

**LETTERS TO DEAD
AUTHORS, PP. 1-251**

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Letters to Dead Authors, pp. 1-251 by Andrew Lang

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ANDREW LANG

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AUTHORS, PP. 1-251**



LETTERS
TO
DEAD AUTHORS

BY
ANDREW LANG

WITH AN ETCHED PORTRAIT BY S. J. FERRIS
AND FOUR ADDITIONAL LETTERS

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1893

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INTRODUCTION

To the Gentle Reader

DEAR SIR OR MADAM,—This little book was first written several years ago, at the suggestion of Mr. Greenwood, then editor of the *St. James's Gazette*. The idea was Mr. Greenwood's; the author confesses that it did not exactly smile on him, but a journalist must "do his darg," and any "darg" of a literary sort is pleasanter than another to a bookworm. The public, it is well known, seldom regards a man's performances with the eye of the writer himself. For some reason the kindness of readers has favored a volume which is not the author's favorite; he has his own ugly ducklings that are much more dear to him than "Letters to Dead Authors." Perhaps we all naturally prefer the work which has given us most trouble, perhaps that which comes most easily is naturally

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the least inadequate. Certainly letter-writing to the illustrious dead comes easily enough; though the task never satisfies my sense of reverence. To this edition, "by special request" of the American publishers, four new letters have been added—letters to John Knox, Increase Mather, Homer, and Mr. Samuel Pepys. To be printed in a pretty form tempts industry; yet more is it stimulated by the thought of producing a sister volume to Mr. Stevenson's "Virginibus Puerisque." Only in *format*, paper, type, binding, is there any sisterhood or similarity. All the Muses came to Mr. Stevenson's cradle, and gave him the gift of story-telling, the enchantments of style: charm and genius. There is no thought of rivalry in this little book, which is content to admire and delight in great writers dead and gone, to smile sympathetically at Chapelain and Increase Mather, men not so great, but very human. If any who read this book about books are moved to read the books themselves, it will not have been written quite in vain. But we are apt, in these matters, to remain content at two removes from reality.

ANDREW LANG.



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