

## *The Fiscal Question.*

**T**HE Duke of Devonshire, formerly a member of Mr. Balfour's administration, delivered a speech recently in Lancashire, England, referring to the fiscal questions as a cause of serious misunderstandings between the Mother Country and the Colonies. He said:

"It is possible that the proposals which have been made that we should tax ourselves, that we should put a tax upon our people for the benefit of the colonies may lead to misunderstandings and to difficulties which, although I trust and believe they will never lead to violence or war, may tend rather to impair than to strengthen the good relations which are now existing between ourselves and the colonies."

Mr. An'sin Taylor, M.P., speaking at the same meeting, said:

"One thing Great Britain imperatively needed—a free and abundant supply of food bought without let or hindrance from those nations which in the bounty of Providence were best able at any given season to supply it. Canada has sent us over 3,000,000 cwt. less wheat this year than last. If, in the name of Imperial unity, they permitted the imposition of a tariff which would discriminate against countries more adjacent in order artificially to stimulate those which were more distant, dissatisfaction and disunion would be in the long run a sure and certain result."

Sir Edward Grey, speaking at Hastings, said:

"After we had taxed our food in the interest of the Empire we should never cease pressing the colonies to admit British goods free to their markets, yet they were plainly told by the colonies that they intended to go on imposing duties on British manufactures, so that Chamberlain's proposals instead of being a bond of union would be the cause of constant friction. Let there be a conference with the colonies on questions of Imperial defence, foreign policy and general interests of the Empire, by all means, but a conference on the fiscal question was bound to lead to heart-burning disappointment."

It will be seen that there are two points against Mr. Chamberlain's proposal: First, that English people would not tax themselves for the benefit of the colonies. And in the second place, it would be unsatisfactory to protectionist manufacturers in Canada who would object to placing on the free list goods of British manufacture, that could be produced in Canada. Canadian manufacturers at a recent meeting passed a resolution favoring Mr. Chamberlain's idea. The insincerity of their position is shown in the view advanced by Sir Edward Grey. An instance of the disapproval of the preferential plan that would be met by protectionists in Canada, is given in the woollen manufacture. There are protectionists who even object to the present 33 1-3 per cent preference on British goods.