

# COLONIAL PEARL.

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## MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

The following OPENING ADDRESS was delivered before the Mechanics' Institute, by JOSEPH HOWE, Esq. at the commencement of the Winter Course, and is published in compliance with a vote passed by the body :

[Concluded.]

In meeting each other again, there is much in the aspect of the Province, and the application of mechanical science to its affairs, to form a subject of congratulation, and to encourage us to pursue our course with renewed energy and hope. Before the lapse of another year, Halifax will be connected, not only with the mother country, but with every state and colony by which this Province is surrounded, by lines of steamers, carrying passengers and correspondence with wonderful rapidity, and maintained at the public expense. Among the great advantages that must be derived from these means of rapid and certain intercommunication with other countries, are the facilities that will be afforded to our population to study their social condition, and copy their improvements. No Novascotian can travel through Great Britain, without seeing something that he would like to copy—or catching from those vast stores of agricultural, mechanical and commercial experience, treasured up in that great country, some ideas to bear with advantage upon his own or his friends' occupations, or upon the public affairs of the Province. The same may be said of intercourse with the United States and the neighbouring colonies. The manufactures of the former are very much more advanced than our own—in that department we have much to learn; and, when a week will suffice to carry a Halifax Mechanic to Lowell, and bring him back—giving ample time to run through the workshops and factories, it is morally certain that many branches of business will be introduced into Nova Scotia, which are not in existence now. It has often occurred to me, that much advantage might be gained to the Province, if a couple of practical men were induced to make a tour through some of the New England towns that are the chief seats of manufactures, and, observing them narrowly, report and publish their observations on their return. Such a document would, no doubt, be worth much more than the fifty or hundred pounds that it would cost; and I have no doubt that, if this Institute were to select two men, in whose practical knowledge and general intelligence they had confidence, the Legislature would cheerfully bear a moiety, and perhaps the whole, of the expense.

As the soil of this country is locked up for so long a period of the year by frost, it is of the utmost consequence that some employment should be found for a large portion of our people, during those months when they cannot work with advantage upon the land. If there were indoor occupations to which the spare hands of many thousand families could be profitably turned, during the winter months, the whole produce of the land would not, as now, be almost entirely consumed, during that long and unproductive season in which little or nothing can be earned; and every year would be marked by an accumulation of capital, to be laid out in stock and permanent improvements, by which, in a few years, the face of the country would be changed. The New England States, to a much greater degree than ourselves, possess these resources, and know how to turn them to advantage—but they paid a very high price for their advancement in manufactures. The revolutionary war, and the non-consumption, and non-intercourse, by which it was preceded and followed, laid the foundation of them; the last American war, by which they were cut off from European supplies to a great extent, advanced them still farther; and, by leading to the investment of much capital, and to the general reception of the notion, that the true way to humble England was to undersell her in the general market of the world, prepared the way for that enormous tariff, by which, at the cost of countless millions, and the risk of a separation of the Union, the manufactures of the United States have been enabled to brave every difficulty, and are still sustained.

Most of the rude domestic manufactures of the old colonies our people understand and practice—we have learnt them without paying the penalty of warfare and rebellion; it is for us to see now to what extent we can avail ourselves still further of the experience of our neighbours, at as cheap a rate. To the protection of a heavy tariff we need not look;—first, because if we had the right to impose it, it would be impolitic and unwise; and next, because I trust we shall never have the inclination, or the power, to shut out British manufactures. Our object, then, should be, by a close inspection of the workshops and factories of Great Britain, and the United States, and by comparisons of the price of raw materials—the cost of production—the advantages derived either from legis-

lation, the rate of wages, the multiplication of resources, by steam or water power, and other mechanical contrivances; to ascertain what branches may, with safety, and the fairest prospects of advantage, be transferred to Nova Scotia—contenting ourselves with the gradual introduction of these, and leaving to a much later period of our progress those which depend upon the employment of enormous capitals, or which require the impolitic bounty of a monopoly against all the world to warm them into existence. To what extent these suggestions may be considered appropriate here—whether they point to matters which come legitimately within our province, or should be left to the action of the Legislature, it is for you to determine.

