

PREFACE.

On the occasion of the opening of the Winter's Course of Lectures of the Mercantile Library Association, the Introductory Lecture was delivered by the Rev. Henry Wilkes, A.M., in the Assembly Room of Donegana's Hotel, to an audience of from seven to eight hundred persons. At the upper end of the room, a platform was erected, which was graced by His Excellency the Governor-General, Lady Alice Lambton, Hon. Colonel Bruce, Lord Mark Kerr, Major Campbell, John Young, Esq., H. E. Montgomerie, Esq., and several other gentlemen, including the Directors of the Association. The Reverend Lecturer was supported by the President and Vice-President of the Institution. At the close of the Lecture, His Excellency rose, and, in a clear, distinct, and impressive manner, delivered a most eloquent Address.

The Board of Directors of the Mercantile Library Association, actuated by a desire to perpetuate and increase the interest created by the delivery of this Lecture and Address, have decided on publishing them in their present form. They are confident that every one who had the pleasure of listening to these prelections, will desire to possess them in a form convenient for reference; and they believe that those who had not that privilege, will gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of perusing them.

Of the Lecture itself, little needs to be said. The subject is a comprehensive and a difficult one: but all will allow that it has been most ably treated.