

Mr. Blatch's Lecture on "Common Errors."

[At the repeated solicitations of several gentlemen, who have expressed a wish to see the able Lecture on "COMMON ERRORS," delivered by Mr. BLATCH at the Hall of the Mechanics' Institute, on Monday, the 16th January, in a printed form, we waited upon that gentleman, and through his kindness and courtesy are enabled to give it a place on our pages.]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

In carrying out the object of Institutions, such as this, within whose walls we are now assembled, divers are the means which may be employed, to effect the desired result; and multifarious are the subjects, to which the attention of the members may be advantageously directed. The instruction of those, whose opportunities of acquiring knowledge have previously been circumscribed, the education of the younger branches of the community, and the general improvement of society, by the diffusion of rational information and useful knowledge, and by exciting a taste for intellectual pursuits and polished habits, are the legitimate end of Mechanics' Institutes; which, though named after one particular class of individuals, yet, in truth, embrace within their scope all ranks and degrees, every age and sex. To furnish mental food for so many appetites, to gratify such numerous tastes, and to suit the necessities or deficiencies of such various species of disciples, requires a wide range of dissertation, a diversified selection of subjects and talents. The highest flights of scientific speculation and oratory may find delighted listeners, in so heterogeneous an assembly as the audience frequenting this lecture-room; while the simplest and most elementary principles of the same sciences must be familiarly explained, for the benefit of others. The interesting researches of the historian, the biographer, the geographer, the topographer; of the curious enquirer into the wonders of natural philosophy; of the practical mechanic, the grammarian, the etymologist, the statistician, and the moral philosopher, may all, in their turn, enlighten and amuse the enquiring auditory; and numerous as are the subjects which may thus from time to time engage your attention, so various may be the talents employed in presenting them to your contemplation. While, therefore, your admiration may be intensely excited, by the deep learning and

ingenuity of those who descend before you matters of abstrusity and profoundness; (as the admirable philosophical and scientific lectures to which you have so lately listened) let a kindly thought be also bestowed on the man who minister to you in humbler things. In your mind, that all, in their degree, endeavour, in the limit of their ability, to contribute to your gratification and improvement; and then, instead of measuring the talents and capacities of one Lecturer by the standard of those who distinguish another, you will merely consider whether each has acquitted himself well of the task which he undertook to perform; and will not decide on the competency of each individual by the execution of his own self-imposed task, and not by intellectual comparison with others.

In the variety of subjects already alluded to, there are many to be found, of homely nature but of great practical utility; many maxims which may considerably affect our personal success or comfort through life, and which would not be chosen by the mere man of science or of elocution, as the theme of a lecture or an oration. Fortunately, the scope of a Mechanics' Institute admits of free dissertation on such subordinate things as these, and placing myself, therefore, on the present occasion, in the rank of humbler utilitarians, whom I have already claimed your consideration, I shall endeavour, this evening, to present before you a few homely observations on COMMON ERRORS, in a plain way; under the conviction, that a candid consideration of them may result in some beneficial effects, and may in some degree legitimately promote that mental and personal improvement which is the object of this Institution.

Society, in this free country, is nearly homogeneous: there exists among us no titled aristocracy, no hereditary class of claimants to rank or honours: the only social distinctions we admit are those arising from the adventitious combination of circumstances, to which all are liable, and through which all may attain elevation. Probity, integrity, moral worth, and industry confer the proudest titles which can dignify man; while they are, in this happy land, the surest means of procuring competence, distinction and respect. The road to public eminence and honour is open to all classes; the humblest origin is no bar to final exaltation; and when rectitude and successful exertion have placed an individual in the highest grades of society, he finds there no pre-eminent distinctions towering far above his newly achieved honours, but confidently clas-