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## THE LEADERSHIP OF MR. BALFOUR.

The Conference of the National Union of Conservative Associations, which is being held at Birmingham, will be memorable for the speech delivered by Mr. Balfour last Thursday. The leader of the Opposition did not fail honestly to acknowledge how much he owed to the drift of events during the immediate past in the crystallization of his views on tariff reform; he admitted that until the Colonial Conference had opened his eyes to the strength of colonial feeling on the question he was doubtful as to the practical applicability of his ideas. Not only has Mr. Balfour removed any doubts from his own mind, but he has been able to frame his convictions with systematic clearness and statesmanlike breadth. His opponents are still inclined, with ineffectual perverseness, to fasten on him the long-discredited charge of ambiguity; but the speech itself, as it stands in black and white, dealing concisely and under specific heads with every aspect of a definite scheme, is an ample refutation; the manoeuvre with which it is met is clearly out of date, but it is as yet the only manoeuvre to have been attempted. It is moreover a manoeuvre which Unionists may safely ignore: it would not convince the most uneducated electorate, and it will not convince an unbiased public seeking advice on a difficult problem. Mr. Balfour's principles will doubtless withstand, as they certainly challenge, a categorical examination. He took as his text Mr. Chaplin's four-fold resolution as embodying the constructive policy of tariff reform: the broadening of taxation; the safeguarding of the great productive industries from competition; the strengthening of the British position for the purpose of negotiating in foreign markets; the establishing of preferential commercial arrangements with the Colonies, and securing for British producers and workmen a further advantage over foreign competitors in the colonial markets. From whatever point the question was approached there were four principles which were practically incontrovertible: the first was that duties should be widespread; the second that they should be small; the third that they should not touch raw material; the fourth that they should not alter the proportion in which the working classes were asked to contribute to the cost of government. Mr. Balfour is not prepared, and could not be prepared, to bring forward a detailed statement of his scheme in order to fix in advance the extent and precise application of the duties. He is as resolutely opposed to such meretricious forecasts as to the folly of accepting for modern requirements the unreciprocated principles of fifty years ago. He has simply stated concisely and plainly, as far as he can foresee them, the lines on which he intends to pursue his policy, and no amount of misapprehension, misinterpretation, and mis-statement can for a moment obscure the fact that he has dealt openly and honestly with his party and with the country at large.

Mr. Balfour did not limit himself to doing what was expected of him on this occasion. On Thursday, and in two speeches made on the following day, he touched upon other topics almost as controversial—the menace of Socialism as apart from the policy of social reform, and the condition of Ireland, with which he dealt convincingly. He made it clear at the outset that he refused to regard Socialism as the "class war" which is being preached in Germany and elsewhere, and in taking the more moderate view of Socialism as "the bureaucratic arrangement of every man's life and every man's industry and every man's earnings" substituted for individual enterprise, he emphasized the fundamental distinction between such a policy and a policy of social reform. It was not a distinction of degree; it was a distinction of kind. Socialism as separate from individualism lay at the bottom of all Radical reforms, and he could not help thinking that the



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actual social reforms achieved during the last half-century were the work of his own party. The reforms of the Radical party meant distinction of some kind or another. At the moment that party claimed that the existence of the House of Lords impeded the progress of reform, and it was therefore necessary to remove it before reforms could be attempted—those projected reforms with which, as Mr. Balfour added, they had for fifty years tickled the ears of the public. The Unionist party were prepared to carry through the reforms they had already begun without destroying anything, and least of all the "immemorial elements of the British Constitution."

Such is a very brief and wholly inadequate statement of Mr. Balfour's pronouncements; but we have perhaps said enough to justify the epithets we have applied to them. Mr. Balfour has suffered in the past, and his opponents see to it that he should suffer still, from the conscientiousness of his attitude. He has said no more now than he said two years ago; but because he once admitted, what was perfectly true at the time, that he had "no settled convictions" on the subject of Protection, the statement is cast into his teeth when he repeats with unimpeachable directness and greatly increased conviction the moderate opinions he has held from the outset. The experience of the last two years has shown him that the theories of the past are the facts of the present. This and this alone constitutes his real change of attitude, his real advance upon his former position. It is unfair, and it is also palpably insincere, to labour the charges of ambiguity and inconsistency; such weapons are dangerous only in so far as they tend to recoil on the aggressor.

