

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JUNE 10, 1885.

THE BRITISH POLITICAL CRISIS.

The defeat of Mr. Gladstone, the British Premier, on his budget must be tantalizing to that statesman, and not a little of an astonishment to both his political friends and enemies. For nearly thirty years Mr. Gladstone has been acknowledged as the greatest financier, as well as the greatest of financial orators, of the Empire, and to suffer defeat on a point of finance must be specially galling to himself and his supporters. But to assail the national beverage with a special tax was too much for the average Englishman to stand, even from Mr. Gladstone, for the rank and file of the sons of Albion still sing with heart and lungs their favorite Bacchanalian chorus,

"Blast his eyes, whoever tries
To rob a poor man of his beer."

But to waive the beer question, and even the foreign policy question, it naturally arises in the minds of men of commerce, What are likely to be the trade results should a Conservative ministry find it possible to go into power, with the hope of being able to continue in it? That they could do so with the present composition of the House of Commons, the most sanguine of their supporters do not for a moment believe. But an appeal to the British electors has often given astounding results, and it is just possible that one made now would result in the return of a working majority for the Conservative party. In that case the question arises, how would the trade policy of Great Britain be affected? The question need hardly be applied to the home trade policy of the new party in power, as there is not much probability of any material changes in that. The changes of party in Britain do not mean so many oscillations between a tariff and a free trade policy, for that question may be considered permanently settled there. Even Lord Beaconsfield, the most powerful and popular of Conservative chiefs of the past half century, while he bitterly opposed free trade in 1841-2, frankly acknowledged its beneficial results in 1867. There is no doubt a desire among some Conservatives to return to the old protectionist ideas of anti-corn law days, and the cry of fair trade versus free trade, which was faintly

heard through England a year or two ago was the echo of this desire. But the cry was faint, and its foundation shallow in the extreme, and there is not the slightest fear of any political party attempting to shape a policy upon the strength of it. A change of party in Great Britain, therefore, would affect only its foreign trade policy, and its connection with the colonies, and there is no reason to believe that these would be affected adversely. The foreign trade, like every other part of the foreign policy of English Conservatives, has always been vigorous and rather aggressive, so that even were no fields of trade opened up to British merchants under a Government of that stripe, no advantages would be lost in the ones already held.

But the question which most interests us in Canada is how will trade between the Mother Country and the colonies be affected? On this point there is equally good reason to believe that neither would suffer by the change. The policy of every Reform Government in England since the death of Lord Palmerston has been anything but vigorous, and has been equally destitute of liberality. Reform statesmen have looked upon the colonies as so many squalling babies entrusted to their care, which they would be well clear of, could they once pick for themselves, and if we wish a specimen of radical parsimony, we have it in the refusal of Secretary Campbell Bannerman, one of Mr. Gladstone's gosling statesmen, to even make an effort to settle the question of the navigability of the Hudson's Bay and Straits. There is no doubt but the English liberal policy towards the colonies has been one of stinginess and want of interest, while their attention has been confined mostly to home affairs, and in Mr. Gladstone's case mostly to Irish affairs. With Conservative statesmen it has been altogether different. They are jealous of the power of the Empire, and look to the colonies as a source of strength instead of a burdensome charge. To strengthen this power in the colonies, they are prepared to make sacrifices heavy and liberal, and specially in strengthening the trade relations between them and the Mother Country. Such a policy cannot be otherwise than advantageous to the colonies, and at the same time in the best interests of British trade. There is, therefore, no reason for regret on the part of Canadians and other British colonists at the prospect of a

change of parties in England. With Conservatism in the ascendancy, there will, doubtless, be less aiming for a free breakfast table, for a leveling of religious distinctions which can never be accomplished for a patching up of social differences and for many other hobbies of the statesman, who has ever been the pet of nobocracy. But there is every likelihood of a policy being pursued which would change the colonies of Great Britain from so many disconnected fragments of an unwieldy Empire to members of one great national family, whose interests would be mutual, and whose unity would bring certain prosperity to all.

CANADIAN MILLIONAIRES.

There are always a number of men in every country who can be pointed to as the representatives of wealth, although the class they are from differs widely in one country from another. Thus in Britain we have a Duke of Westminster, a Marquis of Bute and a Duke of Buccleuch and others who can measure wealth successfully with the Rothschilds or any other bankers, and yet the wealth of such noblemen is due mainly to the resources of lands decending to them from ancestors who won them with their swords, or secured them through other services to their country. In the British Isles however there are scores of immensely wealthy men, who have amassed their fortunes by industry and business tact, and indeed this class now balance, if they do not outweigh in wealth power the millionaires of the nobility. When we cross the Atlantic into the United States, where there is no tilled or hereditary nobility, the landed power is altogether lacking in wealth, compared with the business classes, so far as individual opulence is concerned, and the millionaires who have acquired their wealth through lands are few and far between. The Vanderbilt's, Goulds and MacKays are the moneyed kings of the great republic, and have amassed their wealth purely from fortunate speculation or business tact, and are consequently on the same level as the plebian millionaires of Great Britain. But when we come to Canada for millionaires the search must be more minute, and the number much smaller, while their source of wealth in most instances differ widely from those of either Great Britain or the United States. Like the neighboring republic we have almost no landed proprietors whose acres