

LECTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—In inviting your attention this evening to the subject on which I have proposed to lecture, I think we shall at least agree in this, that if properly treated of, it would be a most important and very interesting one. The difficulty of handling such a subject satisfactorily, lies not in the poverty but in the exuberance of the material; in determining precisely what points will be the most interesting and profitable to touch upon, when there are so many interesting and profitable topics open to our choice; and still more in attempting to convey anything of scientific truth without using hard words and ugly calculations—from the former, I am afraid we shall hardly escape altogether, though I shall do my best to explain some of the more important ones, and if on some points our explanations should seem vague and unsatisfactory, I must, in claiming your indulgence for