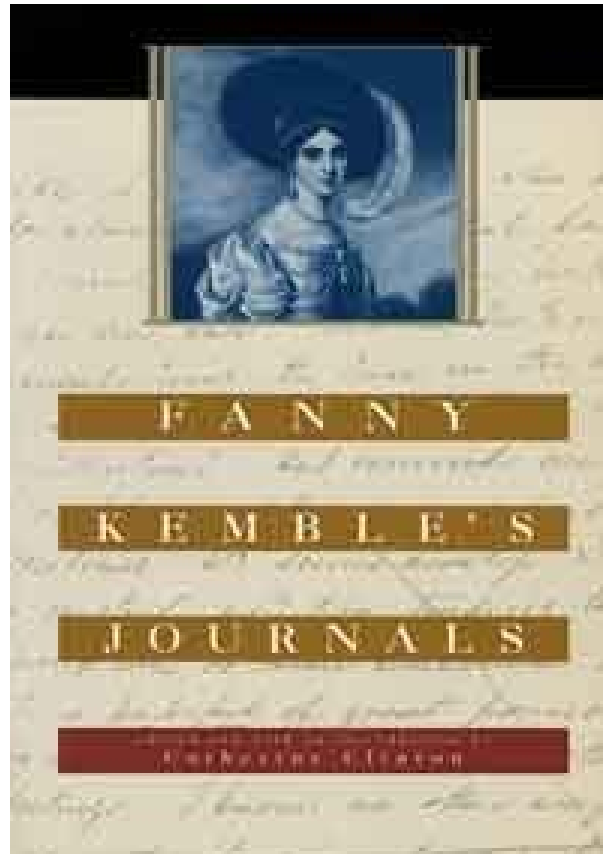
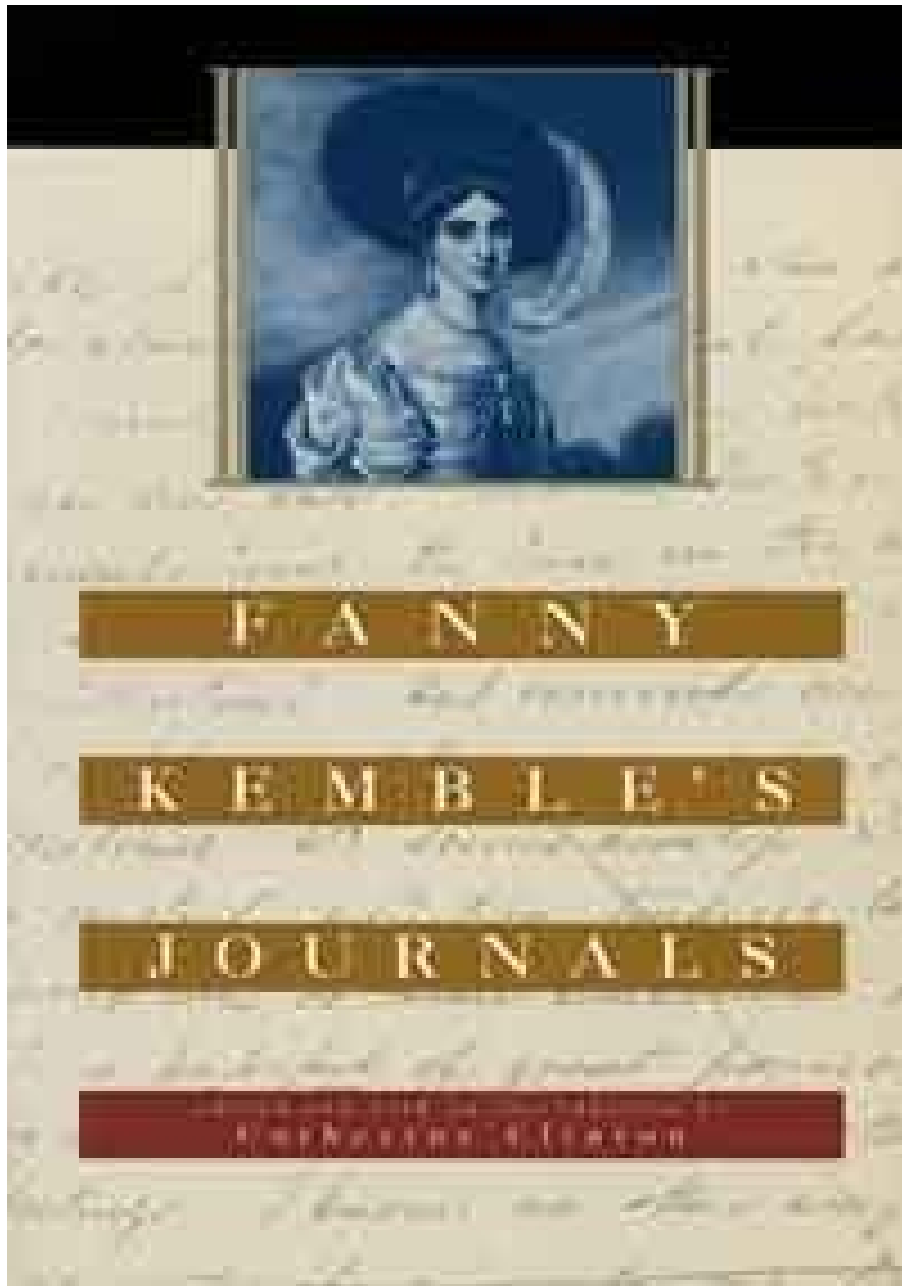


