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The protocol having been signed, Mark Hanna has again begun to talk. To read his interviews, one would suppose it might be true that he keeps the president's intellect and conscience in some secret compartment of his own brain. Mr. Hanna's mission now, as made known by himself through his interviews, is to renominate and reelect Mr. McKinley. For that purpose he is no doubt ready to raise a larger corruption fund than before. But can he get up as big a scare?

It is now tolerably plain what policy the president intends to pursue regarding the scandalous management of the war department. He intends to hush up the scandal. Unless a democratic majority be secured in the next congress, there will be no investigation, and every guilty man will be allowed to escape.

The refusal of the president to thoroughly investigate the sins of omission and commission of the war department, and to place the responsibility where it belongs, is equivalent to a plea of guilty. No one knows better than President McKinley and his back-office advisers how disastrous to the administration an open inquiry into the conduct of the war would be. That is the reason why no inquiry will take place if they can help it. An attempt will be made to "shoo" down the scandals as an outbreak of yellow journalism. But all such talk is played out. It has been carried so far that every thief of high degree, when detected, has something nasty to say about yellow journalism,

as if that were a complete defense to his own crimes. It makes no difference whether attention has been called to the army scandal by yellow journalism or not. The question is whether the scandals are true. And the way to find out whether they are true is to investigate mercilessly, not to snarl at yellow journalism.

It will not do to ignore the stories of unnecessary suffering in the army. These stories are abundant and abundantly proved. Throughout the country they have been carried, not by yellow journals, but by the soldiers themselves. Hardly a village in the land but has learned from sources which it trusts that men dying of fever were forced to lie upon the damp ground because there were no better accommodations; that the sick had nothing to eat that sick men could assimilate, and so in many cases died of sheer starvation; that soldiers were recklessly and uselessly exposed to disease; and that disease was generated in camps through bad management. They have heard too that starvation and typhoid fever—not the scourge of the tropics which our soldiers braved, but typhoid fever—have killed more men, five to one, since the war closed than were killed by the Spanish; and they have heard that the post of greatest danger was not in front of the enemy and during the war, but in home camps after the war. These things they know. They do not yet know who in particular is to blame, but they do know that it is President McKinley's duty to find out. If he shirks that duty he will hear from them. Time was when the people looked upon the president as a species of American monarch, who, like other monarchs, could do no wrong and must be venerated even to the extent of idolatry.

But the more wholesome idea prevails now that he is a servant, to be held to strict accountability both for his own actions and those of his subordinates whom he shields. Mr. McKinley's political bodyguard may well fear to allow his administration to pass through the ordeal of an investigation upon the eve of an election. That is evidently the motive for suppressing an official inquiry. But it were better for both him and his administration to boldly bring the full truth to light—provided, of course, the truth would not be worse than its suppression for Mr. McKinley himself.

Some attempt has been made to excuse the war office scandals by intimating that the volunteers were a lot of hot-house plants who broke down under treatment with which the regulars are familiar. That is a lame excuse indeed. If it is true that the regular soldiers of the American army are familiar with such unnecessary suffering, from the ignorance and incompetency of superiors, as our army has been subjected to since the war ended, the importance of an investigation is more urgent than ever.

How mushy are those editorials of the daily press which try to coddle what they vaguely call "labor," meaning the underpaid hired-man class. They invariably speak of "labor" as being weak and needing protection. These editorials are always plentiful about Labor day, and the Labor day of the present year was no exception. Unfortunately, laborers themselves invite such trashy effusions by thinking of labor as being weak and needing protection. Isn't it strange that such a notion should have vogue? All that ever has been done in this world, all that ever will be done, except to plunder industry, has been