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EDITORIAL

## NOW, VOTE, YE GUDGEONS!

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE cry has gone up from the headquarters of Tammany that “The people shall rule,” in obedience to which decision, so the cry proceeds, Tammany will not dictate the platform for the pending municipal campaign in this city. “The people” shall themselves set up their demands.

There is a well authenticated story of an election in a down-town district of the West Side, in the days of Tammany’s supreme sway, when the Tammany local chieftain, sitting before the ballot-box that stood on a table, opened the polls with language and tone similar to that which now proceeds from the Tammany headquarters. He said:

“Boys, this is going to be a fair, honest election—no frauds! The people shall vote as they please. Now, come on boys, cast your votes!”

The opponents of Tammany who were within ear-shot, and who already numbered a majority, were at first staggered with incredulity; then they gathered confidence, and they sent word to their partisans:—“Come and vote; the Tammany election inspector promises a fair election. Come!”—And they came; and nobody gouged any of them; and they voted; and, fast as they voted, they retired with the conviction that an honest election was held and that they had won. Did not the Tammany inspector quickly repress any attempt of his rowdy partisans at disturbing the proceedings? Indeed, everybody voted—the people had voted as they pleased.

When the ballots were counted the Tammany minority candidate was returned at the top of the list, with an overwhelming majority; the majority candidate had only a few “scattering” votes. What had happened?

When the polls closed, the honest-looking and jovial Tammany inspector had announced a recess of “only fifteen minutes, for just a little lunch.” The lights were

turned out; the voting booth was vacated; the ballot-box on the table was thrown out of a window into the back-yard, and another ballot-box, which all the while lay concealed under the table and was duly stuffed, was substituted for the regular one.

The gudgeons had voted—each casting his ballot, just as he pleased.

The same Tammany now says aloud: “The people shall rule!”—and, in an undertone to its Saints: “Let the gudgeons have their gudgeon way!”

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)