

# The People.

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SECOND EDITORIAL

## Past Light on Present Events.

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**W**e have frequently, since the start of the class-conscious capitalist movement, organized in this city by the “Citizen’s Union,” pointed out whence it proceeded, whither it tended, what was at its bottom, what its goal, in short, its significance in the career of development of the capitalist in America. The more recent pickle, in which Seth Low, the nominee of the Citizens’ Union for Mayor of the Greater New York—the economic capital of our capitalist class—, finds himself indicates a condition of things in the capitalists’ world that should be reckoned with.

Seth Low finds himself beaten by Tom Platt. That’s the way the thing looks superficially. Below the surface, the facts point to this condition of things: the professional politician seems still to be so much needed by even powerful capitalists, even powerful capitalists are still to such an extent held where the hair is short by the class of the professional politician, that even the large capitalists among themselves are not yet able to come together; they have split up; one set, the one already emancipated from the professional politician, gathering under Seth Low, the other compelled to gather under Tom Platt. Consequently, Tom Platt’s victory over Seth Low is the victory of the professional politician, plus the capitalist{s}, who still need him, over the capitalists who no longer need him, standing alone.

The present situation, with Depew, and, thereby, the Vanderbilt interests, together with other such, in the Platt camp, making the scales tip in his favor, throws valuable light upon the methods that are adopted by the professional politician to make his subject capitalists line up; it throws valuable light on the impotence of even big capitalists, thereby throwing also a side light upon the importance to an economic class of controlling the Government; incidentally it also throws valuable light upon the essence of capitalist “good government” and other such fine phrases.

An article that appeared in our issue of February 25, 1894, under the heading “A page from modern history,” and dealing with one of the many abortive rebellions against Tom Platt, “bad government,” and all that, will aid materially in elucidating the important points made above. Here it is:

If a man with his eyes often expresses the maxim that the capitalist has no political party except his pockets, that he has not political convictions except such as affect his profits, and that all his talk about “honor,” “political integrity,” “patriotism,” “religion,” etc., is but a blind behind which to fleece the people, the innocents and the criminal class of the capitalist set up a howl against the “vicious” Socialists.

Now then here is a page from modern history that speaks for itself.

The organization of the Republican party in this city is just now going through the throes of a “reorganization.” On the one side are the silk-stockinged high muck-a-mucks who wish to control the machine, the Vanderbilts, Depews, Blisses, Choates being the leading lights on that side of the circus; on the other, are the millionaire politicians Tom Platt and Whitelaw Reid, with their right hand bower, the professional workingman and bunco-steerer Milholland. Each side had its “organ”: The *Tribune* was the organ of the Platt-Reid-Milholland combine, while the *Mail and Express*, WHICH IS THE PROPERTY OF THE VANDERBILTS, tooted the horn for the Depew-Vanderbilt-Bliss show.

Now then, when the Platt-Reid combine made its first open appearance in the local row, the editor of the *Mail and Express* was aroused to great and righteous indignation at a scheme which he claimed to be obviously designed to injure the party. He “swung out” his paper against it, publishing columns of denunciation of Platt, Reid and Milholland, under headlines of double the ordinary size and extending across two columns of the first page. In his editorial columns he published a genuine old-fashioned “scathing” leader, in double-leads, speaking of Platt, Reid and Milholland in terms which must have sent shivers down their backs, and saying of the occasion that it was not one for “temporization,” but was so serious that the editor could not “mince words” about it. This was continued with undiminished fervor on the second, third and fourth days. The fire upon Platt, Reid and Milholland was terrific, and the combine assailed was spoken of as the “Platt-Reid-Milholland coalition.” Then came a mysterious and unexplained change over the *Mail and Express*. The name of Reid was dropped out on the fifth day, under “pressure” of some sort, and the *Tribune* ceased also to figure as an object of the editor’s wrath. The headlines were still continued over two columns, but the bitterness of tone toward Platt which had hitherto distinguished them was perceptibly modified. On the sixth day the headlines dropped to a single column in width, and on the seventh Platt’s name disappeared from them, and a call for “harmony” took its place. In the editorial columns, bossism continued to be assailed in general terms, but Platt as well as Reid and Milholland ceased to be mentioned.

Now, why this sudden, mysterious change? Here is the explanation: 🖱 The day

before the banner “Harmony” was hung from the paper’s masthead, a bill appeared in the Legislature at Albany forbidding the burning of soft coal in any railway tunnels in New York City. It was said that if this measure were to become a law, it would put the New York Central Railway—I.E., THE VANDERBILTS—to an additional expense of at least \$100,000 a year. This bill was quietly introduced in Albany through the instrumentality of Platt, and old stagers at Albany spoke of it as performing a function known as “ringing the bell on Chauncey Depew,” and predicted that it would be followed by an outbreak of “Harmony” in the *Mail and Express*. Their forecast proved true to the letter, and the *Mail and Express* has now nothing more to say against “Platt rascality,” or “Milholland dishonesty.”

Touch a capitalist’s pocket and you have his “honor,” “patriotism” and “religion” at your feet.

How could not the proletariat bring these gentry to terms if it held the reins of power—they would dance to whatever tune the proletariat played!

By the light of the above exposition, if Seth Low’s fate is sealed, we shall know exactly why; if it is not, and Seth Low prevails, we shall know just what it means.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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