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EDITORIAL

THE BOSS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ALBANY'S senatorial deadlock is not altogether barren. It, especially its duration, has brought out facts enough to help knock out the silliest of vituperative terms—"Boss!" The identical papers that one day denounce Charles F. Murphy as "boss," "dictator" and more of the same style, the next day report him as "forced against his will to continue the fight for Sheehan." A "Boss" that is "forced against his will" is a curiosity. The contradiction incurred by the Anti-Boss press suggests the question, What is meant by a "boss"?

The best definition of "boss" is: "The name given by one man to another who has beaten him at his own game,"

The usual run of "bosses" divides the species into two classes.

One class has the power of patronage; this class have the living of others at their mercy. When a member of this class calls someone else "Boss!" what he announces is that that other person has managed to get away from him, and fastened to his own belt more livings than he himself can dispose of.

Another class has the power of argument. When some lunkhead finds his arguments torn to pieces, he immediately pronounces the other fellow a "Boss!" When the epithet "Boss!" is heard in this connection it means that someone who would have liked to see his own reasoning prevail finds himself out-reasoned, and lacks character to admit it, and improve by the lesson administered to him.

There is a third category to whom the term is applied. This category is best illustrated by Charles F. Murphy, the putative "Boss" of Tammany.



CHARLES F. MURPHY
(1858-1924)

It goes without saying that Murphy does not come under the first category of “Bosses.” He, probably, is a well-to-do man. As such there certainly is more than one man dependent upon him for a living. The “Boss” who sways livings does so by the hundreds and, indirectly, by the thousands. Murphy is no capitalist, not in that sense.

Obviously also, Murphy does not rank under the second category of “Bosses,” the category of superior reasoners. All praise that is notoriously inapplicable is an affront to the object praised. As much of an affront as would be praises of Murphy on the score of his proficiency as an elocutionist, would be praises of the man on the score of his intellectual powers. Not his best friends have ever set him up as an intellectuality.

The category of “Boss” under which Murphy ranks is a satire on the “Boss.” Charles F. Murphy is nothing more and nothing less than a faithful messenger boy. His employers, for reasons best known to themselves and easily understood, prefer to work in the dark. Murphy is their abject man. He carries and fetches, and stands the odium—and gets paid for his services.

These are the three categories of Bosses.” In every case when the epithet is used it renders the user thereof ludicrous. Under the first two categories, the epithet pronounces the user disgruntled; under the third category, it pronounces the user too dull or angry to see.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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slpns@slp.org