

A LECTURE ON THE FUTURE OF CANADA;

DELIVERED BY DR. BOVELL, BEFORE THE ASSOCIATION OF ARTS AND
MANUFACTURES OF LOWER CANADA.

GENTLEMEN:

BELIEVE me when I say that I address you this evening with considerable diffidence, not only because the subject is foreign to my immediate pursuits, but for the reason that it is one of the most important which could engage the attention of the philanthropist and statesman; the latter I cannot pretend to be. Cold and lifeless must that breast be which refuses to beat in response to his country's welfare: dead to all the noblest feelings of human nature the man who sits down in stolid indifference to the condition of the soil to which he is attached. Fortunately such a state of apathy cannot be charged to any who have Canada for their home. Descendants of two European nations, we meet on this northern land, the chivalrous sons of France and the dauntless freeman of the British Isles; both grasping the same banner, and worthy of the parent stock from which they sprang; winning for religion and to civilization the forest home of the heathen and benighted children of a race, who, long lapsed in ignorance, know not the riches of the vast territory over which they roam, and are unequal to the task of developing its great resources. Here, then, on this glorious land, destiny has joined us brethren! Here, on this reclaimed wilderness, the red-crossed flag floats freely to the breeze, uniting in one bond of Christian Brotherhood, those who were once disjunct: binding with the cords of a mutual, a common interest, those who, in other climes, seemed to have no elements of cohesion. The Union has been accomplished, and, although for a time, the natural peculiarities and habits of dissimilar people prevented, or rather retarded the process of amalgamation, the commercial necessities and geographical homogeneity of the soil, are exercising their legitimate influence, and already we see the lines of demarcation becoming dim—the process of fusion fast going on. It is no matter of surprise that the heart clings fondly to the associations of its earliest days. Dare we quarrel with that affection which binds man tenderly to the hearth, by the glow of whose fire all the best and holiest feelings of his nature had been fauned

into life? On what spot in all this world beside would the Irish knee bend more devoutly, and where would the warm feeling of his soul gush more freely than at those time-hallowed shrines before which he was wont to linger? What mountain slopes and shadowy glens would the foot of the home-loving Highlander press with the same earnest deep attachment as those which, in the dawn of life he was wont to step; as among the heather he roved the clansman of a noble clan.— And if the children of Erin and Scotia's sons retain their love, shall not old England live in her children's hearts—be their roof tree raised beneath a summer or a winter sky? But sacred as such feelings are, it should be remembered that they are not more so than those which bind each one to his own home. The son remembers forever with reverential love the house of his infancy, but learns in manhood's years to be proud of his own, when he, in turn, becomes the sire of a rising race. Therefore, we should recollect that so long as each one moves within the compass of that wide domain which his forefathers has won, so long does he tread no foreign soil. Britons we are, in this British land—the heirs of British freedom, truth, and virtue, and most truly British when we lay claim to all that in the parent-state commands and ensures those very qualities which has made them what they are. What, shall it be said that within the compass of those sea-girt Isles—those Islands of the blest—is contained our nation? Will you, whose hard fate it may have been to leave all that was dear to you allow that when you left your native soil, the white sails bore you away aliens and outcasts from your country? The proud spirit which sent you forth to people these very wastes, rebels against injustice such as this. In a less enlightened age, ere the principles of good government were understood, and when ignorance and avarice swayed the minds of national authorities, there can be no doubt that the emigrant left behind him half his birth-right, ceasing to occupy his place within the limits of the Imperial shores, he found himself a colonist in a foreign plantation. No longer English, Irish or Scotch, he was classed as the West India plant-