

Requies 26/5/94.

THE LECTURES ON LITERATURE AT THE UNIVERSITY.—Monsieur Calais is to be congratulated on the success which has attended his experimental course of French lectures. That course was brought to a close on Friday evening, and so greatly has its popularity and value impressed the authorities of the University that a fresh series is to be entered upon under their auspices. We have frequently advocated the delivery of such lectures as a means of popularizing the University and extending its usefulness, and it is satisfactory to find that the Council has irrevocably committed itself to this new and important departure. Though French literature in the past has not appealed to the million in this country, M. Calais has already done much to awaken a taste for it. His addresses have proved exceedingly attractive to a large number of people, who, though not privileged to be University students, have through their agency secured the advantage of gaining some insight into a most fascinating branch of study. The able manner in which the lecturer has handled his subject marks him out as being well fitted to discharge the task entrusted to him. It was a wise choice to select for treatment the life and works of Molière—the great comic author-artist of France, the man whom Voltaire did not hesitate to pronounce the most eminent writer of comedy of any age or country. His writings afforded ample material for the ten lectures in which M. Calais succeeded in keeping hold upon the attention of large audiences. Molière was a man of many parts, every inch an actor, and a Frenchman of Frenchmen. From the time when as Jean Baptiste Poquelin he became enamoured of Madeleine Béjart and threw aside dry and musty law books to follow, as Molière, the captivating occupation of amusing and instructing the multitude, to the day of his tragic death his life presents numerous and varied features which the art of the lecturer can turn to good account. It could not be said of Molière that he resorted to his memory for his jokes and to his imagination for his facts. His powerful and pungent satire and his ready wit were sharp as a poniard, and their thrusts were distinguished alike by brilliancy and truthfulness. His works rank amongst the foremost in the language, and the lectures upon them which Mons. Calais has now completed so appropriately with a sketch of "Malade Imaginaire"—a play possessing the melancholy interest of being Molière's last—cannot fail to be beneficial to those fortunately able to attend the series. The interest aroused in his productions has had an influence far beyond the walls of the lecture-room, as is shown by the impetus that has been given to the study of French literature, and it may be expected that the next course will command even larger attendances. Similarly gratifying results have attended the lectures of Herr Rechner on German literature. The Council of the University has acted wisely in determining to extend the scope of the great educational institution under their control, and courageously in selecting French and German as a beginning. We would fain hope that ere long other popular lectures will be arranged. A series on "Tennyson" or "Browning," for instance, or any great English writer for that matter, to be followed by another series on perhaps "Dante" would be particularly interesting and helpful to those outside of University instruction proper, who seek to cultivate literary tastes under difficulties.

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#### THE UNIVERSITY FRENCH LECTURES.

THE authorities of the Adelaide University have reason to be well pleased with the success which has attended the French lectures given under their auspices by Monsieur Calais. There has been in the past a regrettable tendency in South Australia to neglect the bright and epigrammatic language of France. True, French is not to-day the indispensable accomplishment that it was when Frederick the Great wrote all his works in the language of his foes, and obtained the assistance of Voltaire to correct his mistakes and add a literary polish to the royal compositions, but French literature is still, as it has been for several centuries, a guiding power among the nations. "An oracle going the round of the interests of civilized man," says Monsieur Roget truthfully, "would with difficulty find an object of study or a branch of culture in which the French could not offer a model of presentment." England possesses a literature of which any country might be proud, and which has been a subject of admiration for many French writers from Montesquieu to Taine, but we can always study with advantage the literary masterpieces of France. French poetry may sometimes to the foreigner seem a mere jingle—Byron was in a bad humor once went so far as to call it "monotony on wire"—but French prose is acknowledged as the model of the whole world for transparent clearness, crispness, and lucidity. It has been invaluable to English writers in showing them the path they should tread, and in teaching them to avoid the involved and tortuous periods of purely Teutonic races. The Council of the University has been fortunate in obtaining the able services of Monsieur Calais as a lecturer. Thoroughly at home in his subject he has been able to enlist the sympathies of his audiences, and by his clear and pleasant delivery and his explanatory remarks has made his hearers realize and understand the characters of Molière's comedies—characters drawn with a master's hand from the men and women of his day. As a result an impetus has been given to the study of French literature, and in many Adelaide drawing-rooms recitations and acting in that language have been successfully undertaken. It is gratifying to find that the authorities of the University see their way to prolong the French course, and it is to be hoped that Monsieur Calais will continue his lectures not only in the classic but in the modern developments of French literature.

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#### FRENCH LECTURES AT THE UNIVERSITY.

The last of the series of ten lectures on Molière and his works was delivered on Friday afternoon at the University. Monsieur Calais, who for the last ten weeks has kept up the interest of his audience, surpassed his former achievement on this sketch he gave of the "Malade Imaginaire." Besides being one of the most amusing plays of the great French comedian, sparkling with wit and humor, exhibiting with a comic animation the highest degree of irony and truth, additional interest is attached to this comedy, for it was while making the part of Argan in the ceremony, and in pronouncing the word "Jure" that Molière met with the accident which cost him his life and deprived the stage of the most accomplished comedy writer of ancient and modern times. Monsieur Calais in a few well chosen words alluded also to the little consideration his hero had received at the hands of his contemporaries; but posterity had fully vindicated his character, and the name of Molière will live long as the language in which he wrote his marvellous works. In this comedy the author deals a blow both to the doctors of his time and to imaginary patients of all times. By exposing the absurdities of the former he tries to bring them to a better understanding of their honorable profession; the latter, who like Argan drug themselves under the fear of some imaginary ailment, could easily profit by the remedy cast upon him. Molière has perfectly delineated the chief character Argan. The credulity which he displays, the ease with which he is imposed upon by his unscrupulous physicians, together with his simplicity and earnestness of action, make him one of the