

sult of the investigation into the Baker case is typical, says the Post, of every similar investigation instituted by the department. We should suppose so. A private soldier, in the Philippines and out of reach of constitutional protection, who has written home "disloyal" facts in private letters, would be an extraordinarily brave man, if, when approached by his colonel in the process of a "rigorous investigation," he didn't welcome an opportunity to explain that his letters were jokes. It would be altogether too evident to him that if he neglected that opportunity the outcome of the matter would be no joke. This "rigorous investigation" has all the earmarks of rigorous intimidation. It is evidently in aid of the rigorous press censorship McKinley maintains at Manila.

A test law suit of universal interest has just been decided, upon the facts, by a Chicago jury. It bears upon the so-called labor riots of 1894, and is one more link in the chain of proof that exonerates Gov. Altgeld from the malicious charges of promoting riot, which have been distributed broadcast by the plutocratic interests that he, as governor, refused to serve and whose predatory schemes he frustrated. The city had been sued by Armour & Co. for damages caused by the loss of refrigerator cars burned by mobs during the "railroad riots" of 1894, and the case turned upon the question of riot or no riot. Witnesses were produced in behalf of the city, who testified that the cars had been destroyed not by a mob, but by individuals acting independently, some of whom, at least, were employes of Armour. Armour was unable to overcome this testimony, and the jury decided against him. It held in effect that there was no labor riot. And that is the truth. What the plutocratic press of Chicago called a riot, and worked up so sensationally to justify President Cleveland's invasion of a state with federal troops for local police pur-

poses, had no other basis than a conspiracy of railroad magnates. They caused some of their own old rolling stock to be destroyed, by their own employes, for the purpose of making out the appearance of a case of riot against the strikers. This is the third jury trial tending to expose that conspiracy.

With all but partisan cavillers, who would manufacture an excuse for voting against Bryan if they could find one, his reply to the silver payment and North Carolina negro questions is conclusive. The questions were propounded to him by the republican club of Princeton university, in these terms:

"1. Will you if elected president redeem the coin obligations of the government in gold or silver.

"2. Do you approve of the disfranchisement of the negroes of North Carolina by the democrats of that state."

Mr. Bryan's reply is as follows:

1. I can only repeat what I answered in reply to a similar question at Wilmington, Del.—namely, that I shall enforce the law as I find it, but I shall not attempt to construe the law until I reach it. The republican party has the executive, house and senate, and there is one more session of congress before another president is inaugurated. I have no way of knowing whether this law or some other law will be in existence after the 4th of March. My views on the money question can be ascertained from the Kansas City platform and from my letter of acceptance.

2. In regard to your second question, I beg to say that the North Carolina amendment is not an issue in the present campaign, and your own sense of fairness will convince you that you should hold the president responsible for what he has done in Puerto Rico, but not hold me responsible for what has been done in North Carolina. The administration has prescribed an educational qualification in Puerto Rico which excludes 83 per cent. of the black men of voting age, and has also denied them the protection of the constitution. The republican policy in the Philippines drew a social line between our people and the people of the orient. The race question in this country will be sufficiently difficult without adding a race question greater than our own which will have to be dealt with 7,000 miles from home. I might suggest this question to you: How can you object to anything down in the south if the republican party is going to do worse

in the Philippines than is done in the south?

Doubtless Daniel W. Lawler, of St. Paul, voices the sentiment of a good many other plutocrats who wear the democratic label, when he proposes to "bury Bryanism this time," so that "four years from now the old party"—by which he means the old democratic party—"will march to victory." If there be many such democrats they are an obtuse lot, not to know that the old democratic party won its last victory long ago. It died in the embrace of the slave oligarchy in 1860. And though the corpse was galvanized into muscular activity by Tilden, the old party itself has never been and never will be resuscitated. Cleveland's regime was not democratic, neither old nor new; it was simply a tender to plutocratic republicanism. The prediction is perfectly safe that the old democratic party will win no victory four years hence should Bryan be defeated now. Its deposed bosses may indeed come into power in the party organization; but if they do, the rank and file of the new democracy will leave them to their funereal feast. Out of Bryan's defeat, should that unfortunately and improbably be the result of the pending election, only one of two things can come: either Bryanism will retain control of the party, leaving its plutocrats in the republican party to which they have gone, or a new democratic organization will spring up, leaving the old one where the democratic masses of all parties in the fifties left the whig organization.

ON THE BRINK.

The presidential contest will have been decided before another number of The Public appears, and on the eve of that portentous event we invite every voter under whose eye these words may fall to consider the issues well—to consider them with the same conscientious sense of responsibility he would wish to bestow if he knew that his were to be the casting vote.

In behalf of Bryan, imperialism is put forward as the paramount issue.

