

**MINOR MELODIES:
LYRICS
AND SONGS**

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Minor melodies: lyrics and songs by J. M. Stuart-Young

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TO THE ONE FRIEND WHO 'UNDERSTANDS'

When my soul, with sin oppress'd,
Took love's burden to its breast;
Sweet, you made life sweet for me—
Lost to all save love and thee!

9.9+

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For permission to re-use an earlier title (cf. *Minor Melodies* of 1904) the author extends his thanks to Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd.

A few of these lyrics have appeared in *Pearson's Magazine*, *Westminster Gazette*, *Poetry*, *John o' London's Weekly*, *Chambers's Journal*, *The People's Friend*, *West Africa*, *United Empire*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Occult Review*, etc.; and the author begs leave to thank the Editors of these several periodicals.

Composers can send communications either care of Messrs. T. and A. Constable Ltd., University Press, Edinburgh, or direct to 4 Tinubu Street, Lagos, Nigeria, where the author is resident during each English winter season.

Roughly: the author's terms are, a small royalty (under the same conditions as the composers' own royalty agreements with the publishers)—but details can be discussed when the songs are ready for publication. The text of any lyric can be altered within reasonable limits.

THE AUTHOR'S ARGUMENT.

As Foreword to this volume of lyrics, I had originally intended to reproduce, by courteous permission of the Editor of John o' London's Weekly, an essay upon the Art of Lyric Writing. But, as the majority of users of this book will be Composers, an action of this kind might have savoured too much of the ancient adage about Grandmamma and the Eggs!

I should, however, like to say, for the edification of the general reader, that I have no present intention of offering a prize to the earliest discoverer of the most frequent use of words like 'golden,' 'dreaming,' 'roses,' 'moonbeams,' 'sweet,' 'silver,' 'memory,' 'garden,' 'dawn,' 'dew,' etc.

It might be obvious, to even the most captious of purely literary critics, that the constant use of these (and similar) epithets is, in greater or lesser degree, inevitable to the song-writer. As each lyric must, necessarily, seek to become a perfect entity in itself—with absolutely no relation to either its predecessor or its successor—every writer of verse, meant for musical setting, is compelled to (or, rather, let us say, should not lightly be dissuaded from) the adoption of all such jewelled ornaments of his thought.

There are innumerable lyric-writers—popularly known as 'poets,' and regarded as such by that musical, but generally far from secluded, section of the public that concerns itself not one whit about the Laureateship of the Realm!—who have, for a very long time past, wallowed in the utmost extravagance of metaphor. 'A kingdom of love' is found in 'somebody's' eyes, or a 'garden of memory' is discovered in 'somebody else's' heart. But, going much further, it is now nothing new for the music-hall lover to asseverate his conviction that

'the light in your eyes makes the bright stars grow pale,'

or to assert his belief that

‘the sun even envies your smile!’

Bits of the anatomy of the Beloved are compared to all manner of weird objects in the surrounding landscape, until the brain fairly reels again.

Of course there are many perfectly justifiable exaggerations, although, sad to tell! Mr. Lockton’s ‘moon of golden roses’—a superbly beautiful phrase, but actually nothing more than a phrase!—will not stand the test of analysis. For the imagery of

‘land of the golden day,’
‘dawn where the skies gleam gold,’
‘gold on the sunset clouds,’
‘golden moon in the midnight skies,’

etc., there is ample poetic excuse, even as the universally favourite diminutive is only slightly demonstrated by the ubiquity of

‘Little Winding Road,’
‘Little Grey Home in the West,’
‘Little Place for You,’
‘Little Grey Lane,’

etc. Nor need one be a deep student of Freud the Preposterous to understand the psychological insistence upon the value of our sleep fancies:

‘Land of my golden dreams,’
‘Come back to Dreamland and me,’
‘Lost sweet dreams divine,’
‘Life’s just a wonderful dream,’

etc. The whole human race calls for these three epithets (golden and little and dreams) with an insistence which cannot be denied! Composers and lyric-writers merely meet that demand. In all these aspects, then, of the popular needs, it should be sufficiently obvious to every one that each lyrical neophyte must frankly, and without arrièrè pensée, accept a threadbare