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NO. 1.

A LECTURE.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR COUNTRY AND OURSELVES.

Delivered in the Mechanics' Institute of
St. John, on Monday the 13th Decem-
ber, 1852, by WM. WATTS, Jr., Esq.,
of Fredericton, Barrister-at-Law, and
Editor of the "Head-Quarters."

It is a very trite remark, that the people
of the Colonies are prone to think and speak
slightingly of their country and themselves.
We are so accustomed to make disparaging
remarks, and hear them made, that we
forget their injustice in their frequency,
and indeed make them, and suffer them to
be made as a matter of course.

Nevertheless, this is no trifling matter—
it works great injustice; and in truth,
when properly investigated, will be found
to be a prolific source of many, very many,
serious consequences.

It may be safely predicted that no people
ever attained any desirable reputation for
themselves or country without the inspira-
tion and the hardihood of resolute and un-
flinching patriotism; and that no people
in any country, at any time, ever failed in
this attainment who exhibited this virtue.

Some men may be born to fortune, may
inherit reputation and influence, but a
people must make themselves and character.
Mere material wealth in mines of
precious metal, or costliest jewels, in fruit
of richest flavor, or flowers of the most gor-
geous beauty, has never made or contribu-
ted to the moral elevation of the people
who are the natives of the lands possessing
them.

You will look in vain through all the
strange vicissitudes of human experience re-
corded in the history of our race, for any
such illustrations of enterprise and progress
among the effeminate children of the Trop-
ics, or the dissipated idlers of the gold re-
gions, as are presented in the annals of
ancient Athens, or the glorious story of a
later day, of Holland, of Britain and Amer-
ica.

The character of a great people is earned,
not received of charity; it is communicated
by no special Providence, but is wrought
out in sweat and industry, in obedience to
the great prevailing law of compensation,
by which the God who governs all things
in righteousness, makes every good thing
bear its appointed service to human faith
and human industry. Sloth may revel on
its bed of beauty, and lap itself in the aro-
ma of ambrosial perfumes, but it is sloth
still and for ever, despite the beauty and
the odours. Vice may luxuriate in all the
costly dissipations which a new and gen-
erous view of yellow treasure may ap-
pear to justify, but the beggary and peni-
tence, aye, and the hard wages of trans-
gression, will come with the morrow. There
is not even wealth to be had in these things
—they are so unfriendly to the formation of
character, that they may be considered de-
structive to it. All history attests the truth,
"It is the hard circumstance which makes
the strong character."

Now, it is directly in connection with
this elemental truth in the formation of na-
tional character, that I find my first illus-
tration of the evil offices of that disparage-
ment which we colonists are prone to prac-
tise. We have just such disadvantages of
climate and position as have spirited other
people to exertion, success, and immortali-
ty. To study these, to understand them
with a view to conquer them, would be just
the most sensible thing in the world; but
instead of this, we permit—nay, even assist
—the ignorant cockneyism and charlatani-
sm which mislead the world, to turn into
contempt and ridicule the austere but re-
spectable disabilities of our country, by writ-
ing its short hard history of our seasons, in
—a nine months winter, and a three
months of mosquitoes—to heap its libel
and injustice upon ourselves, by lampooning
us in its yard-stick literature, as a sort of
outside barbarians, equalling awaiting in
the stern virtues of nomadic independence
and the amenities of civilised life. These
people come among us again and again, as-
sume all the ill-bred airs of illegitimate gen-
tility and refinement, betray ignorance and
ill-manners at every step; and yet, despite
the discovery of all the hollows and im-

pertinence of these jackdaw pretenders,
John Bluenose is still prone, "with bated
breath and whispered humbleness," to re-
ceive even this insolence as a condescension
provided always the lamponer has had the
grace to have been born in England.

This "virtue of humility" has been car-
ried quite too far already. I, for one think
we have eaten more than our share of
"humble pie." We must now exhibit
such a spice of self-esteem and love of coun-
try as will at least save us from ridicule
under our own roof-tree.

Let it not be argued that self-esteem is
dangerous. Without it no good thing can
be accomplished for ourselves, our families
or our country. It is sanctioned of Holy
Writ. We are commanded to love God,
because He first loved us—to love our
neighbors *as ourselves*; and the domestic
attachments and relations are again and
again commended, as when we are em-
phatically reminded that he who *neglecteth
his household is worse than an infidel*.—
Now, the best, the only genuine patriotism,
is that which finds its centre and com-
mencement, in an indomitable self respect
—enlarges into the warm circumference
of family affection, radiates into a munifi-
cent or civic devotion to the interests and
advantages of the community of which we
are members, and these expand into the full
volume of the sturdy patriotism which em-
braces our country. There is more of this
sentiment or principle in Britain than in
any other portion of the world. The Amer-
ican rarely localises his patriotism, and
does not like to anchor himself. When
his love for national hyperbole breaks forth,
as it does full frequently, it is to sound the
praises of

"The universal Yankee nation,
The smartest people in all creation."