But as the primary importance of this issue is denied by his adversaries, let us reflect first upon the issues they themselves thrust to the fore. There are two—the gold standard and the “full dinner pail.” Whoever has read the republican campaign literature or listened to republican campaign speeches fully realizes that the republicans put forward no others. They meet imperialism shamefacedly, and the trust issue apologetically; but all their aggressive efforts are concentrated upon the necessity of maintaining the gold standard for the business man and a “full dinner pail” for workingmen.

To neither of these issues is there a particle of substance.

There is no pretense as to the gold standard that it is involved practically in the campaign in any way but one—namely, that, if elected, Bryan could put this country upon a silver basis by paying public obligations with silver. To claim more would be supremely absurd. No radical change in our monetary policy is possible as an outcome of the presidential campaign. To make such a change Bryan would need the support of a free silver congress, both house and senate. For have not the republicans enacted a law making gold the standard of value? They say they have, in their platform; and if their assertion there be true, nothing but an act of congress can repeal their law. Bryan alone could not modify it. Bryan and the lower house together could not. The republican senate could still maintain the gold standard which the republican party boasts of having established. There is nothing to this issue, then, but the weak assumption that Bryan would order his secretary of the treasury to hand out silver in payment of public obligations.

But Bryan cannot do that if the republicans have indeed established the gold standard, as they boast. The law would not permit him to, if it really makes gold the standard of value; and he has publicly declared his determination, in terms so definite that no one doubts his purpose, to enforce the law while it remains a law. If, however, after all their expressions of devotion to

“sound money” the republicans have left a hole in their boasted gold standard law so that Bryan might pay public obligations with silver, who would be responsible if he did so? Would it not be the republicans themselves? Must we forever keep the republicans in power so that they may guard the holes they leave in the laws they make?

Let us rest ourselves in peace, however. If Bryan did pay public obligations in silver, that would not put the country upon a silver basis. His power to pay with silver is limited by the amount of available silver in the treasury. And that amount, at the close of business on September 30 last, was, according to the official treasury statement, only \$13,767,922.30. How could Bryan put us upon a silver basis by paying public obligations with only \$13,767,922.30 in silver?

It is evident, upon any fair consideration of the subject, that the money question has been thrust by the republicans into this campaign for the sole purpose of diverting attention from living issues. Recalling its usefulness to them in the east four years ago, they seize upon it now as “a good enough Morgan till after election.”

The same thing is true of the “full dinner pail” issue. So completely, however, has that collapsed that it calls only for passing notice.

Though statistics of increased work and wages were abundant at the beginning of the campaign, it was soon discovered that, even by these figures, wages have fallen per capita. A notable instance is to be found at page 293 of the republican official campaign book, where a citation of returns from 200 factories shows a considerable increase in workmen and aggregate wages in 1899 over 1895. But when these returns are examined, they disclose the fact that the average wages per employe in these factories in 1899 were \$26.64 less than in 1895. A similar result is derived from a circular of the railroad employes’ political organization of Chicago, which is published in the interest of McKinley’s election. While it indicates a large increase in work and wages in the aggregate, it reveals upon examina-

tion the interesting and very significant fact that the average freight carried per employe by the railroads of the United States was 146 tons more in 1899 than in 1896, and that the average wages were \$4.52 less. More work per man and less wages per man! If anything else were needed to demolish the “full dinner pail” issue, it is furnished by the strike in the anthracite coal regions. That strike took the cover from the dinner pail and disclosed its contents. They were what \$240 a year could buy—\$20 a month, \$5 a week. If this is a full dinner pail, pray what would an empty one look like? If this is prosperity, what should we understand by hard times?

Though the republican campaigners have solemnly made as much of the gold standard and “full dinner pail” issues as their sense of humor would permit, the situation has forced them to deal at times with live issues. One of these, the question of trusts, has greatly confused them. Some say there are no trusts. Some say there are good trusts and bad trusts, and that only republicans can distinguish one from the other. Others say that trusts are desirable. Others, again, see no way of getting rid of trusts except by doing away with electricity and steam. There are others who appear to have heard of no trusts except an ice trust in New York city; and they would not have heard of that if a few local democrats hadn’t bought interests in it, for it is from top to bottom officered by prominent republican politicians. But the intelligent voter surely knows, despite all this confusing babel of campaign sound, that there are trusts, and that they are grinding the people hard and fast.

