

TO  
*MY UNANSWERED CORRESPONDENTS.*

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DEAR CORRESPONDENTS,  
FREE AND UNSOLICITED,

I send you at once my apology and epistle general in the form of a Dedication to this little book.

For years it has been your habit to write me, sometimes to praise, oftener to blame. You have informed me that your great-aunts cannot be expected to approve of certain passages in my works. This has indeed grieved me, but not so much as when you patriotically send me the postage stamps of your native countries—which (I tell it you once for all, and in the name of all my fellow-craftsmen who share with me your favours) do *not* frank letters of reply from our land to yours, owing to some unfeeling prejudice on the part of our British Post-office. Worst of all is it when you send me the small coinage of your realms and republics, not as tribute, but as prepayment of autographs. These the alert Postmaster-General can feel between finger and thumb as the covering letters pass through his hands. Then forthwith he sends his satraps to charge me such sums for excess and non-registration of coin as are fitted to shake the foundations of any literary finance whatsoever. This however, be it remembered, does *not* apply to cheques or bank-notes.

Then, having as it were paid your footing, with a faithfulness which does you infinite credit, you proceed to inform me that I am not doing the things I ought—but, in fact, quite otherwise. Furthermore, I am leaving undone my manifest