

ality with those who have preceded him in similar career. This being the case,—the material for future merchants, magistrates, legislators and public men of various denominations being probably in a great measure included in present families of mechanics, and among members of the humbler classes, is it not desirable, that they should so far qualify themselves, by previous education, for a different career, as to be enabled hereafter to appear with credit and without diffidence, in a station superior to their present condition? To attain this qualification is easier than many may imagine; and to pass current in good society depends less on high attainments in learning or science, than on a simple refinement in speech and manner, and a reasonable attention to the minor requisites of politeness and good-breeding. How common an occurrence is it, that when persons have either neglected or not enjoyed in their younger days, the advantages of education, they are in after life exposed to innumerable mortifications in their intercourse with society; how often and how bitterly do they then regret their deficiencies; and how deeply do they feel their inferiority to many of their familiar associates, whose position in life may be no way superior to their own, but whose speech and manners and acquirements are more polished and passable. Frequently, indeed, does it happen, that such persons are placed in social and public situations, where their outward appearance and known position would claim for them distinction and respect; but whose language and looks inevitably betray their uncountness and ignorance, and who pass muster only while they refrain from opening their lips. To obviate these difficulties, to remove these obstacles to social intercourse, is a part of the object of Mechanics' Institutes. To incite all classes to *self-cultivation*, and to consequent self-respect and public esteem, is the legitimate end they have in view. The mechanic and labourer of to-day may become the legislator, the magistrate or the public functionary of tomorrow; and will thus not only be thrown into intimate communion with all, even the highest grades of society, but may on many occasions be called upon publicly to display his capacity and talent. But though changes such as these cannot be the lot of all, yet all are liable thereto, according to the operation of individual exertions and concurrent circumstances; and it can therefore, at least, be but antagonistic to the general tone of society, if correctness of language and civilization of de-

portment be sedulously cultivated by all. It may not be necessary, that every handicraft or common labourer should be distinguished, in the ordinary exercise of his calling, by the practised elegance of diction and the easy polish of manner of the habitual gentleman; but it certainly is desirable, in a country like this, where all society is progressive, and where exclusiveness can be but little tolerated, that every individual, however humble, should be free from vulgarity and ignorance, should be accustomed to speak and to act with correctness and propriety, and should thus form the germ from which, in due process of time, more finished manners may naturally emanate; so that a progressive advancement in the social scale may develop, without difficulty or affectation, a corresponding improvement of colloquy and behaviour. Even were this social progression not possible, were all grades and classes permanently stationary, yet such cultivation as is here contended for would at least promote general civilization and moral improvement. Whatever tends to humanize and soften the feelings and conduct of men, proportionably exalts their moral principles and lessens the probability of criminality; hence, mental cultivation and the encouragement of courteous demeanour among the poor and the humble, must redound to the public good.

Proceeding upon these principles, and confining myself, on the present occasion, to a humble section of the educational subjects which might be broached, in furtherance of my general theory, I shall devote the passing hour to a consideration of a few colloquial vulgarities and common errors of phraseology prevalent among us; and which, for the attainment of the improvement already suggested, must be universally abrogated.

It is commonly observed, by educated Englishmen arriving in New-Brunswick, that the native humbler classes of the Province, including even the coloured population, speak better English—that is, that their enunciation is purer and their language more grammatical, than that of the lower orders of the mother country. And this is the fact. I account for it in this manner. The peasantry and labouring population of England, born in the lowest sphere of society, almost hereditary hewers of wood and drawers of water, have in general no other prospect than hard and incessant toil, nearly from the cradle to the grave. The low rate of wages furnishes the poor labourer with scanty provision for the support of a family, and wholly denies him the power of giving any