

### THE CHAMBERLAIN COLLAPSE.

When the REVIEW some months ago prophesied the utter and complete failure of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals for preferential tariffs and the renewal in fact of all those protection fallacies laid away fifty years ago, and in Great Britain at least impossible of resurrection, we were taken to task by some of our British correspondents. The noise that Mr. Chamberlain and his followers were making in the hope of creating a diversion in the movement for the taxation of land values, sounded so loudly in the ears of our friends that they actually began to believe that there was something real in the agitation. That any large part of the voters of the United Kingdom, fallen as they seem politically, for the time at least, upon evil ways, should ever have seriously contemplated a return to protection was incredible, in spite of the noisy cackle of Joe Chamberlain and his followers.

The result amply justifies our prophecy; the movement with which the Birmingham charlatan has linked his fortunes has suffered a total collapse. There are no longer great meetings to be had in favor of a policy which sugar coated as "preferential trade," or accompanied by honeyed words addressed to the labor vote, some months ago gave heart of hope to those who fatuously dreamed of a return to a system in the greater interests of the landed few.

As if further to aggravate the situation in Mr. Chamberlain's eyes, the birthday of Richard Cobden was not allowed to pass without many and splendid tributes to the memory of the great trade emancipator. Cobden memorial meetings were held in London, Birmingham, Manchester, and elsewhere, and in all of these the leading men of the kingdom from both of the great parties participated. The total failure of Mr. Chamberlain's plans leaves him in a position of isolation that has every attribute but that of "splendid."

In this collapse of the protection movement in Great Britain there is a lesson for the American who thinks he is a protectionist. The British free trade victory partially won over fifty years ago—for the commercial free trade such as England has is but a step toward the full and complete free trade that Single Taxers would bring about—was won for all time. Under this larger freedom of commerce from the restraint of customs imposts England has prospered as no other country has, for her small area and the meagre natural resources she possesses make impossible any comparison, industrially, with the great leading nations. But her advance along the highway of economic progress was but a step, and if such a small advance may secure such advantages what may we not hope from a complete adoption of that full freedom of production and distribution which Single Taxers alone among economic thinkers and reformers contend for as the one

desirable and demonstrable thing industrially among all the warring Babel of foolish tongues?

### THE COMING INDUSTRIAL DEPRESSION.

There seems to be no doubt that a general stagnation is enveloping all industry. The *World* in its issue of Sunday, June 19th, makes a general survey that is interesting as well as suggestive of what is coming. It shows that the cotton mills of New England are working on half time, that thousands of employees in the packing houses are idle, and that in Southern and Eastern centres many iron furnaces are no longer burning. Building operations halted by strikes are at the moment active, but on the completion of these contracts there is to be foreseen a long period of dullness ahead. The number of idle men in all trades is placed as high as 655,000.

The industrial outlook is full of dark portent. Yet it is best that the acute crisis should come at a period when protectionism is triumphant, and when the dominant party is boasting most loudly. Coming as it does it may teach the almost unteachable organized democracy a little economic sense, and may open the eyes of the workers to the transparent humbug of which they are the chief victims.

### HON. ROBERT BAKER.

The things that Robert Baker has done during the term of his service in the House of Representatives would make the reputation of half a dozen men if the people were in the mood to honor their public servants at a true valuation. Speeches on the land question, the question of wages, the Boss Cox school of politics, ship subsidies, protests against petty bribery of Representatives by means of railroad passes, a demand that there be an investigation of the relations of the railroads to the Post Office and incidentally to Post Office officials, a short speech, genuinely Democratic and full of the old American spirit, answering the Kaiser's well intentioned gift of a statue of Frederick the so-called Great—this is but a very partial list of what Mr. Baker has done. It is a notable achievement, and probably never surpassed by a new member of Congress coming to that body unheralded by any prestige that might give him power and standing. These Mr. Baker has won for himself during his short stay in the House. Mistakes he may have committed through impulsiveness, but the time-servers and the monopoly tools who are among his associates have learned to entertain a wholesome dread of his ready wit and perfect fearlessness. In the time to come when the Democracy shall have really awakened, the services of Mr. Baker will be remembered, and such remembrance will, perhaps, assure him the suffrages of his fellows for a much higher office than the one he occupies today.