Before closing this Lecture, I cannot but allude to the gratifying appearances of prosperity which the town exhibits, and to the introduction of some branches of industry into Halifax, which formerly it was considered difficult if not impossible to establish. I have referred to the advantages which we must derive from the facilities about to be afforded for our inspection of the improvements of other countries—and to nearly an equal extent are we likely to be benefitted, by strangers and capitalists seeing the natural resources of our own. A wealthy Englishman, who has once been in Nova Scotia, and observed the peace and order which reigns throughout the Province, and the certainty with which a due administration of the law affords protection to life and property, will not hesitate to invest his money here at six per cent, if he can get but four or five at home: particularly as, if any thing goes wrong, he can get on board a steamer, and, in twelve days, be upon the spot to look after his own affairs. Some are averse to the introduction of capital from abroad, because, say they, the interest goes abroad also. But if what the Province never owned, by being brought into it, brings with it hundreds who would not have been here, or enables hundreds, already here, to earn a living and lay by a profit to themselves, surely to that extent the Province is benefitted, even though the interest and the capital be entirely withdrawn: which it is not always, being often invested in some other enterprise, by which the country is still further advanced. We have now an English Mining Association, by which steamboats and steam engines, foundries, railroads and locomotives, have been introduced into the country—while thousands have been employed, the cost of fuel diminished, and, as yet, not a farthing of interest withdrawn. We have an English Bank, extending, by the amount of its capital, the facilities for carrying on foreign and domestic trade, equally secure with our own, and introducing a better system. We have also English Insurance Companies, by which, I dare say, the premiums have not been raised; and I doubt not that, before ten years pass away, instead of four or five, we shall have fifty British associations extending their branches into Nova Scotia, and stimulating its industry by the employment of their capital. In addition to what has been, or may be, done by great companies, it is gratifying to glance at what individuals have accomplished. Mr. Johns, comparatively a poor man, has established an Iron Foundry, at which stoves, ovens, machinery, and almost every description of iron casting, are turned out in the neatest manner; and I have little doubt that, if a larger amount of capital were embarked in that business, he could undersell the foreigner in the domestic market, and put a stop to the importation of many bulky articles, which pay a heavy freight. Mr. Allan has established a wholesale Chair Manufactory, and a capital article he makes; to Mr. Robert Lawson we are indebted for the manufacture of cut nails, which are now made at a second establishment; Mr. Whitmore has introduced machinery for carrying on the Wool Card manufactory, which has, I believe, succeeded. By the enterprise of Mr. Black, the business of Milling, fruitless if not ruinous in former times, has been made, of late years, to yield such handsome returns, that six are kept in profitable employment in the neighbourhood of the capital alone, where formerly one could scarcely get any thing to do. Malt liquors are now extensively manufactured; and, stimulated by the example and the good fortunes of Mr. Keith, our brewers have of late made them quite an article of export. There are several other branches to which I might refer, as exhibiting signs of progress and improvement, but must bring this paper to a close. It is pleasant for us, however, to reflect that, as respects the Institute, we meet to-night under different auspices from those which marked our humble beginnings—and, as regards the town and Province generally, both of which are prospering, with very different hopes and prospects before us all, from those which we were compelled to contemplate, when we met in the Methodist School House, after thousands of our population had been driven into foreign lands by a general bankruptcy, or swept into the grave by disease. For the blessings which surround us, under these altered

circumstances, we cannot be too thankful; and the assurance that the return of many wanderers gives us—that Nova Scotia, "with all her faults," is not without varied resources and attractions—ought to stimulate us to love her with a more enduring fondness, and to elevate and advance her, by every means within our power.

## LAST NO. OF "NICHOLAS NICKLEBY."

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True to his purpose, Nicholas took the earliest opportunity of explaining his position to one of the brothers, thus :

### CONFESSION OF NICHOLAS.

"When you first took me into your confidence and despatched me on those missions to Miss Bray, I should have told you that I had seen her long before, that her beauty had made an impression upon me which I could not efface, and that I had fruitlessly endeavoured to trace her and become acquainted with her history. I did not tell you so, because I vainly thought I should conquer my weaker feelings, and render every consideration subservient to my duty to you."

'Mr. Nickleby,' said brother Charles, 'you did not violate the confidence I placed in you, or take an unworthy advantage of it. I am sure you did not.'

'I did not,' said Nicholas firmly. 'Although I found that the necessity for self-command and restraint became every day more imperious and the difficulty greater, I never for one instant looked or spoke but as I would have done had you been by. I never for one moment deserted my trust, nor have to this instant. But I find that constant association and companionship with this sweet girl is fatal to my peace of mind, and may prove destructive to the resolutions I made in the beginning and up to this time have faithfully kept. In short, Sir, I cannot trust myself, and I implore and beseech you to remove this young lady from under the charge of my mother and sister without delay. I know that to any one but myself—to you who consider the immeasurable distance between me and this young lady, who is now your ward and the object of your peculiar care—my loving her even in thought must appear the height of rashness and presumption. I know it is so. But who can see her as I have seen,—who can know what her life has been and not love her? I have no excuse but that, and as I cannot fly from this temptation, and cannot repress this passion with its object constantly before me, what can I do but pray and beseech you to remove it, and to leave me to forget her!'

'Mr. Nickleby,' said the old man, after a short silence, 'you can do no more. I was wrong to expose a young man like you to this trial. I might have foreseen what would happen. Thank you, Sir, thank you. Madeline shall be removed.'

'If you would grant me one favour, dear Sir, and suffer her to remember me with esteem by never revealing to her this confession—'

'I will take care,'—said Mr. Cheeryble. 'And now, is this all you have to tell me?'

'No!' returned Nicholas, meeting his eye, 'it is not.'

'I know the rest,' said Mr. Cheeryble, apparently much relieved by this prompt reply. 'When did it come to your knowledge?'

'When I reached home this morning.'

'You felt it your duty immediately to come to me, and tell me what your sister no doubt acquainted you with?'

'I did,' said Nicholas, 'though I could have wished to have spoken to Mr. Frank first.'

'Frank was with me last night,' replied the old gentleman. 'You have done well, Mr. Nickleby—very well, Sir—and I thank you again.'

Upon this head Nicholas requested permission to add a few words. He ventured to hope that nothing he had said would lead to the estrangement of Kate and Madeline, who had formed an attachment for each other, any interruption of which would, he knew, be attended with great pain to them, and, most of all, with remorse and pain to him, as its unhappy cause. When these things were all forgotten he hoped that Frank and he might still be warm friends, and that no word or thought of his humble home, or of her who was well contented to remain there and share his quiet fortunes, would ever again disturb the harmony between them. He recounted, as nearly as he could, what had passed between him and Kate that morning; speaking of her with such warmth and pride of affection, and dwelling so cheerfully upon the confidence they had of overcoming any selfish regrets and living contented and happy in each other's love, that few could have heard him unmoved.