

(For the Canadian Magazine.)

ON COMMERCIAL EDUCATION.

Mr. Editor,

As society is now constituted, a certain degree of education is indispensably necessary to enable a man to appear to advantage or to fill with propriety any station of life above that of a day-labourer. This is a fact so well established that I believe few will dispute it. The circumstance of some few uneducated individuals having risen to eminence for wealth and riches, forms no exception to this general rule. These instances but rarely occur, and where they do, are more attributable to a fortuitous combination of chance events than to any effort of natural talent or the exertions of an uneducated mind.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, which,
Taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

And such persons are more indebted to what is termed *good luck* for their success than to any thing else. It is their riches which gives them their consequence, and they must depend entirely upon the amplitude of their purse for the reception they meet with from their superiors. When present among the well-educated, the sense of the latter, and their good breeding, will prevent their behaving improperly to them: but in many instances their boorish blunders and ridiculous mistakes will make them far more frequently the objects of ridicule than of respect. Besides this state of degenerate estimation in which the proud and ignorant, but wealthy, man is held; and which is certainly not an enviable lot, there are other considerations which deserve to be kept in view. Being unlettered, although he has partly taken advantage of the fortunate circumstances which chance has thrown in his way, he has not done it so effectually as if he had possessed that great auxiliary, a good education; and hence he is not so rich as he might have been.

If you look around upon the unequal distribution of riches, you will at first view be inclined to doubt the validity of the old maxim, *fortuna favet fortibus*; for it appears to be superseded by the fact, that the fickle goddess blindly showers her favours down, and that every gaping fool who happens to stand in the way, comes in for a share of her bounty. But although to mortal *ken* this may seem to be the case, and although it sometimes happens, it is not an event upon which a general principle can be laid down. To say nothing of the pernicious consequences the adoption of such a principle would produce, in putting a check to all active exertion, it would be highly injurious in other respects. It would put an end to the necessity of obtaining a preparatory education for any pursuit or occupation of life: all education would soon be considered as useless, and consequently all knowledge, and all desire to acquire it, would soon be obliterated. Men would become *feræ naturæ*, and the advantages which flow from the accumulated intelligence of education would give way to that un-