

sometimes unconsciously, are driven to take the same or different views on this subject. Thus, we learn by our messages from the other side of the Atlantic that Lord Rosebery has been recommending Imperial Federation, while Mr. John Bright has been denouncing the theory as chimerical, and the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* again has been displaying perhaps even more than his usual violence in advocating this new scheme.

At first sight this is very puzzling to us—to find the more Conservative statesman looking coldly upon a proposal which seems calculated to promote the greatness of the Empire, while the advanced Radical is eager for its adoption. But the mystery is dispelled when we remember that in the eyes of many Imperial Federation is closely connected with the now burning question of Home Rule. It is greatly to be feared that those ardent Radicals who seem so eager for the greatness of the Empire would be very lukewarm on this subject if they were not still more eager for a scheme which to many seems to threaten the very destruction of the Empire. It is very easy for an American or a Canadian to talk in an airy manner of the reasonableness of Home Rule and the advantages of federal government; but the government of England has been that of one united kingdom; and although it may well be that advantages would accrue from a greater extension of local government, it will be difficult to convince sober students of history and of British institutions that Great Britain will be greater under three or four parliaments, with the check of a central government, than it has been under the present system. We find the same kind of disturbing—or, if it seems better, determining—causes in this country; although here the opposing forces are Commercial Union, or complete trading reciprocity, on the one side, and Protection, or the National Policy, on the other. It is quite clear that the advocates of Commercial Union, under whatever form or by whatever name called, must regard unfavourably any proposals for Imperial Federation. The two things cannot go together. It would be strange to advocate with one breath a system of commerce which should lead to union with a foreign State and discrimination against the Mother Country, and a proposal to draw closer together the Mother Country and her dependencies. We peoples of English race are proverbially illogical, but we are not quite so blind and so inconsistent as to hold these two theories in solution. We understand, then, how so considerable a portion of the oratory, the other evening, should be devoted to the denunciation of Commercial Union.

On one point we would make our protest. It is quite legitimate to point out the disadvantages of Commercial Union. It is not unfair to show that certain classes here and on the other side may desire it in their own interest, while the country at large would be injured; but it is neither generous nor wise, nor even loyal to our nobler British spirit, to rake up all the grievances which have existed between this country and the United States. Very probably Jonathan has been sharper than John. But we cannot go back into the past without exciting recriminations. The Americans declare that they have many complaints to urge against our treatment of them at various periods of their past history. But of what use to revive these grievances? Probably on neither side would they be repeated. At any rate, we have no right to blame the present generation for the misconduct of their forefathers. And besides, in our judgment, there can hardly be a greater offence than to stir up strife between men of the same blood and language, living under laws and institutions almost identical, and observing customs by which they can scarcely be distinguished.

To return, it is quite apparent that the maintainers of the union between Great Britain and her colonies are bound to seek for some means of binding them more securely together. Now what is the purposed Imperial Federation? We are sorry that we cannot make out the clear meaning of the words from anything or everything which was said at the recent meeting. One thing, indeed, was proposed, which to many will seem reasonable and advantageous, but which high authorities declared to be impossible. We refer, of course, to the proposal of Commercial Union between the Mother Country and her colonies with discrimination against all countries external to the British Empire.

Now, we are free to confess that this proposal has great attractions for us. It seems quite reasonable in itself. When we look further into it, it seems as though it would work. We imagine that most of the necessities or even the luxuries of life could be procured from some part of the British Empire. We might have to go to Germany for our hock, to France for our champagne and claret, to Spain for our sherry, and to Portugal for our port; but these imports are taxed at the present moment, and who knows but that the Prohibitionists may, by the time we have come to Imperial Federation, have persuaded Britons in all parts that they can exist without these alcoholic liquors? But, apart from these and some other commodities which might well be taxed, we could provide everything that we want, and have free intercourse and exchange between all parts of the Empire. We repeat that this seems reasonable; but then we are only Canadians, who as a people actually approve of protection, and how should we presume to set our judgment against English Free Traders?

However this may be, it seems that there is no immediate prospect of English statesmen of any school adopting partial free trade or partial protection in this or any other form. They tell us that it is out of the question, and this answer comes not merely from men like Mr. John Bright, from whom it might be expected, but from Lord Salisbury and his followers as well; so that there does not seem to be much prospect of the proposal getting beyond the position of a theory. Let us, then, assure the advocates of Imperial Federation that we have great sympathy with them. If annexation to the States or the independence of Canada is to be resisted, it must be done by some such method as that which they are recommending. When, however, we come to details, we find that the one portion of their scheme which we can understand is a proposal which no statesmen in England will entertain.

