

### PROF. SUMICHRAST'S LECTURE.

OUR readers will remember that, in our last issue, we intimated our intention of reviving the old idea of a monthly course of lectures, before the Athenæum, or Students Debating Society, which of late years had fallen somewhat into disuse. It affords us pleasure now to be able to state that the course for the current year was opened in a highly satisfactory manner by Prof. Sumichrast, on Friday evening, October 15th.

The Lecturer chose for his subject, "Hungarian life and character," a theme, which from his being a native of Germany, and having travelled in Hungary, hence, being an eye-witness of the scenes he described, he was adapted to treat in a masterly manner. Our readers who were in attendance at the institution three years ago, will remember having enjoyed a rich treat in hearing Prof. Sumachrast lecture before the Athenæum at that time. We might add, that had they been present on this occasion, their enjoyment and profit would have been commensurate with, if not superior, to their enjoyment of the former lecture.

The lecturer introduced his subject by giving us some account of the geography of the country; and then entering more particularly upon the topic of the evening, he dealt first with the general characteristics of the people, showing, that although they evinced great subtlety in evading the law, in their unfortunate propensity to appropriate the property of their neighbours, yet they were an industrious, frugal, and, in many respects, a highly moral people.

To proceed with the subject in a systematic manner, the lecturer took up in succession, the three different grades of society—the lower, middle and upper classes; commencing with the lower. In imagination he introduced us to the cottage of the peasant, and held out to our gaze the scanty, yet in many instances, strange contents of that humble abode. His very graphic description of the peasant's stress was entirely amusing, and called forth frequent outbursts of laughter. It was, however, when he came to describe the grotesque manner in which the Hungarian rustic woos and wins his fair one, that the greatest hilarity was displayed by the audience.

The delineations of character and costumes of the middle and upper classes, were equally interesting and amusing. The lecture was intermingled throughout with anecdotes and ludicrous descriptions of Continental dress and habits of life, which kept it from being wearisome, although an hour and forty-five minutes long. Prof. Sumichrast's powers of description are of no ordinary kind, as we think all present will freely admit, and

we also think it will be some time before the picture which he painted upon our minds, in describing Hungarian life and character, will have faded away.

### OUR READING ROOM.

No student can afford to neglect this important branch of his education, even if he were so disposed. The rare inducements presented by our Reading Room are such that every member of the institution will find the possibility of excuse from insufficient attractions forever precluded. A student, we know, has little time at his disposal; yet general reading on the news of the day, and the questions of the age constitutes an important element in every man's training. It is absolutely necessary that he be thoroughly informed of these, that he may be able to bend the new force he is daily developing towards its legitimate practical ends. Such knowledge should not be regarded as secondary, but as a requisite for the pursuit of the more classical and mathematical departments. Instances are too frequently found of learned ignorance, wherein a man seems to have been acquiring facts and theorizing without any definite idea of their future utility. Such could not be the unfortunate description of any one who avails himself of the choice opportunity supplied by the Reading Room. There may be found various papers and magazines from different sections of the Dominion and United States, in which will be met different views well presented on the leading topics of the age—literary, religious and political. We trust the measure of attention due this room will not be withheld to the detriment of the student and disappreciation of the Society which furnishes it.

### "GREATNESS IN LITTLENESS."

MAN holds a stand-point midway between infinite greatness and infinite littleness. He cannot ascend nor descend to any considerable degree without crossing the line of demarcation, which shows where man ends and God begins. And that kind of human power which descends deepest into infinite littleness, is by far greater than that which ascends into infinite greatness. Look at a massive ice-crowned imperial mountain; it is a magnificent work of nature. Yet what is it? It is only a collection of materials with which we are all familiar. It is only a larger mountain than the hillock which lies at its base. A few of these hills would make one of those huge mountains with its Alpine glaciers, its thunder-bolts of snow and its eternity of frost. Such vastness, although it makes deep impres-

sions upon us, is not beyond our comprehension. So the mighty ocean, with its mountain-like billows is only an expanse of water larger than the river which lazily meanders through the pleasant meadows. It is great, but it is only an aggregation of diamond drops which our eyes can measure, and our minds comprehend. These are considered great objects, and so they are, but only so because they are large. They are above us, and they lead us less toward creative infinity.

If we turn our eyes in the other direction we lose ourselves quite as readily. If we pick up a pebble and undertake the examination of its structure, the different elements which compose it, the relation of those elements to each other; the mode of combination—we are lost as quickly as though we undertook to track the foot-prints of the stars. We can dissect from each other the muscle, veins, arteries, and nerves of a human body; but the little gnat which taps a vein upon our hand does it with an instrument, and by the power of machinery, which are entirely beyond our scrutiny. They are the servants of an instinct of which we are entirely ignorant. We may look through a drop of water, and may at first be arrested by the sports and struggles of animalcular life, but at length we find ourselves gazing beyond into infinitude, using it as a lens through which the Godhead becomes visible to us.

If we look up into the firmament and send our imaginations into its deep abysses and think that, even further than dreams can go, those abysses are strewn with stars. If we think of comets coming and going with lightning rush, yet occupying centuries in their journey, or if we only sit down by the sea and think of the waves that kiss other shores thousands of miles away, we are pressed by a sense of our own littleness, and ask the question whether God who has such large things in His care can think of us—specks on an infinite collection of surface—motes uneasily, shifting in the boundless space? We get no hope in this direction; but we look down and find that the shoulders of all inferior creation are under us lifting us up into the very presence of God. It is then we obtain comfort and happiness. We find that God has been at work below us in a mass of minute and munificent detail by the side of which our lives are great, simple, and satisfyingly significant.

Let us note one more phase of this subject. A large number—the greater part in truth—of the human race are engaged in doing small work, and it may be gratifying to them to know that the Almighty Maker has done a great deal of the same kind of work, and has not found it unprofitable employment. And that it is