



# **Selected Plays of George Moore and Edward Martyn (Irish Drama Selections)**

*George Moore, Edward Martyn*

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Best known as a novelist and man of letters, George Moore (1852-1933) is the author of such works as *Esther Waters*, *A Drama in Muslin*, *The Untilled Field*, *The Brook Kerith*, and his masterpiece, *Hail and Farewell*. Edward Martyn (1859-1923) was a distant cousin of Moore's, and, for a time, the two were close friends. Martyn, a man of considerable wealth, devoted his energies to a wide variety of activities, particularly the Church and political activism. His interest in playwriting, like Moore's, was of a secondary nature. Nevertheless, the two pooled and concentrated their talents to make important contributions at a critical juncture of the Irish literary renaissance.

In 1899, aiming to provide a platform for the work of serious native dramatists, Martyn, W. B. Yeats, and Lady Gregory together founded the *Irish Literary Theatre*, Martyn soon brought Moore on board to lend his experience and notoriety to the venture. The great success of the Theatre's first season was Martyn's *The Heather Field*, republished here, which later enjoyed brief revivals in England, Germany, and the United States. Top billing in the second season was to have gone to Martyn's fast-paced, caustic satire, *The Tale of the Town*, but Yeats thought the play crude and not at all suitable for a serious, literary theater. When Moore reluctantly agreed, Martyn turned the play over to them to do with as they wished. Moore then rewrote it as *The Bending of the Bough*. Here the plays are published together for the first time.

This volume also includes Moore's *The Strike at Arlingford*, *The Passing of the Essenes*, and *The Coming of Gabrielle*. This last is based on his correspondence with an Austrian countess he never met, and much of the dialogue in the play is taken directly from her letters. Martyn's *Maeve*, written for the *Irish Literary Theatre*, and *An Enchanted Sea*, a short lyrical play first produced in 1904, are also found here.

The plays in this volume were selected by David B. Eakin and Michael Case, who have contributed a critical introduction. Helpful bibliographical checklists of Moore's and Martyn's works, both published and unpublished, are also included.

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