

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 2, NO. 97.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1901.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

CROKER'S REPARTEE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.¹

IT is not for naught that the whole pack of the Republican press of this city has been beside itself with rage since Tammany's choice for Mayor—the “respectable,” the “elite,” the “choice,” the “wealthy,” the “reformer,” Edward M. Shepard—was made known. The nomination of Shepard was a brilliant, squelching political repartee to the supposedly invulnerable nomination of Seth Low.

Four years ago, in that memorable, the first Mayoralty contest of the then newly created Greater New York, Shepard and Low stood together. In that campaign the idle, Labor-fleecing and, as a result, corruptedly criminal Capitalist Class split up into three;—that was one more fraction than usual. Besides the regulation Republican and the regulation Democratic, or Tammany, crowds with their respective standard bearers, there sprang up a third band. These called themselves variously “Citizens' Union,” “Reformers,” “Good Government forces”: their correct name was the Hypocrites. Republicans and Democrats made no bones of what they were there for,—SPOILS. Otherwise the Hypocrites. Despite the obvious fact that Tammany could not extort hush-moneys from them unless they were themselves committing acts against the Working Class that needed hushing, they struck the attitude of governmental purists. In order to bolster up this false pretense, they conjured up a set of “principles” in which absurdity vied with fraud for the upper-hand. One of these principles was that “Municipal elections have nothing to do with politics and should be conducted on non-partisan lines.” Upon these “principles” and their “sub-principles” Seth Low, the Republican, set up himself as the mayoralty candidate of the city purifiers, and Edward M. Shepard,

¹ [William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 5. Scene I.]

the Democrat, took the stump for him. Low denounced the Platt machine as unspeakable; Shepard denounced Tammany as “utterly utter”; and both whooped it up for a “non-partisan” Mayor. Enough people failed to be taken in by that particular contention; Tammany won out.

But the Hypocrites did not lose hope. Low’s vote plus the vote of the Republican candidate exceeded that of Tammany. With this fact as a supposed asset, the Hypocrites made themselves ready for another dash to political jobs. But they also determined to profit by experience. Accordingly they managed to get for the Republican Low the Republican nomination, and they threw over that ugly fact the cloak of a “nomination” by the revamped Citizens’ Union. Seth Low, the four years’ ago “non-partisan,” “anti-boss” candidate for Mayor of the Labor fleecers thus stepped up once more this year before the public as a mayoralty candidate.

If the figure of Seth Low as an intellectual and moral leader in government reform was a farce four years ago, this year, when, for the sake of votes he openly makes common cause with a political machine, the farce is all the more transparent. But transparent though farces may be, they are apt to take in the unguarded, unless exposed. Croker’s method was masterly. Against the “purifier” of four years ago he set up the “purifier’s” first lieutenant, himself a more distinguished man than Low. By answering “Low” with “Shepard” Croker stripped the former of his mask. The contest, as far as the regulation old parties are concerned, has by this mere fact been brought down to the regulation old fight for spoils. While this emphasizes the fact of what Tammany is, it virtually settles the issue. The odds are in favor of Tammany in a clear fight of this nature.

A repartee is a smart, sharp rejoinder that turns aside a thrust; and buries the steel in the adversary’s breast. Its power depends upon its brilliancy; its brilliancy upon its terseness; its terseness upon its soundness. Croker’s repartee combines all these excellencies, and places it in the foremost ranks of its kind.

No wonder the Seth Low press is demented with rage.

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

Uploaded July 2006