

**TALES AND NOVELS; IN EIGHTEEN
VOLUMES, VOL I. CONTAINING
CASTLE RACKRENT; AN ESSAY ON
IRISH BULLS; AN ESSAY ON THE NOBLE
SCIENCE OF SELF-JUSTIFICATION**

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Tales and Novels; In Eighteen Volumes, Vol I. Containing Castle Rackrent; An Essay on Irish Bulls; An Essay on the Noble Science of Self-Justification by Maria Edgeworth

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MARIA EDGEWORTH

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TALES AND NOVELS

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING

CASTLE RACKRENT;

AN ESSAY ON IRISH BULLS;

AN ESSAY ON

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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Edition of the TALES and NOVELS of MISS EDGEWORTH, which, in conformity with the present prevailing taste, is embellished with Plates, and presented to the Public in Monthly Volumes, will consist of Castle Rackrent, Irish Bulls, The Moral Tales, Popular Tales, Tales of Fashionable Life, The Modern Griselda, Belinda, Leonora, Patronage, Harrington, and Ormond, and a few smaller pieces. It is not intended to include in it any of those writings of Miss Edgeworth which are of a more juvenile character than the Moral Tales, a smaller size being deemed more appropriate. Of these a fitter opportunity for speaking will occur hereafter: at present it is only necessary to say, that there are few persons who have not, in their earliest years, experienced the greatest pleasure, and imbibed the highest moral truths, from the perusal of the "Early Lessons" and "The Parent's Assistant." "Rosamond and Frank," "The Little Dog Trusty," and "The Cherry Orchard," will not be easily forgotten by them; and in their after years they will delight to renew, and will profit by renewing, their early acquaintance, by a perusal of works from the same pen, but adapted to maturer age.

With respect to her works of higher pretensions, it may be justly said, that her TALES and NOVELS form a class by themselves. They are for the most part Irish; but without any of those savage features so painfully characteristic of the novels which, for the last few years, have turned on the circumstances of Ireland, or that admixture of foreign manners which is so striking in the works of Lady Morgan. They contain highly-finished pictures of fashionable and domestic life, and yet have few points of similarity, if any, to the novels of Hook, Bulwer, Lord Mulgrave, on one side, or Miss Ferier, Miss Austin, or Mrs. Brunton, on the other. Though they cannot be said, strictly, to be Historical, yet they will be found to resemble no contemporary works in the department of Romance so much as the earlier novels of the Author of *Waverley*. Sir Walter Scott, indeed, with his characteristic frankness, has acknowledged that his original idea, when he commenced his career as a novelist, was to be to Scotland what Miss Edgeworth was to Ireland—to pourtray peculiarities of manners belonging rather to the generation passing away than to that which now exists; and to give life to the national scenery, and permanence to the national characteristics of his countrymen. *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*—the novels to which Sir Walter Scott originally intended to have confined himself, bear, in their most striking features, a considerable likeness to *Castle Rackrent*, *Ennui*, *Ormond*, &c.; and the works of Miss Edgeworth will not suffer by a comparison which, to almost any other

series, could not fail to be fatal; while she may also justly claim the merit of priority.*

In depicting the strange varieties of Irish Character, whether grave or gay, she is confessedly without an equal; and when she puts her foot upon a soil foreign to her own, she does not tread it as a stranger. The same felicity which inspires her in the unequalled characters of Sir Phelim, King Corny, &c. presides over the pictures which, in "Patronage," and other works, she draws from the higher classes of English society. Her comic and playful satire ranks her high in the dominions of humour, while it is combined with a sterling common sense, and a power of picturesque

* "Two circumstances, in particular, recalled my recollection of the mislaid manuscript. The first was the extended and well-merited fame of Miss Edgeworth, whose Irish characters have gone so far to make the English familiar with the character of their gay and kind-hearted neighbours of Ireland, that she may be truly said to have done more towards completing the Union, than perhaps all the legislative enactments by which it has been followed up.

"Without being so presumptuous as to hope to emulate the rich humour, pathetic tenderness, and admirable tact, which pervade the works of my accomplished friend, I felt that something might be attempted for my own country, of the same kind with that which Miss Edgeworth so fortunately achieved for Ireland—something which might introduce her natives to those of the sister kingdom, in a more favourable light than they had been placed hitherto, and tend to procure sympathy for their virtues and indulgence for their foibles."—*Extract from Sir Walter Scott's General Preface to the Waverley Novels.*

description which seldom fall to the lot of the wit or the satirist. Her story-telling powers are admirable: who but herself could infuse so much grace and shrewdness into so small a compass as we find them in the *Moral and Popular Tales*, in "To-Morrow," "Murad the Unlucky," and many others? It is, however, unnecessary now to eulogize the works of Miss Edgeworth: they have taken an enduring position in the literature of the country, and the Publishers of this Series give it to the world in a well-grounded confidence of its successful reception.

The Series will be printed in eighteen Monthly Volumes, and published at 5s. each. The Embellishments will be of the very first order, consisting of a Frontispiece and Vignette Title to each volume. They will be executed (on steel) by the most eminent Engravings, from Paintings wholly by HARVEY, who unquestionably is, and will ere long be universally acknowledged to be, in the first class of British Artists.

To delineate with accuracy the peculiar scenery of Ireland, and to give to native character all its humour and truth, this talented artist has traversed many of the districts of Ireland, and is thus enabled to introduce into his fine drawings living character, and much of the wild and beautiful landscape of the country.

The whole of the Works have undergone a careful Revision and Correction by the Author herself.

PATERNOSTER-ROW,
April 30, 1832.

P R E F A C E.

THE prevailing taste of the public for anecdote has been censured and ridiculed by critics who aspire to the character of superior wisdom: but if we consider it in a proper point of view, this taste is an incontestible proof of the good sense and profoundly philosophic temper of the present times. Of the numbers who study, or at least who read history, how few derive any advantage from their labours! The heroes of history are so decked out by the fine fancy of the professed historian; they talk in such measured prose, and act from such sublime or such diabolical motives, that few have sufficient taste, wickedness, or heroism, to sympathise in their fate. Besides, there is much uncertainty even in the best authenticated ancient or modern histories; and that love of truth, which in some minds is innate and immutable, necessarily leads to a love of secret memoirs, and private anecdotes. We cannot judge either of the feelings or of the characters of men with perfect accuracy, from their actions or their appearance in public; it is from their careless conversations, their half-finished sentences, that we may hope with the greatest probability of success to discover their real