Parker amended his party platform in this respect? Why does he substitute for a positive platform declaration this elastic pledge to make that declaration good when the Filipinos "are reasonably prepared"? Is it possible to read into that substitute pledge—which must, under all the circumstances, have been deliberately framed—anything more than a purpose to let the question of Philippine independence drift? Who shall say, and by what tests, when this promise matures? Who can decide when any people are "reasonably prepared" for independence? Judge Parker's letter leaves the decision to the good pleasure of the very "benevolent despotism" which in his peroration he condemns. These verbal variations as to the Philippine question are not reassuring. While it is easy to see many reasons for voting for Parker in preference to Roosevelt, the difference in pledges of the the two candidates regarding the Philippine question is not one of those reasons. Better by far for the Filipinos and for this Republic, that the imperialists carry their policy of benevolent despotism to the point of reaction under Roosevelt, than that the anti-imperialists be placed in a position of acquiescence in the same policy under Parker. Under Roosevelt, elected against anti-imperial sentiment, the policy can be combatted; under Parker, elected by anti-imperialists, it would have to be regarded thenceforth as the settled policy of the country.

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On the tariff question, Judge Parker says much in a general way that is most encouraging. The principle of equal opportunity in place of special privilege which he states in his peroration is well amplified in the body of his letter; and he takes unmistakable ground for revenue tariffs only. These he refers to as defining an old difference in principle between the parties, and asserts that "this difference of principle still obtains." But when he gets down to detail, it is not a revenue tariff that he proposes, but "tariff reform." This offense might be overlooked if he had explained that the obstacles in the way of securing tariff for revenue are practically insurmountable, and that the goal must therefore be sought step by step. But that is not his explanation. He shies at the principle of tariff for revenue only, not because of the legal and political obstacles in the way, but because it would "disturb business conditions." In other words, protection, which Judge Parker's platform declares to be "robbery of the many for the benefit of the few," must be continued indefinitely, in slowly diminishing degrees, lest business conditions suffer by speedy change.

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Any man ought to know that the "business conditions" which depend upon robbery will be disturbed as well by slowly reforming the robbery as by abolishing it. They won't be disturbed as badly, that is true; but for this very reason they will be all the stronger to stimulate reaction against the reform. By the same token the business interests that do not depend upon robbery will assert themselves all the more quickly and strongly for being at once restored to their rights.

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Judge Parker's idea that "tariff reform should be prudently and sagaciously undertaken, on scientific principles," with a view to avoiding any disturbance of "business conditions," is discouragingly suggestive of Mr. Cleveland's tariff performance. He, too, was afraid to disturb business conditions. He, too, therefore shied at the logic of the platform. He, too, had visions of "prudently" and "sagaciously" reforming protection robbery on "scientific principles." The result may be read in the election returns of 1894 and the Dingley tariff subsequently adopted. When the Democratic tariff "scientists" brought their "prudence" and "sagacity" to bear upon "tariff reform," they turned out as pretty a piece of protection legislation, on a slightly reduced scale, as the "prudent" and "sagacious" Republican tariff "scientists" had cursed the honest business interests of the country with. What wonder, after this, if the people, intending by their votes in 1892 to condemn protection as robbery, turned in despair to other theories in explanation of their impoverishment, and so made possible that Democratic disorganization which in 1896 opened wide the door to McKinleyism? History sometimes repeats itself, and Parker's election this year, if it were possible, might prove to be like Cleveland's in 1892, the best conceivable prophecy of an overwhelming reaction four years later in favor of the Republicans.

Readers interested in the remarkable disclosures of the new system of valuations for taxation in New York (vol. vi, p. 724), may now procure, at slight expense, official reports of some of the more important results. Under this system improvement values and site values are stated separately. The first assessment under the system has shown that the taxable site values of New York City are 60 per cent., while the taxable improvement values are only 40 per cent., of the total value of all the taxable real estate of the city. More interesting and significant, however, than this general result, are the details, which show that in cases where improvements are most valuable, the site value is farthest in excess of the improvement value. For instance, the aggregate values of ten recently constructed and largest office buildings of the city are 75 per cent. of the total value of sites and improvements together, these costly buildings having a value of only 25 per cent. of the total—only one-third as much as the value of the lots on which they stand. As the New York tax law requires the publication of assessments, any one desiring it may, at a cost of 25 cents for the report and 10 cents for postage, 35 cents in all, procure the full assessment for so much of the borough of Manhattan as lies south of Grand street. This report, which itemizes each piece of real estate, giv-

ing full value of site and improvements separately, together with other details as to real estate values of much more than local interest, can be had of the "Supervisor of the City Record," City Hall, New York City. It may be described as "Section 1, Blocks 1 to 315, Borough of Manhattan," of the assessment roll supplement of the City Record. Reports of other sections are ready for delivery at the same price—25 cents each, plus 10 cents for postage.

