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EDITORIAL

## LIKE TOADS UNDER A HARROW.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**ONDROUS are the grimaces made by the politicians every time they start to “reason,” and bump themselves against facts that, to them, are like sunken and unknown reefs.

After long having listened and pondered, pondered and listened, in the conference of “leading Republicans” at the Fifth Avenue Hotel on the situation created by the re-appointment of Devery, ex-Senator Hiscock threw up his hands and said:

“I never could understand New York city politics, and never will!”

The conference had been considering how to exploit the Devery episode in the approaching Mayoralty election in this city. The more it considered, the worse was its tangle, due to the information that was coming in.

Ex-Senator Hiscock and his fellow Republican luminaries are undoubtedly the elite of their party in this State. And what intellectual preparation do these gentlemen bring to their task of seizing this city? The intellectual preparation of a child. They imagine that abstract principles of purity are the strings, that, being pulled, will bring on the desired results. They spin their political maxims out of their own navels. Proceeding upon that visionary line, they set up their plan of campaign. One time victory crowns their “efforts,” another time defeat. Of course, they imagine it was their cleverness that “did it” the first time; and they are proportionally staggered when, another time, defeat follows. The time comes, as it now does to ex-Senator Hiscock, that they throw up their hands in despair. Fact is that when victory or defeat falls to these gentlemen, they, of all people, are the least responsible for either.

Sweet principles, good principles, moral principles, etc., etc., are but the external trappings or pretexts of all these capitalist ebbs and flows. The real factor is something infinitely more tangible. It is material interest; class interests.

Evidently, the war on Devery has stepped upon the corns of extensively ramified material and class interests—Goo Goo as well as Tammany. These interests need a Devery, and they will defy all “sweet principles” in their own protection. The Republican luminaries who foregathered in this city, expected to be able to make political capital out of “Tammany’s perverseness.” They got no response and the responses that they did get were not the desired ones. Unable to see the connection of things, ever looking for the root of trees in the sky, they had expected that their “indignation” at the “depravity of Devery’s re-appointment” would start a tidal wave, on the crest of which the Platt machine could ride into power in this city. It did nothing of the kind, and the gentlemen, speaking through the mouth of their most candid limb, declare their inability to understand New York politics.

These capitalist politicians, caught in meshes, the existence of which they ignore and the power of which they do not guess, look just now like toads under a harrow.

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