ANTIQUE FONTS

Kester

A free letterpress serif traced letter by letter from an 1890s American travel book, ink spread and all, with four printed versions of every lowercase letter.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789 & ? ! “ ”

STYLE	Serif · Old Style	ERA	Victorian
SOURCE	Adventures of Famous Travellers in Many Lands, William L. Allison Company, New York, c. 1893–1894	ORIGINAL TYPE	Ronaldson Old Style (probable), MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan, Philadelphia, 1884
CHARACTERS	94 characters · 225 glyphs	VERSION	0.100

FREE & OPEN SOURCE · SIL OPEN FONT LICENSE 1.1

CAPITALS

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQ
RSTUVWXYZ

LOWERCASE

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

NUMERALS, PUNCTUATION & SYMBOLS

0123456789

!"#$%&'()*,-./:;?@[]l·——‘’ “ ”•…

LIGATURES, AS IN THE BOOK

fi ff fl ffi

F + I F + F F + L F + F + I

NOT INCLUDED

- Accented letters (é è à ñ ü ç and others): Kester is for English text only
- § ¶ † ‡ (section and footnote marks)
- £ ¢ ½ ¼ ¾ © ° + = ×
- The ffl ligature
- Bold and italic styles

Four printed versions of every lowercase letter and three of every capital (one each of X and Z, since only one usable example survives in the book). Each variant comes from a different page and was checked against its main letter's weight. With Contextual Alternates on, as it is by default, Kester rotates through them as you type.

LOWERCASE · EVERY PRINTED VERSION

	MAIN	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3
a	a	a	a	a
b	b	b	b	b
c	c	c	c	c
d	d	d	d	d
e	e	e	e	e
f	f	f	f	f
g	g	g	g	g
h	h	h	h	h
i	i	i	i	i
j	j	j	j	j
k	k	k	k	k
l	l	l	l	l
m	m	m	m	m
n	n	n	n	n
o	o	o	o	o
p	p	p	p	p
q	q	q	q	q
r	r	r	r	r
s	s	s	s	s
t	t	t	t	t
u	u	u	u	u
v	v	v	v	v
w	w	w	w	w
x	x	x	x	x
y	y	y	y	y
z	z	z	z	z

CAPITALS · EVERY PRINTED VERSION

	MAIN	SET 1	SET 2
A	A	A	A
B	B	B	B
C	C	C	C
D	D	D	D
E	E	E	E
F	F	F	F
G	G	G	G
H	H	H	H
I	I	I	I
J	J	J	J
K	K	K	K
L	L	L	L
M	M	M	M
N	N	N	N
O	O	O	O
P	P	P	P
Q	Q	Q	Q
R	R	R	R
S	S	S	S
T	T	T	T
U	U	U	U
V	V	V	V
W	W	W	W
X	X	X	X
Y	Y	Y	Y
Z	Z	Z	Z

OPENTYPE FEATURES

FEATURE	WHAT IT DOES	ON BY DEFAULT
Contextual Alternates (calt)	Cycles each letter through its printed versions, based on the letter before it	Yes
Standard Ligatures (liga)	fi, ff, fl and ffi joined as in the book	Yes
Stylistic Set 1 (ss01)	Switches every letter to its 2nd version	No
Stylistic Set 2 (ss02)	Switches every letter to its 3rd version	No
Stylistic Set 3 (ss03)	Switches lowercase to its 4th version (capitals have 3)	No

Apps without OpenType support show only the main version of each letter.