Nor is it very difficult to diagnose the trust disease. It does not consist merely in combination. To combine competitive businesses and make them stick is no more possible than to make a rope of sand. If they could combine they would harm no one. The only combinations that can be made to stick are combinations of monopolies; and the only ones that can be made permanently powerful are those that combine monopolies that are fundamental. It is

not the trusts that make monopolies; it is the monopolies that make trusts. This is the one thing to understand if trusts are to be abolished. To attack the trusts by repressive measures is a Quixotic enterprise. But an attack upon the monopolies upon which trusts rest, monopolies derived from public franchises, will do away not only with trusts, but with what is much more important—with the evils that make trusts possible and that would produce oppression though there were no trusts.

To meet an objection right here, let us concede that Mr. Bryan has not definitely and fully taken this ground. But if that is important, it is sufficiently answered by the retort that Mr. McKinley hasn't either. One difference between the two in this connection is that whereas Mr. McKinley has neither the disposition nor the purpose to destroy the evil of trusts, Mr. Bryan has both.

The beneficiary of trusts who wishes to continue in the enjoyment of trust privileges would be a great fool to support Bryan against McKinley. Precisely so is the victim of trusts who supports McKinley against Bryan. The tendency of McKinleyism is toward special privileges; the tendency of Bryanism is away from special privileges. A vote for McKinley, therefore, is a vote for the perpetuation of legalized monopolies, while a vote for Bryan is a vote for their destruction.

When the whole political field is surveyed, the one issue that stands out preeminently is the issue which the democrats have proclaimed as paramount and which the republicans industriously endeavor to evade—the issue of imperialism. This is the issue that includes the essential principle of all others, for it is the issue with which there hangs in the balance the charter of American liberty, the declaration of independence. Let that charter be repudiated by the people and the last issue in this republic will have been decided.

By the election next Tuesday the declaration of independence is for the third time in the history of this country to be tried. It was tried

first in the dark days of the revolution, in those "times which tried men's souls." It was tried again when Lincoln by his proclamation made the civil war a war for human liberty. It is to be tried now when President McKinley comes before the country for an indorsement of his forcible annexation and crown colony policy. To vote for him is to indorse this policy, and to indorse this policy is to condemn the fundamental principles of the declaration of independence.

Of the Cuban war, begun for the extension of human liberty and political equality, Mr. McKinley has availed himself to make a war in the Philippines simply for conquest. When this country, upon his own admission, had no right in the Philippines outside of Manila and its harbor, he proclaimed American sovereignty over the entire archipelago. That is a matter of public record. In doing so he declared this country to be the enemy of the Filipino republic which had for nearly six months, as American official reports clearly testify, held undisputed sovereignty over all the civilized parts of the archipelago outside of Manila. It was a peaceable and orderly republican government, and though not yet recognized by foreign powers was recognized freely by the inhabitants. It was especially friendly to our government. Its armies and our navy had been in alliance. Six weeks after Mr. McKinley had made this hostile declaration of sovereignty, a declaration which beyond reasonable doubt constitutes the commencement of the present war, open hostilities broke out. Our troops fired upon the Filipinos; they replied; and then the first battle began which, as Gen. Otis says, "was one strictly defensive on the part of the insurgents and of vigorous attack by our forces."

The object of President McKinley's war in the Philippines, an object not at all concealed by himself, is to establish therein an American government over which the American constitution shall have no control. That is imperialism.

It is not necessary to make imperialism that Mr. McKinley should wear a crown and purple robe and be

hailed as emperor. Rome was an empire before she had a Caesar. Great Britain would be an empire though there were no British throne. And if we of this country make crown colonies of foreign peoples to whom we refuse citizenship, we, too, become an empire, though our domestic liberties for a time remain and our officials bear only republican titles and appear in republican dress. Our empire, moreover, testifies not to development toward greater freedom, but to retrogression. For we turn our backs upon our ideals of liberty. We turn back upon advances already made. We deny that fundamental doctrine of our own declaration of independence, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. We repudiate our principle of national morality, that forcible annexation is criminal aggression.

Whether this policy of imperialism shall go on by the authority as well as in the name of the American people, depends upon the result of next Tuesday's election. So far it has the sanction only of Mr. McKinley and his party. Should he be re-elected it will have the sanction of the nation. That is the overshadowing issue. Whatever inferences may be drawn from Tuesday's vote, one inference, and only one, will be inevitable. Mr. McKinley's election will be an indorsement, Mr. McKinley's defeat will be a condemnation, of Mr. McKinley's imperial policy. Should he be elected, the relative status of silver and gold will not be mentioned after the votes are counted. The dinner pail will be put into the political lumber-room until another election calls it forth. One thought, and only one, will find expression wherever men read and think. And the universal chorus that in Europe as well as America will greet Mr. McKinley's triumph will proclaim that his imperial policy is approved by the American people. He who votes for Mr. McKinley, therefore, must assure himself now, before it is too late for anything but regret, that he wishes the people to approve that policy.

After all, Ambition is little else than a refined form of Greed.—Puck.