While the thorough bass of John Bull, whe-
ther heard within the sound of Bow bells,
or on the Andes or the Alps, is still em-
ployed upon "Rule Britannia," or "God
save the Queen." John's pride and affec-
tion consummate in the glory of his coun-
try—Jonathan's is political, and vaunts
itself in the people and institutions.

Now, the trouble with us, we do nei-
ther—we act or do nothing—speak or keep
silence, as if we had no country, and even
no people—as if we held the former by suf-
ferance, and were a not over respectable
second-hand or supernumerary tail of an-
other people beyond the great Atlantic. In
a word, *we have no confidence in our
country or ourselves.*

True it is, we have our occasional reu-
nions (we used to have more of them) and
at the hospitable and festive board, song and
eloquence will be heard in the expression of
an enthusiastic nationality; but it is a na-
tionality too remote for the practical inspi-
ration which issues from a domestic patri-
otism. The glorious name of England, the
Land of the Mountain and the Flood, the
Emerald Isle, are all noble themes for the
eulogy of orator and poet, and passing sweet
it is to have them embalmed in eloquence
and poetry. They revive fond and faithful
recollections among our estimated compatri-
ots who have made the Provinces the land
of their adoption. Then, when we say or
sing of the many triumphs of the red-cross-
banner of Britain by land and sea—of its
glorious heralding of liberty to the captive,
of Christianity to the heathen—of all the
arts of polished and happy life to those who
sat in darkness—it is not in British hearts,
home or colonial, to remain unwarmed by the
genial glow of fervent nationality which
these must awaken. But still we speak,
and still we sing of these as done by others,
not by us—we associate ourselves with them
it may be, gladly and proudly, but it is by an
indirect relationship; and we do not, we
cannot so identify ourselves with the tran-
saction, the danger of the glory, as to make
them *ours*, and a part of us.

Even the loved traditions of our own New-
Brunswick—when we praise the devotion
and the loyalty—when we weep over the
disasters, or rejoice in the twilight hope and
happiness which crowned the later years of
our honoured fathers of '83—we tell, *even
of these*, as of a something past and gone
—as a contrast to the decadence of material
riches in this present age, as a shame and
reproach to us, rather than as of a spirit
which lives and shall live among us; and

among our children—a spirit which is indi-
cating itself day by day in many signs, and
which is none the less chivalrous and loyal
because it is at the same time true to the
present and the past; just like to the im-
proved intelligences and freedom of the age
we live in, and to those truly British insti-
tutions which enable and encourage us to
keep pace with the rapid progress of our
race, and to employ all the vast facilities
for fortune and happiness provided by our
own good country.

*We must cultivate a Provincial patri-
otism*—a respect for a confident belief in
ourselves and country. We must find the
elements for such a faith in what we have
been, what we are, and are becoming. We
must establish Provincial Societies, whose
anniversaries shall commemorate some ho-
nored event in our domestic annals—some
event round which our own orators and
poets may suspend their votive offerings,
and under which they may gather inspira-
tion, and learn to blend with equal power
the historic and prophetic glories of Bri-
tain and New Brunswick.

I should indeed be the last who would
desire to divorce us from our great inheri-
tance of noble incitement to noble enter-
prise, which we adopt from the illuminated
chronicles of British achievement. The
palm-crowned warriors who have signa-
lised her prowess, and vindicated her liber-
ties, on many a crimson field and sea; the
patriotic prescience of the world-renowned
statesmen who, in ancient and modern
times have built and rebuilt the mighty
bulwarks of her freedom; the great and
good men of her Church, who, in travail
and martyrdom have attested their deep
love for the Christian liberty and truth,
which gives sanctity and salt and savour to
her history; her bards, worshipped in all
lands, recited in all tongues—we claim our
right of blood in all of these, and cherish
them with profound and reverend affection.
No suspicion of disloyalty, no taint of qual-
ified allegiance, has ever dimmed the
golden chord, strong and beautiful, which
unites us to these memories. Like the ve-
nerable red-cross flag which hangs upon
our citadels, these *overhang our hearts*,
and will be prized for ever.

But these memories should—they *must*
remind us we have a work to do—an end
to accomplish—a noble and grateful field to
work in—a generous and glorious destiny to
reach. We have all of encouragement
which the proudest history of the proudest
and best country can communicate—all of
present facility which health, a wide ex-
panse of fertile country, and free institutions
can supply—all of hope which a future full
of promise and incentive, can inspire, to
quicken us to *faith and enterprise.*

Let us to it manfully! no longer look-
ing to others to do for us, or even to assist
us. Home—at home, for home, by home
means, with home hands and home hearts.
Let us to the task with cheery courage—
laugh at the difficulties and disasters to
which we will be subjected, make the most
of what of encouragement must befall us,
and in all and through all, maintain our way
and faith right onward; and the success
which never yet failed to wait on persev-
ering industry and confidence will certainly
and in due time reward us richly. The
poetic inspiration of this home patriotism
will then unite, as it should, with practical
philosophy; the actual duties and engage-
ments of life will interest us, and become
endeared to us: we will find pride and
pleasure, as well as profit in fulfilling them;
the voice of song, the heart of enterprise,
the arm of industry, will "pull all togeth-
er."