Whoever takes an active part in public affairs is subject to suspicion. A poor man who champions something in which there is manifestly no "boodle," is usually suspected of harboring envy of the "successful." A rich man who champions something in which there is no "boodle," is usually suspected of being a demagogue seeking popularity with the lower mob. Anybody who champions something in which "boodle" is probable or possible, is likely to be suspected of being a "boodler." Oftentimes these suspicions are malicious. Yet any of them may in particular cases be well-founded. Experience goes far to prove that the last of the three is the least frequently indulged, the most reasonable in its nature, and oftenest the best founded in fact.

We are living in an age of graft. From the railroad passes with which most legislators and not a few judges are brought into pleasant relations with corporation influences, to the large sums that business interests contribute for the purpose of electing "safe and sane" men to office, we are engulfed in a flood of grafting. All of it is not vulgar—not even splendidly vulgar. Social aspirations, political ambitions, professional careers, are largely dependent on the good will of men who profit by governmental favor. They find this field for grafting cheap. Men who are too honest to be bought with "dirty dollars," will often serve respectable grafters faithfully for the social favors, political prestige or professional advancement which those grafters command. But much of current grafting is brazen bold. Although it assumes garbs of gentility which in Tweed's day would have seemed superfluous, it makes few pretenses of virtue. Readers of Lincoln Steffens's articles in McClure's ought to be pretty well convinced that this is so.

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Mr. Steffens's latest article, that in McClure's for October, is on the politics of Wisconsin. Its revelations make meaty food for thought. Senator Spooner denies what it reveals about him; but his denial is like the South Carolina darky's lame back, which was "powerful weak." Mr. Steffens confirms by this article his previous intimations that the business classes and their "safe and sane" tools in office are the worst enemies of the Republic. One of his incidental observations is particularly striking. We do not remember having seen the fact noticed in print before; yet it is a very significant fact, which can hardly have escaped any observer. "I have noticed," writes Mr. Steffens, "that a public official who steals, or, like Lieutenant Governor Lee, of Missouri, betrays his constituents, may propose to be governor without being accused of ambition. 'They' seem to think a boodler's aspirations are natural. He may have a hundred notorious vices; they do not matter. But a 'reformer,' a man who wants to serve his people, he must be a white-robed, spotless angel, or 'they' will whisper that he is—what? A thief? Oh, no; that is nothing; but that he is ambitious." This is said apropos of La Follette, whom the grafters accuse of ambition, having nothing else to accuse him of yet feeling the force of the onslaught he is making upon their graft structures. But its application is universal. It is so common that one may infer, with the almost absolute certainty of being right, that the public man who is reputed in high business or social circles to be "ambitious" or a "demagogue" is raising havoc with some kind of graft. Conversely the reputation in those circles of being "safe and sane" is almost as sure an indication of fidelity to high grade grafters and devotion to their profitable privileges.

In the controversy over the Chicago traction question which has for several days been lively in the local papers, there have been only two important contributions favoring the proposed compromise ordinance. One is from Alderman Foreman, who, as chairman of the transportation committee, is the nominal sponsor for the ordinance. The other is from Edwin Burritt Smith, who, as leading special counsel to the committee, is responsible for its legal perfection. Mr. Smith's contribution is only a republication of his letter in reply to Judge Tuley (p. 352) first published several weeks ago. Neither Mr. Foreman nor Mr. Smith have met the issues which they themselves have raised. The most strenuous reasons for urging the adoption of the ordinance are, first, that it would give the city, at the end of 13 years, a free hand in dealing with the traction question by ridding it of the obstacle of obstructive litigation; and, second, that it would meantime secure good traction service. That the ordinance would produce those results is denied by Judge Tuley and Judge Dunne, and their opinions in that particular are buttressed by the published opinions of a considerable number of practicing lawyers of unquestioned ability and respectable standing. Yet Mr. Smith and Mr. Foreman both ignore these objections. They assume that the results named would be accomplished, and defend the ordinance upon that assumption. They neglect to show that the city could not be tied up with litigation at the end of 13 years under the ordinance, as well as now without it; and they make no attempt to explain how it would be practicable under the ordinance, any better than without it, to compel the traction companies to furnish good service.