72 PT

Seal Hunting

48 PT

The Romance of Travel

30 PT

Excitements of Buffalo Hunting

20 PT

Incidents on a Voyage of Captain Hall, 1871

14 PT

Spain and the Bull Fights · Mr. Lewis in Jamaica · The Fox Shark

TEXT SETTINGS

11 ON 13 PT · THE SIZE PRINTED IN THE BOOK

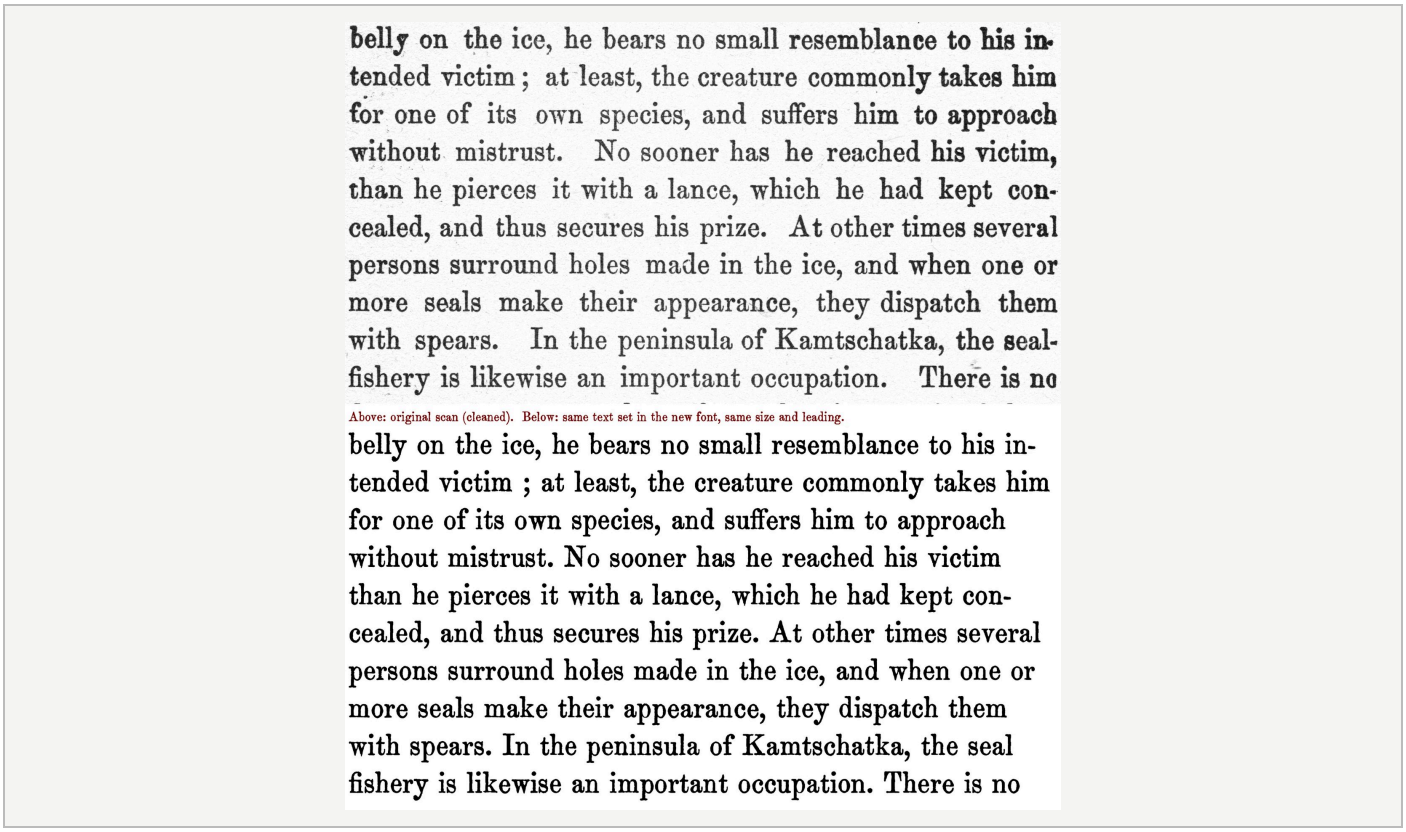
The creature commonly takes him for one of its own species, and suffers him to approach without mistrust. No sooner has he reached his victim, than he pierces it with a lance, which he had kept concealed, and thus secures his prize. At other times several persons surround holes made in the ice, and when one or more seals make their appearance, they dispatch them with spears. In the peninsula of Kamtschatka, the seal-fishery is likewise an important occupation.

9 ON 11 PT

The creature commonly takes him for one of its own species, and suffers him to approach without mistrust. No sooner has he reached his victim, than he pierces it with a lance, which he had kept concealed, and thus secures his prize. At other times several persons surround holes made in the ice, and when one or more seals make their appearance, they dispatch them with spears. In the peninsula of Kamtschatka, the seal-fishery is likewise an important occupation.

16 ON 20 PT

The creature commonly takes him for one of its own species, and suffers him to approach without mistrust. No sooner has he reached his victim, than he pierces it with a lance, which he had kept concealed, and thus secures his prize. At other times several persons surround holes made in the ice, and when one or more seals make their appearance, they dispatch them with spears. In the peninsula of Kamtschatka, the seal-fishery is likewise an important occupation.



TOP: THE ORIGINAL PAGE, CLEANED. BOTTOM: THE SAME TEXT SET IN KESTER AT THE SAME SIZE AND LEADING.

FROM THE BOOK

Adventures of Famous Travellers in Many Lands. William L. Allison Company, New York, c. 1893–1894. Running head: "The Romance of Travel."

The original type is most likely Ronaldson Old Style, designed and cut in 1884 by Alexander Kay for the Philadelphia type foundry MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan, or one of the copies other foundries made of it. The clues are the beaked top serifs on i, m, n, v and w, a y whose tail curls into a ball, an h whose right leg curls inward, an R whose leg ends in an upturned flick, and sturdy, low-contrast strokes suited to fast, cheap book printing. Our confidence is moderate: the letters have not yet been checked one by one against a printed foundry specimen.

WHERE EACH GLYPH CAME FROM

206 of Kester's 221 drawn glyphs are real impressions from the book. The other 15 were rebuilt because the book never prints them; drawn parts use stroke widths measured from the real letters and the same mottled ink texture.

Free for personal and commercial use. Kester is released under the SIL Open Font License 1.1. Use it for anything; just don't sell the font files on their own.

A link back to antiquefonts.com is greatly appreciated. Made something with Kester? We'd love to see it: hello@antiquefonts.com