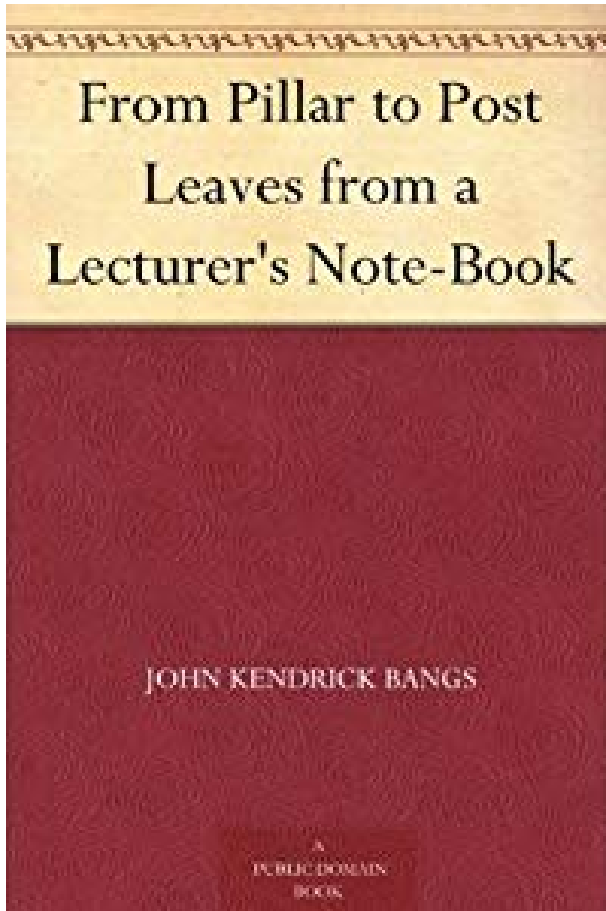


From Pillar to Post Leaves from a Lecturer's Note-Book



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I cannot imagine a more disagreeable way of qualifying for the income tax," said one of America's most noted after-dinner speakers to me when at a chance meeting he and I were discussing the joys and woes of the lecture platform. I must admit that in a way I sympathized with him; for I knew something of the sufferings endured for days and nights prior to one's own public appearance as an after-dinner or platform speaker. There was a time many years ago, upon which I look back with wonder that I ever came through it without nervous prostration, when I suffered those selfsame mental agonies as the hour approached for the fulfilment of one of those rash promises which men fond of the sound of their own voices make months in advance to those subtle flatterers who would lure them from the easy solitudes of silence into the uneasy limelight of after-dinner oratory. Not without reason has a certain wit, whose name is unfortunately lost to fame, referred to the chairs behind the guest table on the raised platform at revelries of this nature as "The Seats of the Mighty and Miserable.