

Addicks's Fourth Campaign

Story of One of the Most Remarkable Attempts to Get Into the United States Senate.



WILMINGTON, Del., July 11.—"Addicks of Delaware" has begun to give evidences of renewed eruption, and there is every reason to believe that he will be in a state of volcanic activity during the coming campaign. There is also reason to believe that unless the Democrats carry the State, as they believe they will, Addicks will manage to land enough members of the Legislature to elect him United States Senator.

Then will he have reached the towering pinnacle of his ambition; he will have succeeded in proving what he has long maintained, in perfect frankness, that it is possible to buy a sovereign State, and, in the event of his success, he will have pleased Senator Hanna by restoring to Delaware what he took away, her representation in the upper house of the National Legislature.

"Gas Addicks," "Addicks of Delaware," John Edward Addicks, was once a commercial traveler, and he was of the kind that "drummers' tales" were told about. Shave, impudent, industrious, and an absolute heretic regarding hereditary honesty in other men, he somehow managed, by reason of these faculties or in spite of them, to amass a fortune. This fortune he has for twelve years past been using to corrupt Delaware politics, but, though he has spent enormous sums, his fortune has diminished little if at all.

His battle is at least half won, and he has as much ammunition as when he started. The greater part of Addicks's wealth was made by promoting and wrecking gas companies in various States. His biggest operations were in Boston, and it was in that city that he developed as a "fixer" of legislative bodies. His operations with the Bay State Gas Company and the Beacon Construction Company made him a rich man, and he was apparently sitting under a steady stream from a hole punched in the cornucopia of fortune when he was brought to book by ex-Mayor Nathan Matthews, Jr., of Boston. His tribute to Addicks may be taken as indicative of the character of the man:

"You could search all the combinations and trusts that infest our land today, and you could not find a sharper, brighter, more acute, and more successful corporation wrecker than J. Edward Addicks."

Addicks's venture in Delaware is purely a speculation. After becoming well known as a speculative figure in Philadelphia, New York, Brooklyn, Boston, and Chicago, he conceived the idea of buying a seat in what was and is in his eyes the finest club in the world. If he had then or has now any idea of entering the Senate as an actual legislator and deliberator he has kept that idea secret.

Why Addicks selected Delaware for his venture is a question to be answered. It has been said that it was because he found the Delaware Legislature an easy one to "work" when he wanted a charter for one of his companies, but when he tried to "work" that Legislature, after he had acquired a constitutional residence in the State by buying an estate at Claymont, he found an obstacle in his path in the shape of Delaware's pride in the matter of her statesmen.

All sorts and conditions of men have been elected to the Delaware Legislature, as well as to State and county offices, some good, some bad, but until Addicks invaded the Diamond State no man of spotted record had ever dared to ask the Legislature for a seat in the National

Senate. That was something reserved for men actually fitted for it, such as the Bayards and Saulsburys.

After the election of 1888 Addicks offered to allow himself to be elected as a Senator from Delaware. His proposition fell flat, and while the people laughed at him he set to work, and by 1892 he had built up a party, called the Union Republican Party, and victory seemed at hand. But that year the Democrats carried the State, and Addicks had to wait until 1894. He put, in two years, at least \$150,000 into the campaign, and in the Fall of 1894 the Delaware Republicans elected their State ticket and Legislature. It is generally admitted that this victory of the Republicans could not have been accomplished without the aid of Addicks, and on this ground he claimed election to the United States Senate.

He pointed out—just as Senator Hanna pointed out during the last National Republican Convention—that Delaware might have remained forever Democratic without Addicks, and that he should be rewarded. To strengthen his argument Addicks at once flooded the lobbies of the State House with his money. Soon he was in possession of six of the thirty members. The thirteen other Republicans were pledged to Col. Du Pont, the millionaire powder maker. There was no election; one seat from Delaware was vacant. In 1896 the Democrats captured the Legislature, and Richard Roland Kenney was elected Senator to fill the vacancy. During his term Kenney was tried for bank-wrecking, but was acquitted.

