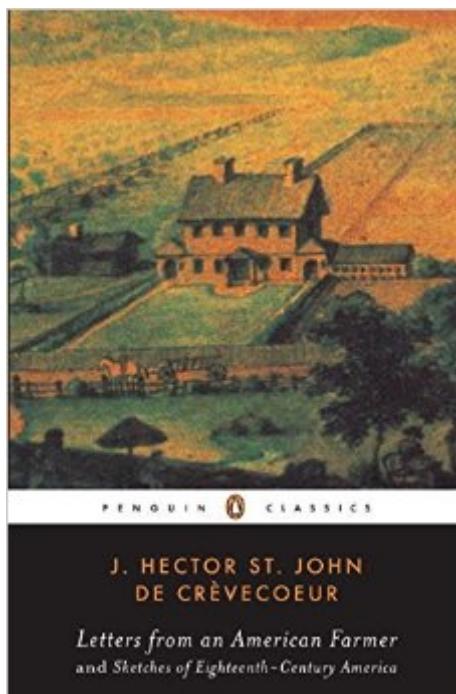


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Letters From An American Farmer And Sketches Of Eighteenth-Century America (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

America's physical and cultural landscape is captured in these two classics of American history. Letters provides an invaluable view of the pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary eras; Sketches details in vivid prose the physical setting in which American settlers created their history. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

I picked up my copy of this fascinating book on a whim at a library sale, and it's turned out to be one of my best choices of the past year. A series of letters by a Frenchman on farming life in 18th Century America, it not only offers a wealth of details that enable the reader to visualize everything, but it's written in comfortably informative prose with a touch of poetry. Both as a vivid description of everyday life & as a naturalist's impressions of the countryside, it places the reader in the midst of that world, engaging all of the senses. For example, the chapter on a snow-storm takes us through the changes of weather as the storm builds & approaches; pays attention to the farmers, their livestock & their fields; and offers countless little human touches -- as when the farmer finishes sheltering his animals at the beginning of the storm, coming inside in a coat of snow & ice, to be greeted by his wife with a mug of gingered cider beside the roaring fire. You can almost smell the

wood smoke & the cider! The letters range over a wide swath of territory, sometimes centering on overall sections of the new country, sometimes providing a close-up of something specific, such as a snake or hummingbird. Both the beauties & the perils of farm life are examined with an intelligent, sympathetic eye. In many ways, this strikes me as a predecessor to Thoreau in its delighted interest in & curiosity about tiny things many people might take for granted, if they noticed them at all. For a book well over 200 years old, it's remarkably readable. What makes it even more interesting is the introduction, which explains that it straddles the blurry border between fact & fiction.

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