

# DAILY PEOPLE

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EDITORIAL

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

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**C**OLLIER'S *Magazine* for this month comes out with a broadside on "the patent medicine conspiracy against the freedom of the press." The broadside contains facsimiles of letters, contracts and telegrams, together with a mighty array of authenticated facts. The exposure is complete; the chain of evidence can not be broken through; the indictment is tantamount to a conviction. Beyond cavil it is proven that the patent medicine interests have extensively muzzled the press of the land. Nevertheless, valuable though such a revelation is, this particular *Collier's* broadside may do as much, if not more harm than it does good. It is cast in a mold to act as an eye-opener to one wrong and an eye-shutter to a raft of other wrongs. It is calculated, by singling out one pimple, to conceal the constitutional putrefaction that produces a series of ulcers—the capitalist press.

Was it an accident, or a unanimity in defective memory, that caused the capitalist press of the land to be silent as the tomb upon the \$40,000,000 raid perpetrated upon the Federal Treasury by the collection of French convicts who owned the "ditch at Panama"? That the ditch and its appurtenances were not worth \$40 was a matter of common knowledge. Yet the appropriation was made at Washington, the sum was paid, and now, after two years, the Commission of Engineers, proposes to abandon the ditch and plant, and start all over anew?—Whence that unanimity of silence in aid of Bonau Varilla's scheme?

Periodically the stench of political corruption up-State breaks out. It has broken out this year again. The up-State press suppresses the facts, and when these are unsuppressible, seeks to minimize them. Commenting upon this circumstance a correspondent to one of the "highminded" city papers has this to say: "If you have any doubt as to what keeps the up-State counties in the grasp of the Republican

machine, you can now see that it is largely because of a pusillanimous press, fearing to speak the truth of a man in high station, who is personal counsel to Railroad Commissioner G.W. Dunn.”—Is this correspondent a dreamer of dreams?

The capitalist world is one city, or, rather, one family. What are the revelations made by a pamphlet entitled *Purchased Peers* just issued and widely circulated in Austria? It contains the stenographic report of an unsuccessful suit recently brought by Privy Councillor von Markhoff against a Vienna paper, *Die Zeit*—a sort of *Collier's Magazine* that, instead of uncovering patent medicine swindles and conspiracies against the press, uncovered the swindles of von Markhoff and one von Gutmann in carrying an extensive traffic in titles, decorations, promotions and seats in the Upper House and OF SUBSIDIZING THE PRESS IN THE INTEREST OF THE CABAL.—Is this a sporadic affair?

But why go to Europe, or Panama, or even up-State for illustrations? Here is *Collier's* itself at hand. It is the successor of a magazine that, with articles and cartoons, thirteen years ago, justly lashed the rhinoceros hide of Depew and the New York Central Railroad magnates for one of the frequent and frightful accidents that had just occurred in the tunnel, and over which Depew was indecent enough to crack ghastly jokes. And what happened? *Collier's* predecessor was censored out of the New York Central Railroad's parlor cars. That was a severe loss in advertisement to the magazine. It first threatened gory things, and then?—collapsed into silence and subservience, just as the papers muzzled by the patent medicine interests, and to-day the railroad interests of the land have no doughtier gouger than this same *Collier's*.

*Collier's* correctly says that our people “rely upon the newspapers as at once the most forbidding preventive and the swiftest and surest corrective of evil” and that “more men are abstaining from crime and carouse to-night than for fear of arrest” due to the fear that “it might get into the papers.” Aye, but these facts rather point to a leading source of revenue than to the ethics of the capitalist press.

Heinous though the wrongs may be that one set of capitalist papers periodically uncovers while it denounces another set for being bribed into silence, as the patent medicine nuisance and bribery in this particular instance, such wrongs almost sink into insignificance beside the real crime that both sets unconsciously expose. The

colossal fact brought out in such instances is the strumpet nature of a private industry that presumes to wrap itself up in the mantle of a “ministry”—the ministry of enlightening the people—the ministry of trimming and keeping brightly burning the lamp of private and civic virtues—the capitalist press.

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