In 1898 the Republicans again captured the Legislature, which was to elect a successor to Senator George Gray. It did not elect a successor to Gray, and never has. The new Constitution had been adopted, increasing the number of members of the joint session of the Legislature from 30 to 52. Of the 52 31 were Republicans and 18 were Union Republicans or Addicks men.

The 13 others voted solidly against him to the end of the session. They went into the Legislature upon the Addicks issue, which has for twelve years been the paramount issue in Delaware, and they never wavered, but kept their promises in spite of fortunes alleged to have been held out before them. Addicks managed to get 3 Democrats to vote for him, but he never managed to get one of the 13 Republicans.

It is a matter of record that on the day they voted for Addicks the three Democrats had to be escorted out of the State House by policemen to save them from lynching. After that there were no more defections from the ranks of the Democrats. The session closed, and one seat from Delaware was vacant.

In 1900 Addicks prevailed upon the Republican National Convention to seat his delegation from Delaware and to make him National Committeeman. Thus he secured the cloak of regularity, but it brought him no comfort. That Fall he landed twenty-two out of twenty-nine Republicans in the Legislature, and as Kenney's term was about to expire there were two seats to fill.

Addicks tried to trade with the opposing Republican faction to elect him and one of their choice. They refused, as they have always refused, to deal with him. Then he offered to trade with the Democrats, to elect him and a Democrat. They spurned his offer. The Democrats and the Republicans opposing Ad-

dicks might have combined to elect one Democrat and one Republican other than Addicks, and this matter was seriously considered, but President McKinley and Senator Hanna, to whom the proposition was referred, disapproved it.

They demanded that two Republican Senators should be elected, and the opposing Republicans were told that the Administration would not be sorry to see Addicks as one of them. But Senator Hanna had not properly sized up the men who had sworn never to vote for Addicks. The proposed deal for one Republican and one Democrat was the only deal that could ever have been made, and it was not allowed. The result was two seats from Delaware vacant. They are still vacant, and Delaware has but one Representative in the lower house.

"I have only fairly got interested." This was Addicks's statement when he was asked if he would continue the struggle after his third defeat. So he is firing up his old machine again, and again has it climbing to the top of the precipice. It may tumble off again, but unless the Democrats carry the State it is not likely that Addicks will again go down.

He has been earnestly at work during the past year and a half. He has won the support, if not the regard, of a majority of the rural voters of Delaware, and he has increased in strength in this city, though there is little hope that he can carry Wilmington.

He has colonized, too. His system has been to become interested in trolley building and other construction works, and to hire negro voters to do the work. This is done in close districts, and in Kent and Sussex Counties there are already threats that there will be a race war if the game is played too openly.

Over and over again during the past six months has Addicks made advances to the opposing Republican factions. He has proposed a joint State Convention, a harmonious primary, and finally an out-and-out deal to make him short-term Senator and some man of the opposing side the long-term man. There has been one answer to these propositions: "We will not have anything to do with Addicks."

Addicks is at a disadvantage in one very important particular—he has on his side no men of high reputation or of considerable power. Secretary of State Layton and State Senator J. Frank Allee are his principal lieutenants, and they are the only men of the slightest importance who are with him.

Layton is a physician and a dabbler in politics. Allee is a man swept up on the crest of a wave, and for the moment he lies exposed on the beach. Very soon he will either be buried in the sand or carried back to sea. He has neither power nor prestige, but is for the nonce the favorite of Addicks.

On the other hand, all the notable men of Delaware are fighting Addicks. They resent his intrusion, despise his motives, and scorn him for his methods. They are fighting for the peace, honor, and dignity of the State; fighting to keep clean the record of the Commonwealth in the annals of the Union, and fighting to save themselves, their children, and their neighbors from the degradation of having to be represented in the world's greatest legislative body by a bargaining politician who has no real interest in the State and who cares nothing for it except to corrupt it.

These are such men as Col. Henry A. Du Pont, Gen. James H. Wilson, ex-Senator Higgins, Lawyer Samuel M. Knox, George H. Elliott, Henry B. Thompson, Willard Saulsbury, and others who are of "the Blue Hen's" chickens and who hold dear the lofty traditions of the Diamond State. G. H. C.