Depend upon it there is a motive power,
an actual force, in these associations of the
heart and the imagination with the labors
of the field, as well as with those of the
pulpit, the Senate or the Bar. *A cheer-
ful spirit is a half day's work*—the
"want of power is mostly the want of
will."

But is it enquired, what have we to jus-
tify or support this patriotic sentiment?—
whereon shall we rest this self reliance? I
answer, we possess every constituent of
greatness, which has gone to compose the
wealth, the reputation and the pride, of all
the countries which have attained to great-
ness; and, in addition, we have the amaz-
ing assurance which is to be derived from

the example of those countries, and the
thousand aids and appliances of this inven-
tive and ingenious age.

Our soil is extensive, fertile, varied, well
watered, rich in mineral treasure;—our
forests affluent in the best and most desira-
ble woods; our harbors numerous, accessi-
ble and safe; our coast and inland waters
teem with finny wealth; our air is healthy
and pleasant. What more is wanting of
material masonry to lay fast and broad the
foundation on which patriotism erects the
towering structure of national independ-
ence?

And if evidence is asked of me to confirm
this postulate, it was gathered to my hand
in rich abundance from every portion of our
Province, at the recent Exhibition. What
would we ask from mother Earth that this
collection did not supply good in kind and
ample in admeasurement? True it is, we
had none of the oranges of the Isles,—no
rice or cotton of the South,—no sample or
auriferous dust to vie with those of Califor-
nia or Australia;—we had none of the spices
of Arabia or the Islands of the Eastern
Seas,—Teas and coffees were not here,—
and some of these will never reward our
native industry by any modification of cli-
mate—by any appliance of art. But if God
has withheld from us the wines and spices
and the luscious fruitage of softer climes, it
is because they are inappropriate to the rug-
ged healthiness of the latitude in which we
live—they are withheld in wisdom and be-
neficence: the loss is gain to us—the depri-
vation is more than recompensed in the
wholesome air we breathe—the absence of
malatia and pestilence—the presence of
every substantial and necessary good thing
which the bosom of the earth is made to
nourish for the benefit of man.

It is admitted, then, not only without re-
gret or shame, but with gratitude and satis-
faction, that we did not exhibit, that we
cannot grow, the delicate fruits and the
romantic condiments which excuse and jus-
tify, as they are always accompanied by *ef-
feminate and half developed men.*

But the *raw substantial* which fill the
farmer's pocket and the workman's stomach
—which give brawn to the arm and blood
to the heart—aye these were there in portly
and rotund abundance. *Potatoes* is all
very well in its way, but in their way,
Potatoes are far better. Sentimental
swains and demoiselles may be content to
"die of a rose in aromatic pains," but I
confess me unromantic enough to prefer to
live on peace pudding. Now, for *Potatoes*
in endless variety and herculean proportions,
in uniforms of all colors, and with facings
to accommodate every fancy—they were
piled heaping high in bags and baskets that
proved beyond all controversy whatever
potatoes can make possible as easy to John
Bluenose; as for carrots, white and red and
yellow; parsnips, mangold-wurzel, turnips,
cabbages, cauliflowers, pumpkins, squashes,
and melons, it would indeed require *large
hands* to tell their sizes, and such of you as
did not see them would suspect me of ex-
travagance if I were to attempt a just de-
scription of their qualities. Then in Grain
we had the most gratifying sample in long
lines of sacks of such Wheat, Oats, Buck-
wheat, Corn and Barley as no country can
surpass. We had Flour in bags and bar-
rels, from each of these, which might safely
be put on show in any market of the world;
and as one ground of anchorage for hope
and faith, we had Wheat Flour ground at
your own Botsford Mills, from grain grown
by your own citizens, under the canopy of
your own famous fogs, which, by all judges
after severest tests, was pronounced decid-
edly superior to the vaunted flour of the best
type of Genesee wheat. Then from your
own Bakeries we saw Bread and Biscuit
and Cakes and Confectionary of every imag-
inable shape, colour and flavour;—we
had manufactured Tobacco from the "dark
North";—Maple Sugar in grain and lump,
and crystalized;—we have Flowers whose
bloom and fragrance would have discredit-
ed no conservatory;—Grapes, white and
purple, in clusters that would have adorned
the vineyards of Southern France or Tusca-
ny;—Apples, the lonest wholesome apple
of every flavour and complexion, fit for the
epicurean table of the gourmand, the pastry
of the housewife, to eat, to stew, to make cid-
dar of, (if you are not Sons and Daughters
of Temperance as you ought to be);—