

LECTURES AND ESSAYS

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Lectures and essays by W. J. Scott

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W. J. SCOTT

**LECTURES
AND ESSAYS**

LECTURES AND ESSAYS,

BY

REV. W. J. SCOTT,

OF THE NORTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE.

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PREFACE.

A few explanatory statements will suffice for a Proem to this small volume. In its preparation I have sought to utilize some of my literary work which has already received the recognition of "print and pay" in the Southern Methodist *Quarterly Review*, under the distinguished editorship of Dr. W. P. Harrison, who is in some directions the most scholarly man of his church. Other material has been gathered from my contributions to the columns of standard literary and religious magazines and journals. A very considerable part of it, however, is now published for the first time. I am greatly indebted to the appreciation of many personal friends who will take the larger part of the present edition. I wish also to tender my acknowledgments to Mrs. Mary Lanier, of Baltimore, and Charles Scribner's Sons, of New York, for the permission granted me to append to my first lecture some of the choicest poems of the lamented Sidney Lanier. My readers, I am sure, will also appreciate their kindness.

W. J. SCOTT.

Atlanta, Ga.

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LECTURES.

SIDNEY LANIER—THE POET.

It was my good fortune to enjoy the personal acquaintance of this illustrious poet. That acquaintance was limited, however, to a few brief interviews, which were quite informal and wholly unpremeditated. I can hardly say that he sought my acquaintance, and I am sure that I did not seek his; for as yet I was ignorant of his literary antecedents, and I doubt if he himself had so much as dreamed of his own literary possibilities.

After the lapse of so many eventful years I can not be exact as to the date of our first interview; but I have a clear impression that it was in the early summer of 1867, at Montgomery Hall, in the capital city of Alabama. Having entered the hotel—not without the proverbial welcome of "mine host"—I wrote my name and residence on the register and took my seat in the rotunda for a slight rest and recuperation. It was but a little while until I was approached by a pleasant-faced young gentleman who quietly asked if I was the editor of *Scott's Magazine*. I replied affirmatively, whereupon he was kind enough to say that he had read the *Magazine*, and liked it. In answer to an inquiry he informed me that he was a native of Macon, Ga., a son of Robert S. Lanier, Esq., and grandson of Sterling Lanier, two excellent citizens of that central city. Learning that I

had met both his father and grand-father, our relation as landlord and guest became more pleasant and even somewhat confidential. He presently stated that he was a graduate of Oglethorpe University, and after his graduation served two years as tutor in the same institution, which at the time boasted of an able Faculty. Amongst them was President Samuel K. Talmage, a near kinsman of Dr. De Witt Talmage, of Brooklyn, N. Y. Another member of the Faculty was Prof. James Woodrow, since eminent for scientific attainments, to whom Mr. Lanier afterward acknowledged his indebtedness for much valuable aid in the way of mental *stimulus* and inspiration.

Like thousands of our most cultured young men, he responded promptly to the call of the South at the beginning of the war between the States. He served in the ranks for more than two years, enjoying an occasional whiff of "villainous saltpeter" and was then transferred to the Signal Service Corps. While in this department he was captured on a blockade-runner, and for some months was straitly imprisoned at Point Lookout. Shortly before the close of the war he was released or exchanged, and from that time until I met him at Montgomery he had bravely battled with adverse fortune. During this first conversation he also stated that he was an occasional writer of prose and verse, and then had in press a war novel with the quaint title of "Tiger Lilies." I confess that I was charmed not more by the evidences of his varied accomplishments than by the frankness of his whole personal bearing, and expressed