## TORONTO.

QUEEN city! Sister queen of ours,  
On thy clear brow shine bright the crown!  
Broad be thy sway and fair thy towers,  
And, honoured, keep thou evil down.  
Sublimely thy straightforward eyes  
Are looking to the great ideals:  
Lead on, lead on! be free, be wise;  
And surge thou o'er with noble zeals.  
Contest with us the race of Good:  
Grow mightier, if thou mayst, than we:  
In sistership and brotherhood  
There is no room for jealousy.  
Extend thy quays and halls and bowers,  
And long be sister-queen of ours!

Montreal.

W. D. LIGHTHALL

## MURDER AND SENTIMENT.

MR. WILLIAM ARMSTRONG is very anxious that a public, in danger of being misguided, should have correct notions respecting his character, his conduct, his calling. He writes to the newspapers that he has not been guilty of the larceny of which he was accused; and as he was found "not guilty," we are entirely willing to believe him. He further declares that he was not the executioner who terminated the earthly existence of the murderer Neil, a fact in which we feel no particular interest, and with respect to which we should think neither the better nor the worse of Mr. Armstrong, if he were or were not that necessary officer of a righteous law. A third point which Mr. Armstrong urges upon is that he is a shoemaker at Whitby, and hopes, by the usual efforts, to give entire satisfaction to his customers.

It is not with Mr. Armstrong personally that we have to do, although we cannot help admiring his skill in advertising. He may not quite have come up to the archetypal example of those who seek to unite religion and morality with a shrewd eye to business, as it is illustrated, for example, by the well-known English epitaph:

Beneath this stone, in hopes of Zion,  
Here lies the landlord of the Lion;  
His son keeps in the business still,  
Resigned unto the heavenly will.

Still he does very well; and we will give him the advantage of this insertion of his advertisement without charge.

But the matter with which we are more deeply concerned is one which has been forced upon the public eye in a very painful and offensive manner; we refer to the circumstances attending the condemnation and execution of the murderer Neil. Nothing could have been much worse than a good deal that was written and spoken in the interval between that unfortunate man's sentence and death. Nothing could have been more offensive than some of the reports of the execution. These reports constitute the strongest possible reason for the exclusion of reporters from such scenes; and we sincerely hope that, before long, they may be excluded, so that our daily paper may lie upon our tables without the risk of our eyes encountering a report of the revolting details which some of them have recently afforded us.

In reference to this case of Neil's we would observe, in passing, that a commutation of the sentence was entirely out of the question, if capital punishment is to be maintained at all. We say nothing against those amiable men who endeavoured to have the sentence commuted. They were evangelists and missionaries rather than magistrates or judges. The priest who refuses to urge the murderer to make public confession tells us that the private confessional is the tribunal of mercy and not of judgment; and benevolent Christian men who are doing evangelistic work among the sinful and miserable have in their minds continually the thought of mercy rather than of justice. At the same time, the plea put forward on behalf of Neil would not be entertained by any ruler who strove to do his duty to the country which had appointed him to administer the law and not to alter it or evade it. Capital punishment for murder may be right or wrong. By the law of this country it is declared to be right, and it is an interesting fact that several countries which had given it up have returned to it again. If a murderer, then, is to be hanged, Neil was clearly a murderer, and one of a very aggravated kind; and therefore, it was, under our law, right that he should die.

But the foolish sentimentality which would have sacrificed the discipline of the prison, and made every warden's life almost impossible to be lived, showed itself in the popular outburst against the hangman. Such an office is certainly not one to be desired, or that most men would, on any terms, care to occupy. Still it is necessary that some one should do the work; and we believe, if it were impossible to find any other person, then it would be the duty of the Sheriff to play the part of executioner. Will the silly people who are ready to hoot the officer of the law, wish the Sheriff to be occupied in such work; and will they desire that the wretched victim himself should be exposed to unnecessary suffering from being put to death by an unskilful hand?

And yet we read in the papers that the hangman, or the supposed hangman, was chased and hooted by the mob, because they did not approve of his having hired himself to give effect to the sentence of the law. We pride ourselves on having all our people educated. We have no lower classes or anything of the kind. Certainly there could be very little education of a true kind in the mob which threatened the hangman.