



# Legends and Stories of Ireland

*Samuel Lover*

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THOUGH the sources whence these Stories are derived are open to every one, yet chance or choice may prevent thousands from making such sources available; and though the village crone and mountain guide have many hearers, still their circle is so circumscribed, that most of what I have ventured to lay before my reader is for the first time made tangible to the greater portion of those who do me the favour to become such. Many of them were originally intended merely for the diversion of a few friends round my own fireside;--there, recited in the manner of those from whom I heard them, they first made their debut, and the flattering reception they met on so minor a stage, led to their appearance before larger audiences;--subsequently, I was induced to publish two of them in the Dublin Literary Gazette, and the favourable notice from contemporary prints, which they received, has led to the publication of the present volume. I should not have troubled the reader with this account of the "birth, parentage, and education" of my literary bantlings, but to have it understood that some of them are essentially oral in their character, and, I fear, suffer materially when reduced to writing. This I mention en passant to the critics; and if I meet but half as good-natured readers as I have hitherto found auditors, I shall have cause to be thankful. But, previously to the perusal of the following pages, there are a few observations that I feel are necessary, and which I shall make as concise as possible. Most of the stories are given in the manner of the peasantry; and this has led to some peculiarities that might be objected to, were not the cause explained--namely, frequent digressions in the course of the narrative, occasional adjurations, and certain words unusually spelt. As regards the first, I beg to answer, that the stories would be deficient in national character without it; the Irish are so imaginative that they never tell a story straightforward, but constantly indulge in episode; for the second, it is only fair to say, that in most cases the Irish peasant's adjurations are not meant to be in the remotest degree irreverent, but arise merely from the impassioned manner of speaking which an excitable people are prone to; and I trust that such oaths as "thunder-and-turf," or maledictions, as "bad cees to you," will not be considered very offensive

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