

LIFE MELODIES

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Life Melodies by Thomas Moore

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PREFACE.

THE following Poems have been written during brief seasons of relaxation from unusually arduous and pressing duties of ministerial life. In these days of increasing activity and excitement, when heavy demands are constantly being made on our mental resources, as well as on our energy and physical strength, the soul truly appreciates the obtainment of even a few occasional hours of holy quietude, and undisturbed and peaceful rest.

Such intervals of brief retirement from the performance of the hard and stern duties which devolve upon us are not only necessary for the restoration of our physical powers, but they are also greatly conducive to meditation and reflection, while they

enable us better to understand the true meaning and important significance of the passing incidents and events of our daily life.

It is at such times the soul takes a survey of her own strangely complicated thoughts, feelings, yearnings, aspirations, and experiences, while she is conscious of her ever-varying and changeful moods, which are continually being produced by the lights and shadows which alternately lighten and darken the atmosphere of her unseen and inner life.

Nor is there any more favourable season for securing a sublime and comprehensive view of the solemn dignity of being than when the soul comes, weary, jaded, and careworn, from the bustling scenes and turmoil of the world, and retires into her own tranquil chamber of thought and contemplation, while she patiently reviews her wondrously eventful history, and calmly looks out from her quiet resting-place on the continual commotion, turbulence, and conflict of a world, in which good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error, sin and righteousness, are ever seen contending for the mastery.

On such occasions so many thoughts crowd the heart, and so varied are the pictures which present themselves to the soul, that one is greatly tempted, rather than let them pass away for ever, to try, even with an unskilful hand, to preserve and enshrine them, although it may be in the most imperfect and unartistic of poetic forms.

And may it not be safely stated, that, while poetry has manifold provinces, from which she can draw the richest, and most abundant materials for her art, the highest, noblest, and most useful employment of her genius consists in giving a true and faithful delineation of realities, which men have felt, and seen, and handled; so that when they read her verses, and behold her pictures, they may recognize them,—not as incongruous and fantastic forms of things merely ideal,—but as the bright mirrors in which may be seen, truthfully reflected, the varying aspects of actual life?

Surely, a faithful exposition of the deep, hidden feelings, and chequered experiences of the human heart, as well as a true representation of the diversified scenes of the external world, in all their bearings and influences on the soul, are calculated

to exert a greater power on human history and destiny than all the aërial flights of mere idealism which have ever been committed to writing.

Nor in the prosecution of this work will the services of imagination be less required ; for as the poet, like the painter and sculptor, is often called upon to delineate phases and scenes of life through which he himself may never in reality have passed, he will require not only to bring observation and reflection, but imagination, to his aid, in order that he may enter into the true spirit of his work, and that all his pictures may be counterparts of the real.

And as it is the rightful province of the poet, not merely to present a one-sided picture of life, but, as far as possible, to shadow forth the changeful feelings and differing moods of the soul, so it is his responsible and solemn duty to abstain from describing thoughts, feelings, and aspects of life, the publication of which would be subversive of morality, antagonistic to the spread of true religion, and destructive of human happiness.

The Author would in conclusion apologize to his readers for writing what may be regarded by