

THE LECTURES OF A CERTAIN PROFESSOR.



LECTURES of a certain Professor! Not much in the title certainly; but then literary merit is not determined by titles any more than manliness or gentility by the name one bears. Open the cover, look within, read, ponder, and if the beauty of thought and expression does not appeal to you, then your heart must be unfeeling indeed, or your mental system sadly out of joint. It is a book but very little known; in fact no edition has been struck off on this side of the "big pond," but the loss is not the author's—he is now where no losses or troubles can touch him—the loss falls on the countless readers of books, who have their mind-food served from the numberless printing presses of this Western Continent.

The author of this remarkable book, the Rev. Joseph Farrell, was a humble priest, working unknown to the great big world, in an unpretentious Irish parish. He was born in the village of Marysborough, Ireland, in 1841, and after his ordination worked principally in the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin. While in attendance at Carlow and Maynooth colleges, he was known as an intelligent and clever student, and had no difficulty in capturing the highest prizes in the different departments of learning. He taught for a while in the former institution, but eventually took to the missionary field, and followed this calling until his death, which occurred on the 24th of March, 1885, at the early age of 41 years. In addition to the volume already mentioned, he has left many pieces, both in prose and poetry, which were published originally, either in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* or the *Irish Monthly*. He was noted, also, as an eloquent preacher and lecturer. These few words will have to suffice as an introduction to the author. If further acquaintance be desired, read

the book we are about to consider and you will be the gainer.

The Lectures of a Certain Professor consists of twenty-three essays on subjects which, upon first sight, would not strike one as being worthy any very serious thought; as subjects, in fact, which could give a writer only a limited scope for the utterance of great life-truths. Father Farrell however, has succeeded in clothing such common subjects as "Day Dreams," "Certain New Beginners," "Money," "Success," "Culture," "Illusions," "Experience," "Self-Possession," and "Impartiality" with a beauty that makes them almost unrecognizable, and transforms them into something so much more charming than our previous conception of them that our first thought is one of admiration for the genius of the man who could work such a change. The great artist can take the common clay or the unhewn rock and fashion it into a shape that has an almost breathing reality. So much so that the onlooker is held spell-bound by the magnificence and fairness of the workmanship, and the name of him whose artful touch was potent enough to re-create, as it were, the once unattractive material is heralded through the world until almost every spot, whereon the foot of civilized man has been set, rings with praises of the artist's power and greatness. Our author has done such work, but with raw material of a different kind from that which the sculptor used, and with a tool which to wield well is perhaps the noblest of human accomplishments. In the first instance the sullied clay or rock is the substance worked upon, in the other the commonest thoughts of every-day life. One leaped into beauty under the powerful influence of hammer and chisel, the other under the mighty magic of the pen. Behind the workers in either case was the genius that is competent to throw around the most ordinary things the charm that fascinates, while it interests and instructs. To the