

## A THOUGHT OF DEATH.

A sleep,—and yet a sleep that hath an end,  
An end that rest o'ertaking;  
(Though bone and fibre with our earth-bed blend,  
The dormant soul forsaking.)

A sleep,—yet through the sleep a sense of fear,  
An awful half-life making;  
A dread, increasing countless year by year,  
The dread of an awaking.

REGINALD GOURLAY.

## COST AND PROFIT OF LIBERTY.—II.

Every one admits that Canada cannot remain a dependency much longer, no matter what the price of freedom may be. It is also clear that there are only three roads open, and a little reflection will show that there is only one. To unite with the United States means an annual expenditure for military purposes of about seventeen millions *per annum*, plus the cost of a militia to be borne by each Province. This would be the smallest cost, but it is mentioned because the value of money is understood by men who understand nothing else. We might grow into the feeling that from seventeen to twenty millions was not too high a price to pay for national unity, honour, responsibility, privileges and life, but to be pitchforked, at a moment's notice, into paying such a sum, contracted too by others, ought to take the breath from the windiest. How much worse to be pitchforked into a Constitution which we had no hand in making, and into conflicts over dishonest money, British aggression, and other issues which would perpetually disgust or rasp us, and end by driving most of us out of political life! An apology is required for referring to this road, but only a reference is made to it, not an argument. I will not argue it with anyone. The other road, nicknamed Independence, is thornier still. A citizen of the United States gets something worth while, for paying twenty times as much for military purposes as we pay. Go where he will, the mighty organization of which he is a member protects him, and at home the current of the national life flows through his veins and infinite opportunities of individual enterprise are open to him. The other day, American missionaries in Asiatic Turkey reported that they were threatened, and the United States Minister promptly informed the Porte that if the threats were followed by action, his Government would hold the Turkish ministry personally responsible. This warning will be quite enough, for the American fleet is a reality, and the United States could exact reparation more promptly than any other power, just because it is not in the European concert, and could act without any suspicion that it intended to play a selfish game. But what would warnings from the Minister of St. Domingo, Costa Rica, or Venezuela amount to? What does the citizen of any of these "independent" Republics get for the military, naval and diplomatic services of his State? Simply the proud consciousness that he belongs to Lilliput. Canada is commercial and cosmopolitan by birth. Our ships are on every ocean; our commercial interests are bound up with those of the world; our missionaries are to be found in the new Hebrides, where French collision is threatened, in Corea, in China, in Japan, where sleeping and active volcanoes abound, in Trinidad and near the mouths of the Orinoco, where Venezuela is attempting to play high jinks, in India, in Burmah, in Africa, and I do not know where not; and our people are beginning to travel for pleasure, for gain or for investigation. Now, if we determined to play a lone hand, what would it cost us? In these days of huge Empires and huge enterprises of every kind, more than we could afford. To propose it simply shows that a man is afflicted with softness of brain or swelled head.

The only road open to us is the one on which we have walked since 1763. We have evolved, during the last 132 years, successfully, from lower to higher stages of political life, till we are at length within measurable distance of full freedom. "Oh, you mean Imperial Federation! Some papers call that a fad." Well, I am not concerned about names. Let us stick to things. You admit that we cannot remain "a dependency." What then do you propose, if not to share the responsibilities and privileges of full nationhood? It is clear that we are shut up to one road, and that being

so, it is our duty to walk along it firmly, taking one step at a time, persuaded that in that way we shall eventually get to the goal. This, for us is a supreme question of duty. It is important to Britain, but not indispensable. Britain would be great without Canada. Canada would be little without Britain. The question, too, will never be solved by men unable to rise above personal or local selfishness. There is something pitiful in any Canadian paper collaring the first Colonial Secretary, who has had the nerve to face the problem, with a cry for immediate cash, on penalty of denouncing him as insincere. "If you mean business give us preferential treatment in your markets, or direct the current of British immigration away from the States and into Canada," is the substance of two or three editorials I have seen. Depend upon it, gentlemen, Mr. Chamberlain will comply with neither the one nor the other demand. Your outcries inspire us with less respect than we would like to feel for the anonymous guides of public opinion. They misrepresent and degrade the country. To suppose that the British people will disorganize the mightiest trade structure the world has ever seen, and disgust 97 of their customers simply to put money in the pockets of the other 3 is to suppose that they are lunatics. Or, does anyone suppose that intending immigrants consult Mr. Chamberlain as to where they should go? They inquire for themselves where they are likely to do best. Few of them consult immigration agents. They have heard about our North-West, and they know that a great deal of the soil is first-class, but they know also that as the winters are long and terribly severe, it costs to live comfortably. They must buy a great deal of coal, of coal oil, of woollens, of cottons, of crockery, of hardware, of agricultural implements, of blacksmith's work, and scores of other things, and while these are "protected," even though produced in Britain, they get no protection in any market in the world for what they raise. It is no comfort to them to be told that the United States are protectionist. The winters there are not so severe, and free trade is secured among sixty or seventy millions of people. That is "a home market" worth the name. In a word, Canada can do something to divert British immigration to itself, but Mr. Chamberlain can do nothing, and to cry to him is a waste of breath. If we have not learned yet the lesson of the last census, we—unlike Maryland—must be blind and deaf and dumb.

As to Mr. Chamberlain's attitude, it is just what might have been expected from his whole career. He is the legitimate successor of John Bright, in the Midlands, as an exponent of the sense of fair play and other deep instincts of the British Democracy, while—partly because of his organizing power—he is more of a political force than Mr. Bright ever was or could have been. He is ready to give local Home Rule to any extent, but he has too much hard, common sense to consent to break up the United Kingdom, and too much healthy Imperialism to contemplate with pleasure the downfall of the British Empire. He recognizes, however, that the unity of the Empire is in the hands of the great self-governing Colonies more than in Britain's, just because much was done before his days to induce them to, or at any rate, in the hope that they would, set up house for themselves. Coercion is, therefore, now out of the question, should one of them resolve to separate. But, "as the possibility of separation had become greater, the wish for separation had become less." It depends on themselves, then, whether their wish shall harden into will, or be evanescent as a dream. He does not even say that he believes in Imperial Federation. It is too nebulous as yet, and has been too often called a dream, for a practical statesman to say that. All he allows himself to say is that it is the kind of dream which lays such a hold upon the imagination that it has a fair chance of realizing itself. In the meanwhile he will give his best attention to any proposal, the object of which is to bind the different parts of the Empire more closely together. Were we Englishmen, we would say no more. Being Canadians, we must do more.

As citizens, we cannot consent to occupy permanently an inferior position to our fellow-citizens in England, Scotland and Ireland. We save dollars by our present position, but if we lose moral fibre, our loss infinitely outweighs our gain. For no nation was ever destroyed by poverty, handships, or external enemies of any kind. Its deadliest foes are always internal. It is lost when it loses its soul, just as a man or woman is lost. We can survive, in spite of defeats or sins, but the loss of self respect is fatal.