

whose increased facilities have since united the remotest portions of the habitable globe. Commerce grew more and more extended, and more and more useful in its influences, in proportion to the intellectual improvement of those who directed its operations. Its invariable effect was to bestow a decided superiority, in all respects, upon such nations as were actively engaged in promoting its advances. After a while occurred the discovery of the singular properties of the magnet, to which may be attributed all subsequent extension of commercial enterprise. Later still, the lofty genius of Columbus, assisted by severe and long continued study, traced a way across the unexplored world of waters. Following his illustrious example, other adventurers discovered a continent almost boundless in its extent, and inexhaustible in its resources. And now, in our own times, no division of the earth is so distant from the seats of civilization, that ambitious industry has not succeeded in ascertaining and appropriating its advantages; neither seas, nor mountains, nor heat, nor cold, have rendered inaccessible the remotest and most inhospitable regions.

This we regard as the result of that distinguished position to which man, through the prospective elevation of his mind, was originally destined to attain. Volumes have been written upon the history of commerce, and volumes more might still be written, all exhibiting the influence which its origin, its growth and its maturity have produced upon the world. It is evident, however, that all its various effects have indirectly arisen from that progressive development which the human mind has manifested; no ignorant man would have conceived the project of traversing an unknown, and apparently illimitable ocean, to seek for lands beyond it, nor would, with the masterly skill of a Columbus, have conducted the expedition intended to accomplish that design.

Since the earliest times, commerce and general education have advanced side by side, continually stimulating and assisting each other. The future well-being of society calls for the extension of knowledge to all its classes, in a greater or less degree, according as peculiar circumstances may require. The professions of divinity, of law and medicine, for practical purposes at least, demand a course of preparatory study very different in its character from that needed by the man of commerce.

We think it is not necessary that the merchant of this day should be deeply versed in classical literature, that he should have studied long and attentively the sublimity of Homer and the volup-

tuous gaiety of Anacreon, that he should have learned to be witty from Horace, critical from Quintillian, or elegant from Cicero. Nor is it by any means a matter of importance, that the abstract principles of the differential and integral calculus should have become to him familiar as his household words. These things have their appropriate place, and we are not of that number who would introduce confusion into society by jumbling together the different professions and avocations of men. An extensive familiarity with the history of nations, a thorough comprehension of the great principles of political economy, and a determination as to the comparative merits of the various ethical creeds, will enable the intelligent commercial man to form a just appreciation of the high character which his profession should sustain,—will control those too eager desires which sometimes verge upon the avaricious, and will elevate, enoble and refine his intellectual and his moral nature. We have alluded thus particularly to the nature of commercial education, because the commercial class, if not the largest, is usually the most influential in every important community. But our position, that education should be general, not confined to any order of men, however great their consequence, will not be disputed. For we conceive that all well regulated societies require the preservation of a *balance of power* between the higher and the lower classes. Now, KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: therefore all should possess it. But how shall all possess it? The difficulty, the existence of which this question implies, is readily removed. Determined assiduity is necessary,—nothing more.

At this very moment there lives a man who, but a few short years ago, was a humble mechanic, a daily laborer, a man whose intellect was powerful, and whose taste was fine, but the rude necessities of whose condition confined him to the forge and anvil, and he toiled as if he had never known or heard of more exalted occupations; still, that man was a most devoted student, and though he abstracted no time from the allotted period of his labor, he yet succeeded in acquiring a *mastery* over nearly all the languages of ancient and of modern times; he studied many abstruse sciences, and gained a reputation which will be as lasting as it is glorious. Though few amongst us may hope to equal the fame of Elihu Burritt, yet that fame and the peculiar circumstances under which it was won, may serve to teach us how much *may* be done through application and undiverted study. A few energetic youths whose original advantages are possibly inferior to those of their neighbors, have perhaps the discernment