

**Stoker, Bram [Abraham]** (1847-1912) novelist; born in Dublin, he studied at TCD after a sickly childhood, and followed his father into the civil service where he wrote *Duties of the Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland* (1878) which became a standard reference book. From 1871 on he contributed drama reviews and other pieces to the *Dublin Evening Mail* and *The Warder*. His reviews of the Dublin performances of Henry Irving led to friendship and eventually to a business partnership. In 1878, after marriage to Florence Balcombe, formerly Oscar Wilde's early love, Stoker moved to London to become Irving's manager, an arrangement which lasted until Irving's death in Bradford in 1905. Stoker's *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, 2 vols (1906), although adulatory and anecdotal, is a vivid account of a great actor. His earliest stories were collected in *Under The Sunset* (1882). A first novel, *The Snake's Pass* (1891), is the only one set in Ireland, in Co. Mayo. *Dracula* (1897), his celebrated vampire novel, was influenced by Sheridan Le Fanu, and was followed by a steady stream of other publications, written in spite of his heavy involvement with theatre business: *Miss Betty* (1898), *The Mystery of the Sea* (1902), and then *The Jewel of the Seven Stars* (1903), in which the action moves from the occult menace of the Egyptian pyramids to London. *The Man* (1905) and *Lady Athlyne* (1908) are, like *Miss Betty*, romantic novels. In *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909), as in *Dracula*, the narrative is assembled from letters, journals, and other documents; it begins with the reported sighting at sea of an eerie apparition in a coffin and ends with a prophetic account of aircraft at war. In *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911), his last work and, after *Dracula*, the most successful, a legendary monster returns to prey on nineteenth-century Staffordshire. *Snowbound* (1908) groups together stories told by a company of travelling actors. *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories*, containing an episode omitted from *Dracula*, was published posthumously in 1914; it also included what is probably his best short story of terror, 'The Judge's House'. See Harry Ludlam, *A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Bram Stoker* (1962).

*Dracula* (1897), Bram Stoker's most celebrated novel, it combines the fifteenth-century Walachian tyrant Vlad Dracul with the vampire of European folklore. The narrative is made up of journals, letters, newspaper cuttings, and phonograph recordings, beginning with Jonathan Harker's account of a journey to Transylvania on behalf of his law firm to meet the mysterious Count Dracula. Five-sixths of the action takes place in England, whither the 'un-Dead' Count travels surreptitiously. His first victim is Lucy Westenra, who preys on children in Hampstead Heath until her tomb is opened and a stake driven through her heart, on instructions from the philosopher-scientist Van Helsing, called in as a vampire hunter. Throughout much of the novel, which contains a number of striking episodes, Dracula and his attendant vampires are pursued

from drawing-rooms and bedrooms to cellars and graveyards. The story has attained the status of a popular myth, largely through stage and film adaptations since the 1920s. It bears a suggestive relation to the semi-feudal order maintained by the \*ascendancy in Ireland before \*Land League agitation brought about reform, but its modern fascination has more to do with images of sexual predation and the fear of communicable disease.

*Snake's Pass, The* (1890), Bram \*Stoker's first novel, serialized in 1889. The narrator Arthur Severn, a young Englishman on a visit to Connemara, becomes involved in thwarting the land-grabbing designs of Murtagh Murdock, a melodramatically sinister 'gombeen man'. Severn falls in love with the beautiful Norah Joyce, the gracious but unschooled daughter of Murdock's chief victim who lives near 'Snake's Pass' (Shleenanaher). The land in dispute is a stretch of bog rumoured to contain treasure hidden by the French army in 1798 [see \*United Irishmen]. Aided by Dick Sutherland, a geologist, and Andy Sullivan, a sympathetically portrayed \*stage-Irishman, Arthur finds the treasure and wins Norah's hand, while Murdock is engulfed by the bog. The novel is remarkable for the central role given to the rainswept Irish landscape.