

**POETRY OF  
THOMAS MOORE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649676002

Poetry of Thomas Moore by Thomas Moore

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**THOMAS MOORE**

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SLOPERTON COTTAGE, MCCRE'S HOME IN WILTSHIRE.

*Drawn by S. H. New from an engraving after T. Bewick. R. A.*

POETRY  
OF  
THOMAS MOORE  
122-127

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY  
C. LITTON FALKNER

London  
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1903

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TO

EDWARD DOWDEN

IN PLEASANT RECOLLECTION OF MANY KINDNESSES





## INTRODUCTION

To realise that the vogue of Moore among his contemporaries was second only to the vogue of Byron and the vogue of Scott, requires something like an effort of the historical imagination. Yet so it certainly was. And not only so, but by virtue of the rapidity with which his early fame was achieved the Irish poet, who had made his mark before either of his great coevals had become widely known, was for a long time considered their equal. Never during his life was he ranked in any lower grade than theirs. The senior by nine years of Byron, "Anacreon" Moore was a celebrity in the salons of London before the author of *Hours of Idleness* had left Harrow; and although junior to Scott by almost as many years, Moore had published three separate volumes and had acquired a definite hold upon the public before the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* had appeared. That hold upon the public Moore retained to the end of his

career, despite the extraordinary poetic fertility of the period in which he lived.

No doubt Moore owed much of this sustained eminence to the circumstance that, in the great poetical tournament with which the nineteenth century opened, he was the first to enter the lists. As Scott good-humouredly said to him, speaking of their numerous competitors, "We were in the luck of it to come before these fellows, whom we have taught to beat us with our own weapons." Yet the fact remains, that despite the advent of the immortal band of moderns—of Byron and Shelley, of Wordsworth and Keats—Moore contrived to command to the close of a long career the unstinted applause of his contemporaries. That the praise thus bestowed on Moore was excessive, hardly requires demonstration. If we take the most prosaic standard of merit possible, the standard of a publisher's appraisalment of a writer's market value, we shall find, irrespective of all literary canons of criticism, a sufficient proof of it. No one considers, nor did any one even in the acmé of Moore's popularity pretend to consider *Lalla Rookh* the greatest poem which was produced in the extraordinarily fertile age in which it was written. Yet Longmans were willing to give the largest sum ever paid for a single poem for the right to publish *Lalla Rookh*, and that without seeing a line of the work.