## THE KAISER AND THE CITY.

It was pointed out the other day by the *Local Government Journal* that the Kaiser made a curious slip in referring to his having received from a former Lord Mayor the freedom of the City of London. As a matter of fact he did not receive the freedom on his visit to the City in 1891, or at any other time, and, as a foreign Sovereign, could not possibly have it conferred on him.

## WHAT SOCIALISTS CAN REALLY DO.

When Socialists really get a chance they do things spaciouly. Three years ago they got the control of the town of Brest. Brest has 71,000 inhabitants; 23,584 of these are now in receipt of poor relief.

## THE KAISER AT HIGHCLIFFE.

His Majesty the Emperor is greatly enjoying his stay at Highcliffe, and is greeted with cheers when and wherever he appears in public. On Tuesday he made an automobile excursion to Christchurch, where school-children lined the road and gave His Majesty a most enthusiastic reception. On Wednesday he went to Bournemouth in a closed automobile followed by four others, containing his suite. After a short stay, the Imperial party returned to Highcliffe.

His Majesty has conferred the third class order of the Red Eagle on the Mayors of Portsmouth and Windsor, as well as on Captain Hickey, Superintendent of the Royal Mews at Windsor.

Reuter's special correspondent in Highcliffe was yesterday received by the Imperial Chamberlain, Count Eulenburg, who informed him that His Majesty the Emperor is greatly enjoying his rest and is in the best of health. He is very much pleased with his surroundings, and during his sojourn will receive no visitors. On this account his Majesty has been compelled to refuse many kind invitations from neighbouring municipalities. The date of the return journey has not yet been decided. The Emperor will certainly remain at his present quarters for the next 14 days. The Imperial yacht "Hohenzollern" will remain off Netley until the Emperor's departure.

## RETURN OF THE EMPRESS.

Her Majesty the Empress returned to Berlin from England at 9.45 a.m. on Wednesday, having on her way paid a visit to the Queen of Holland.

## NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

### MR. HALDANE AT SHEFFIELD.

Mr. Haldane, Secretary of War, in the course of a speech at Sheffield on Wednesday, said the last week had witnessed the meeting of two monarchs who both followed the same high aim, viz.: the maintenance of peace and friendly relations among the nations.

### THE UNREST IN INDIA.

### THE RAILWAY STRIKE.

In consequence of the strike of the East Indian Railway employes, some 6,000 passengers were detained at Assansol. A coal famine is feared in Calcutta, there being no signs of a settlement of the dispute at present. The engine-drivers and stokers at Allahabad struck work after the Bombay and Punjab train had left.

### A NEWSPAPER EDITOR SENTENCED.

It is reported from Bombay that the editor of a newspaper has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of 300 rupees for the publication of articles calculated to incite rebellion against the Government, and calling upon the Hindoo population not to shrink from bloodshed to gain their ends.

### THE PRIME MINISTER'S HEALTH.

Although the state of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's health is for the moment satisfactory, he will be obliged, in view of the approaching Parliamentary session, to take a complete rest for some weeks.

### AMERICAN NEWS.

President Roosevelt had a conversation yesterday with the leaders of both Houses of Congress on the subject of legal measures for improving the financial situation.

All the members present were unanimous in the opinion that financial enactments would be the first task of the new Session, but as to what they should be opinions were divided.

### EMIGRATION FROM THE UNITED STATES.

Owing to the money stringency in the United States, and the subsequent dearth of employment, thousands of emigrants are applying for homeward passages at the steamship offices in New York. The Hamburg-America Line has consequently raised the steerage rates from New York by 12 1/2 dollars for fast ships, and 10 1/2 dollars for the slower boats. Their new steamer, "President Grant", left New York with 3,200 steerage passengers on board. This number together with the first and second class passengers, is believed to constitute a record in passenger lists between America and Europe.

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