

### A NOTABLE IRISHWOMAN

The first book of a new series of novels entitled "The Irish Novelists' Library," "O'Donnell," by Lady Morgan. The Lady Morgan was a prominent figure in literary and social life during almost the half of this century, to many of us she is but a name; and it may not be out of place here to give a few details of her life. What is known of her outside her books is contained in her literary and personal life by late Mr W. J. Fitzpatrick. Her father, whose name was MacOwen, of county Sligo, being a land steward to Sir John Browne, Castle Marget, county Mayo, became, after some struggles, a popular actor, and at the advice of Garrick, he changed his name to "Would Macklin," said Garrick, "have been so popular in England had he not laid aside the brogue of MacLoughlin or his father's." So, in obedience to this advice, MacOwen became Owenson. His daughter Sydney, who afterwards became Lady Morgan, was born about 1775. The precise year of her birth has caused some dispute among biographers, as Lady Morgan could never be induced to reveal the secret of her age. Her father was at this time part proprietor of Crow street Theatre, Dublin, and as an actor had made a great success as Sir Lucius O'Trigger. But the theatrical venture did not seem to thrive in Dublin, and Owenson moved to the provinces, and in county Sligo he was thought so highly of that, in the language of a biographer, Owenson and his gifted daughter were received by the "best" families, and thus the bright little girl had opportunities of observing the ways and manners of "society" on the scale and at the fashion of the place. These she afterwards turned to advantage in her novels, yet undreamt of. The success of her novels ruined the theatrical career of her father, but though he was a devoted dramatist, which was one of her characteristics, her character in 1802 produced the Heiress, which she achieved a great success. Domestically that she paid to her father.