

and therefore the high class grafters are extremely solicitous to prevent such an expression of popular opinion. They are trying to do it by attacking the petition on the ground that it is stuffed with false signatures. A man up a tree might suppose that an adverse vote at the election would be by far an easier, cheaper and better form of condemnation of that huge petition of 137,000 names than any technical withholding from the people of an opportunity to vote on the questions it proposes. And such a condemnation it would receive if the signatures were really fraudulent. But the local financial interests are evidently fearful of the opposite result of a popular vote. Therefore their plan is to prevent such a vote if possible. To that end they are employing high-priced lawyers (who are so much ashamed of the source of their employment that they refuse to disclose their clients), to pick flaws with the petition, and thereby if possible to prevent the printing of ballots on the questions petitioned for. It does sometimes look as if the best friends of reformers were their blind-mad enemy—maddened by the gods, that the gods may destroy him. The traction interests' idiotic attack upon the Chicago "public policy" petition is a case in point.

If the Republicans in Congress had not become morally callous as well as politically defiant, they would have adopted a different course in dealing with the circumstantial charges against Congressman Babcock and the post office department, which Congressman Baker put into the Congressional Record on the 18th, and which may be found in the issue of that date at pages 3603 and 3604. The evidence in support of these charges has been published by the Milwaukee Free Press, a leading Republican paper of Babcock's own State. On its face this evidence makes out a strong case of crime. Yet Babcock has not prosecuted the Free Press, although it persists in publishing the same evidence; and when Mr. Baker

brought this evidence to the attention of Congress, the docile Republican majority responded weakly to the crack of their party whip. Instead of proceeding against Babcock, they voted on the following day to strike the damning evidence from the Record.

As Congressman Babcock is chairman of the Republican Congressional committee, the party machine felt that it could not afford to permit the investigation. But can the Republican party afford to prevent an investigation? The party is already loaded down with the Bristow report, which caught, in a net set for grafters, over 100 Republican Congressmen, who are now being put through a rinsing process. It is still more heavily loaded down with the record of the refusal of the majority in Congress to allow the investigation of the whole post office department, which has been brought under just suspicion by disclosures that the Postmaster General vainly tried to hide. Another black record against the administration of this department is gradually accumulating in connection with the Russian censorship it is fostering. And now comes the attempt to cover up the Babcock case, with its circumstantial evidence of collusion with railroad rings for the purpose of robbing the Government through contracts for mail carriage. Do the pitiful creatures who make up the majority in Congress, suppose that the policy of suppression which they are supporting under machine orders can go on forever without an explosion?

The Grover Cleveland organs need not flatter themselves nor anybody else with the idea that they can stay the Hearst movement with any such "arguments" as the New York Times, that notorious organ of plutocracy, is advancing. To say that Hearst "makes his appeal solely to restlessness and discontent," is to make no meritorious argument against him. Restlessness is a

natural result of oppression; and discontent among the victims of oppression is as natural as smug contentment among its beneficiaries. To appeal to restlessness and discontent, may be one of the worthiest of appeals. It all depends upon whether there is cause for the restlessness and discontent; and the man or the newspaper that says there is none at this time in this country is either acting the part of a fool or filling the role of a liar. The day is gone by when discontent is viewed askance; it has become too common and for too good a cause. If the Hearst movement is to be stayed, it must be done in some other way than by sneering at the discontented and offering them Cleveland or one of his plutocratic ring for President as the alternative of Hearst. Bad as Hearst's character is alleged to be, insignificant as is his personality, and devoid as his mind appears of even a glimmer of political principle, there are hosts of people as good as the average who would prefer him to any favorite of the Hill-Lamont-Morgan-Cleveland group of able-minded and "patriotic" plutocrats.

It might be well to warn the Wall street combination of President-makers, that they are playing a dangerous game when they propose to abolish the traditional two-thirds rule at the Democratic convention next Summer. This is really a bad rule, and ought to be abolished simply because it is bad. So is the unit rule a bad rule. That also ought to be abolished. The one tends by making deadlocks to force weak men upon conventions; the other tends to place conventions within the control of cliques. But the Clevelandites do not propose to abolish the unit rule, and their proposition to abolish the two-thirds rule is not made in good faith; they want to abolish it only to obstruct Hearst. If its abolition would obstruct themselves they would retain it. The question they raise, therefore, is whether the two-thirds rule will operate for them or against them; and the warning