

**THE BALLOT: DANGERS FROM ITS  
PERVERSION. AN APPEAL AND  
METHOD FOR MAINTAINING ITS  
PURITY, PP. 1-39 (NOT  
COMPLETE)**

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**STEUBEN T. BACON**

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# THE BALLOT:

DANGERS FROM ITS PERVERSION.

AN APPEAL AND METHOD FOR MAINTAINING  
ITS PURITY.

BY

STEUBEN T. BACON.

"Stuff the ballot-box much more, will it not burst?" — Rev. Dr. BARNUM.

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To  
THE VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
OF ALL PARTIES,  
This Pamphlet  
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.

1861-1862

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# AN APPEAL AND METHOD

FOR

## MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE BALLOT.

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"If the worst things prevail, the best are excluded, and a nation ceases." -- NATHAN CARYN'S *History of Democracy*.

IT cannot be doubted that the greatest evils that now menace the Republic are frauds upon the suffrage; and whatever will prevent them and secure the stability and practicable economy of government, and the union and fraternity of its citizens, is worthy the careful attention and best efforts of men of influence in every department of life.

Frauds in voting, counting, and tabulating the returns of ballots at elections are crimes fatal to the cause of freedom and to republican government. That such crimes have become alarmingly prevalent, increasing at every succeeding election and deliberately committed on a gigantic scale, even in unsuspected localities, by the preconcerted plans of professional men, with favor and approval, is a lamentable fact, that demands and should receive instant and universal attention and legislative remedies; the perpetrators marked by the indelible stamp of public infamy, and punished as promptly and surely as though they had committed an offense against property.

The honest, wise, and good, and most of the party platforms, demand that an honest ballot, count, return, and tabulation shall be assured. How to accomplish this is a problem that has hitherto baffled the ingenuity of inventors and law-makers.

In addition to the flagrant crimes that are committed under the name of "*mistakes in the count*," there are three frauds by voters, and twenty-two by officials who are charged with the simple duty of conducting elections, and faithfully, honestly, and impartially ascertaining and returning the exact results of all the ballots lawfully cast. But to attain these results has appeared to be a difficult arithmetical problem; for the astute guardians of the laws fail, almost ignominiously, either to correct the mistakes, prevent the frauds, or annul them after their committal; while their efforts to seek and punish the criminals are often a mere travesty of justice.

For the lawful ballot to prevail, it must overtop all frauds and mistakes. When we consider personal, local, corporate, clique, and party interests, and the vast sums of money annually expended in elections, who but the inimical knows *when, where, or how* these varied interests and moneys will act, — whether through the voter, repeater, personator, stuffer, election officer, or tabulator, either or all of them?

I dare aver that fully fifteen per cent. of the ballots voted at the last two national elections failed to be tabulated to the credit of the candidates voted for. Herein lies our alarming weakness. This is the dry rot that is rapidly consuming, not the pillars of state only, but the State itself. How long it can survive this unnatural strain the oracles have not revealed;

but history, the pulpit, press, and platform, with no uncertain voice, warn us that continuance in such parricidal practices will ere long bring our proud Republic to an end.

The legal maxim, that "*every wrong has its remedy*," obtains here; for there is now attainable a sure method to frustrate these destroying cabals, and insure the complete integrity of the ballot. Every known election fraud can be surely detected and annulled, and the perpetrator apprehended for punishment. Contested elections—costing vast sums of money, and seldom decided on their merits—need no longer be necessary.

There is no more sense nor reason why EVERY ONE of the nearly ten million ballots voted at the late election should not be expeditiously tabulated as voted than that a book account representing transactions of ten million dollars should not be balanced correctly.

Hitherto, in the construction of ballot-boxes, no attention appears to have been given to the imperative need of such a method as will prevent or detect mistakes, frauds, and ballots fraudulently voted, and to enable the officials to determine each and every ballot *lawfully*, in contradistinction from those *unlawfully*, voted.

I have made a close study of election frauds and means for their repression, incited by the masterly oration of Col. R. G. Ingersoll on "Eight to Seven," four years ago, and, at great expense, devised several ballot-boxes that effectually compass them; but the cost, fifty dollars, has retarded introduction. I was not aware that republican government was instituted