

LETTER--To Alexandre Dumas

In this letter to Alexandre Dumas, the author celebrates Dumas's vast and golden literary legacy, likening it to a solid foundation more enduring than rock. Dumas, despite a moment of late-life doubt where he envisioned his works as impermanent as structures on sand, is reassured of his everlasting impact on literature, akin to the immortal stories from the "Arabian Nights" or tales of Boccaccio. Esteemed for introducing a "greater and more kindly" influence in modern literature, Dumas's creativity, initially sparked by Walter Scott, is heralded for its miraculous breadth and unflinching strength.

Emphasizing Dumas's unparalleled vigor and the joy his books emanate, the letter praises the lively, gallant characters of Dumas's creation who embody the spirit of adventure with their bravery and love for life. It addresses the unfounded criticisms levied against Dumas for his alleged reliance on ghostwriters, arguing that any collaborator's success was derived solely from Dumas's own inexhaustible vivacity. These collaborators, absent Dumas's inspiration, accomplished little on their own, their works quickly fading into obscurity.

Dumas is lauded for his capability to engage and entertain without succumbing to baseness or moral corruption, presenting tales of honor, love, and friendship that lead through delightful adventures. The letter highlights the enduring humanity and realism of Dumas's characters, particularly from his most celebrated series—the Cycle of the Valois and the Cycle of Louis XIII and Louis XIV—as well as the standalone masterpiece, "Monte Cristo."

Further, it defends Dumas against accusations of frivolity and superficiality, positing that his works' endurance is testament to their depth and substance, transcending the fleeting preferences for pessimism and overwrought realism. The brightness of Dumas's dialogue, the excitement of his battles and duels, and the Homeric grandeur of his narratives are particularly extolled.

In conclusion, the letter asserts that Dumas's legacy, characterized by liveliness and wit, will outlive the criticisms and remain a beloved refuge from the more sordid and tedious tales of contemporary literature. Dumas's spirit, likened to the epic heroes of old, endows his stories with a timeless appeal, celebrating the virtues of chivalry, friendship, and honor above all.