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EDITORIAL

CONTENTED DELAWARE.

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LITTLE Delaware has just been “convulsed from center to circumference.” What about? That’s the rub.

On Tuesday, the 30th of December, there was a bye-election in one of her Districts for Representative to the Legislature. It was an election to break a tie; the constituency is small; the office at stake insignificant. For all that, the event was notable.

Last November the voting in the Kent county Ninth Representative District for the Legislature resulted in a tie. Had the issue of the election been any otherwise, it would not have had any determining effect on the “one great issue” before the Legislature and the whole State. That “one great issue” is Addicks,—J. Edward Addicks, a Bay State Gas Company magnate.

Addicks aspires to a seat in the United States Senate; has a following as a nominal Republican; has, of course, “regular” and “irregular” competitors; although he leads on joint ballot, yet he lacks the requisite majority for an election. The result has been a dead-lock. This result has carried others in its wake.¹

¹ [“In 1889 the Republicans for the first time since the Civil War secured a majority in the [Delaware state] legislature, and elected Anthony J. Higgins to the United States Senate. In that year a capitalist and promoter, J. Edward Addicks (b. 1841, in Pennsylvania), became a citizen of the state, and after securing for himself the control of the Wilmington gas supply, systematically set about building up a personal ‘machine’ that would secure his election to the national Senate as a Republican. His purpose was thwarted in 1893, when a Democratic majority chose, for a second term, George Gray (b. 1840), who from 1879 to 1885 had been the attorney-general of the state and subsequently was a member of the Spanish-American Peace Commission at Paris in 1898 and became a judge of the United States circuit court, third judicial circuit, in 1899. Mr. Addicks was an avowed candidate in 1895, but the opposition of the Regular Republicans, who accused him of corruption and who held the balance of power, prevented an election. In 1897, the legislature being again Democratic, Richard R. Kenney (b. 1856) was chosen to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term. Meanwhile the two Republican factions continued to oppose one another, and both sent delegates to the national party convention in 1896, the ‘regular’ delegation being seated. The expiration of Senator Gray’s term in 1899 left a

During the dead-lock to fill the vacancy aspired to by Addicks, a second vacancy occurred in the Delaware representation in the United States Senate: the slogan that quickly went up on both sides turned on Addicks: it was “Addicks, or Delaware’s two seats in the Senate shall remain vacant,” and “No Addicks, or Delaware’s two seats shall remain vacant.”

On top of this second dead-lock, other dead-locks have followed, and more are threatened: Both sides threaten to block up all legislation, unless they succeed in electing or defeating Addicks, as the case may be. And thus the merry fight has gone on for years.

Looked at impartially, there is no difference whatever between Addicks and any other United States Senator, the sentimental Hoar of Massachusetts, perhaps, excepted. Like Addicks, they are all rich capitalists, and aspire to become richer. Like Addicks there is not one of them whose wealth was not attained by ways and means neatly suggested by the distich:

The higher the plum-tree, the riper the plum;
The richer the cobbler, the blacker his thumb.

Like Addicks, they all seek to dignify the pig-sty source of their affluence and power with the Senatorial mantle, and, inversely, to turn the Senatorial mantle into more dollars and cents. Finally, just like Addicks, they all have their “machine,” and use it for all it is worth. All this notwithstanding, inside and outside of Delaware the anti-Addicks sentiment has wrapped itself in the cloak of morality and holiness. Their poise is that of

vacancy, but although the Republicans again had a clear majority the resolution of the Regulars prevented the Union Republicans, as the supporters of Addicks called themselves, from seating their patron. Both the Regular and Union factions sent delegations to the national party convention in 1900, where the refusal of the Regulars to compromise led to the recognition of the Union delegates. Despite this apparent abandonment of their cause by the national organization, the Regulars continued their opposition, the state being wholly without representation in the Senate from the expiration of Senator Kenney’s term in 1901 until 1903, when a compromise was effected whereby two Republicans, one of each faction, were chosen, one condition being that Addicks should not be the candidate of the Union Republicans. Both factions were recognized by the national convention of 1904, but the legislature of 1905 adjourned without being able to fill a vacancy in the Senate which had again occurred. The deadlock, however, was broken at the special session of the legislature called in 1906, and in June of that year Henry A. du Pont was elected senator.”—From the encyclopedia article “Delaware” at [http://www.1911encyclopedia.com/.](http://www.1911encyclopedia.com/)]

Crusaders enlisted on a sacred mission of “purifying elections,” with Delaware as the Peter the Hermit in this 20th Century “Down on the Unclean Infidel” movement.

It is in view of all this that the recent Kent county Ninth District bye-election has its significance. Addicks was short six votes on joint ballot. One more vote in the Legislature would not change results. But “each vote counts,” and so the fight was bitter: “Honesty” and “Dishonesty” showed the teeth to each other. And what happened?

At the November election there were four tickets in the field: the Addicks Republican candidate with 424 votes, the Democratic candidate with 424 votes, the Regular Republican candidate with 34 votes, and the Prohibition candidate with 27 votes. Of these four, the Prohibitionist party is essentially a religious party. It consists mainly of Holiness men,—an extreme branch of Methodists whose special effort is to “spread holiness.” And now came the bye-election. What became of the “Holiness men”? They vanished. What became of the sanctimonious “Anti-Addicks,” or “Regular Republicans”? They vanished. And what became of the “sturdy Jefferson Democrats,” who turned up their noses and passed the other way at the very mention of a Republican, an Addicks Republican especially? Well, they did not quite vanish. The election returns tell the whole tale: Only two tickets turned up. The Addicks candidate, whose poll rose from 424 to 496, and was elected; and the Democratic candidate, whose poll dropped to 304. Who furnished the 72 votes that Addick’s man got? Was it the absentee Democrats? or the absentee Regular Republicans? or the absentee Holiness men? or did all of these “chip in”?

Delaware may be little. But at times littleness may be great. Delaware illustrates the point. In her confines there is not a ripple of what is called “discontent.” The Single Taxers once tried to start the ripple there, but failed. Delaware is “contented.” Unstirred, even by cat’s-paws of the outside storm, that is rising and portending a new era via new issues, “contented” Delaware, like Parolles’ virginity, “breeds mites, much like cheese,”—and is proud of it.

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