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IS TARIFF REFORM **UNPOPULAR?**

(FROM A LONDON CORRESPONDENT.)

It is one of the grave disadvantages of the process of purging the Unionist party that a test has become necessary whereby the true Tariff Reformer may be recognised and spared. Here a difficulty has arisen. The test to serve its purpose must be official. The whole object has been to substitute Tariff Reform for Unionism as the official policy of the party. Herculean efforts, therefore, have been made to induce the Leader of the party to devise such a test. It has not, indeed, been put to him precisely in that form, for the idea of purging and proscription is believed to be repugnant to his nature; but he has been encouraged to think-that the great mass of the party are really agreed, and that he has merely to invent a formula to which all may conscientiously assent, and harmony will be restored. The truth, of course, is that the party on this question is split, not by one, but by half a dozen fissures in opinion, and the result has been that each formula in turn has been welcomed as decisive, and then discarded as ambiguous. The Birmingham ball in d'essa! recently sent up will serve as an example. A tariff devised for revenue purposes which shall yet be useful for retaliation, for preference, and for the prevention of unfair competition, is proposed. It is further to be provided that raw materials are to be exempt, that no additional burden is to be put on the working classes, and that the duties are to be so small as not to affect the natural course of production or consumption. To so guarded a proposal it is urged that no Free Trader need object, while if it possesses all the fiscal qualities which are claimed for it, Tariff Reformers have little more to ask. When, however, the proposals are more closely examined, it is found that many of the points on which the fiscal controversy has raged are necessarily left unsettled. Is there to be a tax on corn or meat? What is meant by "raw materials" and "unfair competition?" How is the revenue to be substantially increased if no additional burden is to be put upon the working class? How can preference be given or unfair competition prevented if the natural course of production and consumption are to be left unaltered? Unfortunately it is precisely these and other like questions that have caused the differences within the Party, and until we are agreed on the answers to them we must continue to differ. It is, therefore, much to be feared that as a basis of party agreement the Birmingham formula will share the fate of its predecessors. In the meantime it has been a godsend to the Tariff Reformers. Their treatment of all their leader's utterances is consistent if peculiar. So much of what he has said or written as supports their cause they seize upon with avidity. The limitations and conditions they either ignore or explain in a non-natural sense. The formula thus remodelled they proclaim as the true test of party loyalty, and all who will not accept it with its Tariff Reform glosses are exposed to the now familiar process of open attack and subterranean intrigue organised from the Confederate Club.

I believe that in the City of London it sometimes

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happens that an upright if obstinate financier sets himself to oppose the not too scrupulous plans of a syndicate far more powerful than himself. If after due warning he persists in this quixotic course, he finds that all his ventures go a-wry; and unless his position is very firmly established, bankruptcy soon stares him in the face. The process is, I believe, called "freezing him out"; and those who have incurred the hostily of the Tariff Reform League will recognise the aptness of the expression. The treatment is disagreeable for the victim; but that, after all, is relatively a small matter. The serious consideration is the effect that these tactics of the Stock Exchange have upon the Unionist Party and upon the causes for which it stands. Unpopular as I believe Tariff Reform to be I am convinced that the methods by which it has been advocated have weighted it with an unpopularity far heavier than belongs to the policy itself. The system of proscription and intrigue is repulsive enough. Even less defensible is the treatment of Mr. Balfour's speeches and writings. The attempt to pervert them into full-blooded Tariff Reform formulæ has only intensified the atmosphere of dishonesty already created by the exaggerated Imperialism of some of the more wealthy supporters of tariff change. Can it be wondered that a policy thus recommended fails to win the support of the more intelligent electors? Is it too late to urge Tariff Reformers, even in their own interest, to abandon the attempt to carry their policy by a coup de main? In any case it is earnestly to be hoped that the moderate men of all sections of opinion within the party will at last interfere and force a truce upon the Fiscal extremists. Our electoral disasters are not due to the dislike of the electors for the principles of Unionism or Conservatism. The recent Municipal Elections are conclusive on this point. That they do dislike Tariff Reform is, in my opinion, true; but I believe they dislike far more the atmosphere with which it is surrounded and the methods by which it has been advocated. Let these be once for all abandoned and there may yet be a possibility of the return of the Unionist party to something like its old position in the councils of the nation.

NEWS OF THE WORLD.

BRUSSELS, Tuesday.-King Leopold's condition had not improved when the latest bulletin was issued last night. During the afternoon the Nuncio conveyed to his Majesty the Papal blessing. Throughout the day Princess Clementine, the Countess of Flanders, and Prince and Princess Albert remained in or adjacent to the sickroom. After a consultation between the royal physicians, it was decided to hold an operation this morning. Thus far no bulletin has been issued.

According to a despatch from Manila (P.I.), the natives of Sarangani, a group of islands to the south of Mindanao Island, are offering in barter young girls for one ounce of opium apiece. This is attested by a Government horticulturist, who returned recently from a trip through the south coast of Mindanao to get specimens of tropical fruits for the Department of Agriculture. He reports considerable traffic in opium in South Mindanao.

Commenting on the Christian Scientist dispute about Mrs. Stetson, the New York World says:-'History continues to repeat itself in the current developments of the Christian Science controversy. This week has witnessed the summons of the local leader to Canossa, her submission, penitence and profession of fidelity. There has likewise been witnessed an example of church discipline which is probably without a recent parallel in the older faiths. A rich and powerful congregation, on the point of passing a vote of censure which would inevitably have fomented factional strife and intensified a growing discord with the possible result of schism, is suddenly halted by a hundred-word message from Mrs. Eddy admonishing its members to 'abide in fellowship and obedience.' As in the case of the angry waves in the Aeneid, the voice of authority has but to be heard when the tumult subsides, the elements of discord compose themselves and the meeting that met for strife resolves itself into a lovefeast. In an instant the breach is healed, the threatened schism averted and concord reigns anew. Such an exhibition of obedience has not before been seen, 'no, not in Israel.' Christian Science as regards its faith-healing attributes is still at the bar of public opinion; the case is not closed. But as respects its pretensions as a religion of brotherly love and goodwill it has made the most important 'demonstration,' to use its own phraseology, in all its history. It has proved the efficacy of its doctrines in a crisis such as in older denominations has only too often resulted in bitterness of spirit and a rupture of church relations."

A moral lesson is preached to the young men of Kansas by the Chanute (Kan.) Tribune, as follows: A young man up in the north central part of the State grew to manhood, well raised, and went to the Philippines as a soldier, where he won an enviable record. He came home, was a hero and was sent to the Legislature, where he made a fine record for himself. He settled down to the practice of law and was looked upon as a coming Kansas man. He married the daughter of a rich man and had everything coming his way. But he could not stand prosperity and happiness. He got to mixing up with beer and whiskey too frequently, and that led him on to association with bad men and worse women. Now he is a fugitive from his State, alienated from his wife and charged with crookedness in dealing with the estate of his father-in-law. All the promise of a brilliant future has been blasted and all because this man thought he would be smart and booze a little. This is not the first instance of the kind in Kansas. But it serves to teach a lesson to the Kansas young man, and that is to let booze alone and attend strictly to the carrying on of a decent life work of some kind.

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