

your most flattering approbation of his work — a distinction which he receives as one of the highest that could be paid him, and which he would have been proud to have himself stated his sense of, only that being *impersonal*, he thought it more respectful to require my assistance than to write an anonymous letter.

There are very few who have had the opportunities that have been presented to me, of knowing how very elevated is the admiration entertained by the Author of Waverley for the genius of Miss Edgeworth. From the intercourse that took place betwixt us while the work was going through my press, *I know* that the exquisite truth and power of your characters operated on his mind at once to excite and subdue it. He felt that the success of his book was to depend upon the characters, much more than upon the story; and he entertained so just and so high an opinion of your eminence in the management of both, as to have strong apprehensions of any comparison which might be instituted betwixt his picture and story and yours; besides, there is a richness and *naïveté* in Irish character and humor, in which the Scotch are certainly defective, and which could hardly fail, as he thought, to render his delineations cold and tame by the contrast. "If I could but hit Miss Edgeworth's wonderful power of vivifying all her persons, and making them live as *beings* in your mind, I should not be afraid:" — Often has the Author of Waverley used such language to me; and I knew that I gratified him most when I could say, — "Positively this is equal to Miss Edgeworth." You will thus judge, Madam, how deeply he must feel such praise as you have bestowed upon his efforts. I believe he himself thinks the Baron the best drawn character in his book — I mean the Bailie — honest Bailie Macwhhehle. He protests it is the most *true*, though from many causes he did not expect it to be the most popular. It appears to me, that amongst so many splendid portraits, all drawn with such strength and truth, it is more easy to say which is your favorite, than which is best. Mr. Henry Mackenzie agrees with you in your objection to the resemblance to Fielding. He says you should never be forced to recollect, *maugre* all its internal evidence to the contrary, that such a work is a work of fiction, and all its fine creations but of air. The character of