ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS; THOMAS MOORE

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English Men of Letters; Thomas Moore by Stephen Gwynn & John Morley

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STEPHEN GWYNN & JOHN MORLEY

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ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY THOMAS MOORE



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ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS

THOMAS MOORE

BY
STEPHEN GWYNN

New Bork

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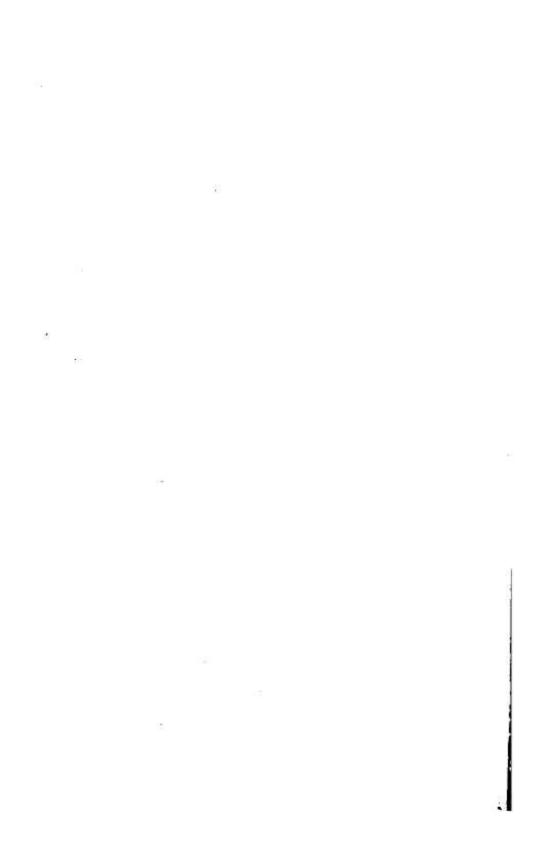
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CONTENTS

	CHA	PTER	1					
BOYHOOD AND EARLY	Рокмв		23	:::	*	**	12.	1
	СНА	PTER	п					
EARLY MANHOOD AND	MARR	LAGE	3 5	¥?	٠		•	29
	CHA	PTER	ш					
"LALLA ROOKH" .		8.50	•	•	•	•	•	58
	CHAI	PTER	ΙV					
PERIOD OF RESIDENCE	ABRO	DAD	¥3.	•	٠	×	J. • ?	91
	СНА	PTER	▼.					
WORK AS BIOGRAPHEE	AND	CONTR	OVBI	BIAI	.18T		٠	112
	СНА	PTER	VI					
THE DECLINE OF LIFE	1967		ē	•	•	•	200	143
	CHAI	PTER,	VII					
GENERAL APPRECIATION	n.	•	٠	•	٠	•	•	171
APPENDIX		•	•	٠	3		0.	191
INDEX		# 00			*			199



THOMAS MOORE

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD AND EARLY POEMS

Sudden fame, acquired with little difficulty, suffers generally a period of obscuration after the compelling power which attaches to a man's living personality has been removed; and from this darkness it does not always emerge. Of such splendour and subsequent eclipse, Moore's fate might be cited as the capital example.

The son of a petty Dublin tradesman, he found himself, almost from his first entry on the world, courted by a brilliant society; each year added to his friendships among the men who stood highest in literature and statesmanship; and his reputation on the Continent was surpassed only by that of Scott and Byron. He did not live to see a reaction. Lord John Russell could write boldly in 1853, a year after his friend's death, that "of English lyrical poets, Moore is surely the greatest." There is perhaps no need to criticise either this attitude of excessive admiration, or that which in many cases has replaced it, of tolerant contempt. But it is as well to emphasise at the outset the fact that even to-day, more than a century after he began to publish, Moore is still one of the poets most popular and widely known throughout the

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