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Henry James called Fanny Kemble's autobiography "one of the most animated autobiographies in the language." Born into the first family of the British stage, Fanny Kemble was one of the most famous woman writers of the English-speaking world, a best-selling author on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to her essays, poetry, plays, and a novel, Kemble published six works of memoir, eleven volumes in all, covering her life, which began in the first decade of the nineteenth century and ended in the last. Her autobiographical writings are compelling evidence of Kemble's wit and talent, and they also offer a dazzling overview of her transatlantic world.

Kemble kept up a running commentary in letters and diaries on the great issues of her day. The selections here provide a narrative thread tracing her intellectual development—especially her views on women and slavery. She is famous for her identification with abolitionism, and many excerpts reveal her passionate views on the subject. The selections show a life full of personal tragedy as well as professional achievements. An elegant introduction provides a context for appreciating Kemble's remarkable life and achievements, and the excerpts from her journals allow her, once again, to speak for herself.

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

##### Fanny Kemble's Journals

By rebugging

I was attracted to this book after I saw the movie, *Enslavement*, based on the life of Fanny Kemble who lived before, during and after the Civil War. This book uses excerpts from her letters and journals to tell the story of her adult life, but it does not contain all of her written material. She published several journals, letter collections, and plays. Fanny was a remarkable woman, obviously much before her time. She was unusually independent and energetic, and her writing includes few of the stereotypes typical of the period. However, we are able to see how the customs of society restricted her ability to act, especially her efforts to help eliminate slavery and improve the life of her husband's slaves. Because of her popularity as an actress she was able to earn a living after divorcing her husband, but he had control over their children until they reached adulthood. This book gives unusual insight into the lifestyles and concerns of the period. It actually reads like a novel.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

##### Great Look into the mind of a powerful women

By James

I must say, I have never seen insight so dignified on such a subject in all my years of book review. When I read this book, every page enlighten me with an overwhelming sensation of sadness, guilt, freedom and anger. Every one of my emotions were totally stimulated by this master piece of modern society. Regardless of the date in which Fanny published this book, it still leaves a gruesome reminder of the pure agony suffered from the hands of Prejudice and Hate. I have just finished watching the TV movie of Fanny's story, and I am absolutely blown away by the extreme emotional precision used in creating this film. Let this film and this book be a lasting reminder, to the youth of our age. It is important for the younger teenage

generations of this new century, understand the facts of what had to be done, to win them the lives they have today. I rate this book 5 plus stars. It was amazing. :-) ~ LiteratureLover418thCentury... ~

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A Fascinating Insight into Slavery

By B. P. Walker

Fanny Kemble provides us with a unique and courageous account of the 'peculiar institution' that was thrust upon her by her marriage to Pierce Butler, the wealthy scion of a Southern plantation owner.

Already a celebrated actress when she came to America, Fanny was well-educated and accustomed to earning her own living when she married Pierce. It was only after traveling from Philadelphia to Butler Island, near Darien, Georgia, that she became aware of the full horror and degradation of slavery. She toured the plantation, helped to nurse the sick, did what she could to improve their conditions, and opened her door to all who dared to air their grievances, much to the dismay of her husband. Eventually, their disagreements on these points led to a divorce, and Fanny returned to Europe where she resumed her theatrical career.

This volume also contains Fanny's letters to friends and confidants that provide a valuable insight into the cultural climate in England as well as America for much of the 19th century.

These journals and letters are not only entertaining, but a must for any serious student of American history.

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