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EDITORIAL

WELCOME SUICIDERS.

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THE Chamberlain manifesto—itself a tinkering of the rickety social structure of capitalism—has set the wiseacres of all other industrial nations to scheming how they can shore up their own respective ends of that shaky international structure, those ends being now threatened with more than the usual strain. It is the schemes of the American political and economic wiseacres that are most edifying to contemplate.

Chamberlain has pronounced himself for an inter-colonial preferential tariff. That's equivalent to a discrimination against importations from foreign countries. It is a solar plexus blow to whatever there was of American "prosperity." The exports of the United States to Great Britain in 1902 amounted to upwards of \$300,000,000 worth of goods,—corn, live animals, flour, wheat, provisions, cotton, etc., etc. This trade is now threatened with destruction. In sight of the peril, the question forces itself upon our wiseacres, How is the blow to be warded off? The question divides our wiseacres into two camps:

One set, the set of routine dullness, takes the obvious beaten path: "Protection!", "Still More Protection!", "Higher Chinese Tariff Walls!"—In what way a "Prosperity," that rests upon the blood-letting of exportation, can be safeguarded by a policy, whose only effect would be still more to check the flow of export trade, these gentlemen do not explain. Social pathology rather points to a social stroke of apoplexy as the result of such treatment.

No less edifying, but certainly more amusing is the other set, the free trade set. A conservative may be stupid; but the "reformer" of the free trade stripe is ridiculous. His superficial knowledge, coupled with the assumption of superiority over his dull conservative "protectionist" brother, at no time—and that's saying a good deal—presented him in a sillier light than at this particular juncture. Quoting

all the anti-protectionist phrases he can think of, and which he does not understand, he proposes to puncture the Chamberlain inter-colonial preferential scheme by what? By a reciprocity treaty with one colony, with Canada!—if not a plaster on a wooden leg, then certainly a plaster on a leg eaten up with cancer!

A country like this needs no other to feed it, clothe it, house it and furnish it with all the other things that civilized man needs. It is vast enough, fertile enough, populous enough, industrious enough, intelligent enough for all that. To-day, even such a country must lean for support upon others, like a decayed tooth, and, the others being no less decayed than itself, a twinge by them is felt by it. Why should this be thus? Why it is thus is evident. Seeing that the producer does not own the tools he needs to produce with, the fruits of his labor fall into the laps of the class that owns such tools. Unable, of course, itself to consume such vast wealth—even with the squanderous aid of Seeley-Harper dinners, Martin-Bradley balls, Washington Seligmann-Anita Sutherland companionships, and such other brain-mad excesses and manifestations of morality—that class, the capitalist class, must look for markets abroad, so as to transmute its goods into the international solvent of cash. Thus it happens that, only in the measure that the plundering class can find a foreign outlet for its plunder, can there be that semblance of “prosperity” at home, that, viewed closely, means, at best, that the working class does not starve in idleness, but pines at starvation wages in arduous toil. In sight of this fact, too obvious to penetrate the thick and cob-webbed skull of the capitalist class,—it ever is a feature of the stupid that they cannot see the obvious—; in sight of this fact, our capitalist class divides into the two camps above described:—one, the protectionist, who would make the country explode by keeping at home, AND IN THE HANDS OF THE PLUNDERER, the plundered goods; the other, the free trader, who imagines salvation can be found in pettiness. The Socialist alone, being the promise of the Future, understands and solves the riddle,—the public ownership of the land on and the tools with which to produce, so that the fruits of labor can be enjoyed by the myriad workers, and no foreign country, but at its own peril, could shut its door in such another’s face,—in short, the SOCIALIST REPUBLIC.

Truly, capitalist society is providentially appointed its own executioner. Let it execute! The Socialist stands ready to bury the corpse, and seal up the malodorous grave.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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