

**LECTURES ON
ENGLISH
LITERATURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649244003

Lectures on English literature by Maurice Francis Egan

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN

**LECTURES ON
ENGLISH
LITERATURE**

#14664
LECTURES

ON

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN, LL.D.,

LATE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK FREEMAN'S JOURNAL, AND PROFESSOR OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME.

NEW YORK:
WILLIAM H. SADLER,
11 BARCLAY STREET.

DEDICATION

TO THE PUPILS, PAST AND PRESENT,
OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
IN THE UNITED STATES,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

DEDICATION

TO THE PUPILS, PAST AND PRESENT,

OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

IN THE UNITED STATES,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

Literature as a Factor in Life,	PAGE 1
-------------------------------------------	-----------

LECTURE II.

Chaucer : Some Glimpses of his Time, his Life and his Friends,	22
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

LECTURE III.

The Real Meaning of Aesthetics,	41
-------------------------------------------	----

LECTURE IV.

Southwell, Crashaw, and Habington,	61
----------------------------------------------	----

LECTURE V.

An Introduction to the Study of Tennyson,	88
-----------------------------------------------------	----

LECTURE VI.

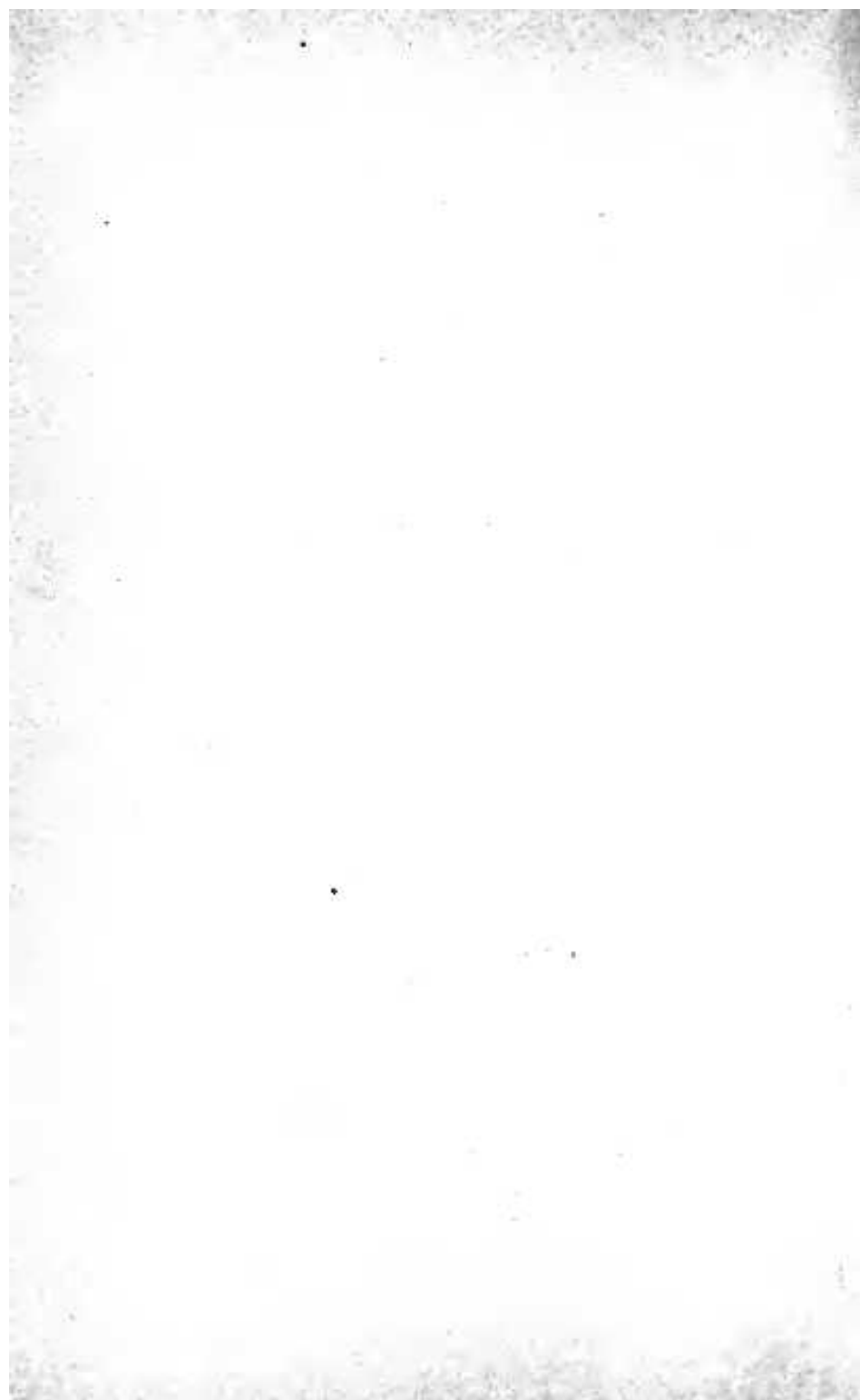
Two Dramas by Tennyson and Aubrey De Vere,	110
------------------------------------------------------	-----

LECTURE VII.

Some Women Writers,	132
-------------------------------	-----

LECTURE VIII.

Literature and Manners,	164
-----------------------------------	-----



LECTURE I.

LITERATURE AS A FACTOR IN LIFE.

THERE are two extremes from which Literature is regarded in these days. From one point of view it is looked on as the only thing in life worth living for; from the other, as a mere ornament, a distraction,—an amusement for an idle hour.

The disciples of what is called Culture,—a term which like the adjective *aesthetic* has suffered grievously by misuse,—place Literature above Dogma. That is, they hold that a human being may be able to get enough vital consolation out of books to do entirely without the teachings of the Christian religion. Blasphemously they group the sacred Scriptures, the Koran, the Buddhistic writings together as great works of literature. Thomas à Kempis and the author of "Paul and Virginia," St. Paul and George Eliot we find jumbled together by the cultured,—with a capital C—who recommend books to the "masses."

Matthew Arnold's name is known to all of you. He died recently. He did more to inculcate in the minds of English-speaking people a love for Literature for the sake of itself than any other man living or dead. He was a poet, but not a great one. He cultivated the art of using words

to the utmost extent possible in a man of his temperament. He wrote at times exquisitely. He was an intellectual aristocrat, and we cannot but admire the position he took above all low, vulgar and common things. But, nevertheless, his life-long cultivation of the art of literature led to nothing, because it did not lead to God. Literature is a factor in life, and an important one in all well-regulated lives, but it is not the end of life. God is the beginning and the end.

The effect of Matthew Arnold's teachings may be traced in a recent popular novel, "Robert Elsmere." The author of it is Mrs. Humphrey Ward. It has succeeded Rider Haggard's "She" and Robert Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" in the estimation of the thoughtless reader. Why? Because Mr. Gladstone reviewed it in *The Nineteenth Century*. There is no getting over the fact that English opinion still sways our judgment in literary matters, although the West is more independent and American in this respect than the East.

This winter "Robert Elsmere" has become the talk of all the drawing-rooms. Ladies who read it because it is the fashion speak learnedly about the impregnable position that Theistic teaching holds in the world of science. I heard one the other day, and I asked, as politely as possible, what she meant. She did not answer; but I knew she had been reading "Robert Elsmere." Next summer when you are in the country, at the watering places, or at home, you will find the ladies, old and young, discussing "Robert Elsmere," and probably some of you will read it