

FARGICAL BALLOT REFORM

THE NEW-JERSEY LAW A MOCKERY OF THE PEOPLE.

ITS PROVISIONS SHREWDLY DRAWN TO DEFEAT ITS AVOWED PURPOSE—NEW-JERSEY'S CONGRESSMEN IN THE SPEAKERSHIP CONTEST.

TRENTON, N. J., Dec. 13.—The attitude of the five New-Jersey Congressmen toward the Speakership contest at Washington is boastfully paraded by the existing régime as a fresh demonstration of the extent of the Abbett influence in New-Jersey, and the Governor's household is claiming the credit of having placed the five votes in line for Crisp. It has, indeed, flattered the Governor's pride to see himself named in the newspapers, along with Hill and Gorman, as a factor in national politics. None of the leaders say it distinctively, but they all allow their understrappers to give it out that it is a convincing indication that they can swing New-Jersey out of line for Cleveland in the next National Convention. It is assumed that Senator McPherson's battle will be for the renomination of President Cleveland, and it had been said, till the Speakership contest showed a solid Jersey delegation for Crisp, that the State House autocrats would offer no serious objection, in the hope of removing the obstacle of Mr. McPherson's opposition to the election of Gov. Abbett to the United States Senatorship.

The solid delegation for Crisp is an ominous sign of a coming struggle, however, and the public men of the State are looking forward to one of the most exciting strifes of recent years between the Abbett and the anti-Abbett leaders for the control of the delegation that is to represent the State in the National Convention. It may be, however, that undue political significance is attached to the stand the five have taken, and some who are high in position say that the Speakership vote was not predicated on any Presidential considerations. The people are reminded that Cadmus, representing the Paterson district, and Dr. English, representing the Newark district, stand for large manufacturing constituencies—districts where great monopolies, nourished by the favor of the McKinley tariff, flourish; and for prudential reasons they may have deemed a vote for Crisp more to their personal advantage than a vote for Mills. It is not forgotten, at the same time, that Dr. English last Fall made his fight for the seat which he holds wholly on the tariff issue. He was backed by the famous tariff message which President Cleveland laid before Congress, and set his face sternly, on every platform from which he spoke, against the McKinley monstrosity.

The Hudson district, which Mr. McDonald represents, is considerably engaged, too, in manufacturing industries. He has the name of being a man of unusual independence and frankness and would be pretty apt to act on his own judgment. He did not hesitate to attack Gov. Abbett for the loss of his seat in the State Senate, because of ballot-box frauds that had helped Abbett; as much as they had helped him, when he and the Governor met at the O'Neills banquet on the very eve of his nomination for Congress; and so it is assumed that if he felt the pressure of the Governor's influence at all, it was not, at least, applied directly. The indirect agency through which he was reached in the matter, if he was reached at all, can be easily guessed. He is the political ally of County Clerk "Denny" McLaughlin, and the County Clerk is attached to Gov. Abbett's fortunes.

Fowler and Geissenhainer stand in Congress for rural constituencies. There are some manufacturing in the New-Brunswick section of Mr. Geissenhainer's district, but the rural vote had more to do with his election than the vote there had. Mr. Fowler is the personal property of Pidcock, who is, in turn, getting a good many favors from Gov. Abbett nowadays, and he may have been reached by the Governor through Mr. Pidcock. At the same time, Mr. Fowler said to THE TIMES's correspondent, who met him on his way to Washington, that he believed that either one of the gentlemen named for the Speakership would make an acceptable Speaker. His leaning toward Crisp was apparently due to his belief that Crisp was destined to win. He could not see that there was any necessary relation between the contest and the choice to be made by the National Convention. In fact, he expressed his belief that Mr. Cleveland will lead the national ticket next Fall.

The situation has been frankly stated in this dispatch, without any regard to a theory as to the reasons that placed the Jersey vote in the Crisp column. It is possible that the State House autocracy may have dictated the attitude of the five Jersey men, and that the boast of its members as to their part in the settling of the national controversy is true. It is easy enough to see how each of the Congressmen could have been reached by a commanding captain. It need not be assumed, however, that their command was the determining factor. The recital points out some reasons for believing that, in spite of their boast, they may have had little, if anything, to do with it.

The progress of events has, however, shown their handiwork in other directions. The wonderful ballot reform law, which they proudly proclaimed as fashioned by their hands in the interest of pure elections, has been subjected to its first strain, and proves to be nothing but an empty shell. Even worse, it seems to have been drawn with a special view to the protection of successful ballot-box villainy. The revelation came with the attempt to oust Haynes from the Mayoralty of Newark—an office which is known now to have been seized for him by a bold conspiracy of bribers and election sharks. One section of the law permits the court, apparently, to act summarily to rid the community of such a usurper. Twenty-five freeholders are authorized to go before the Circuit Judge and demand an investigation as to any election precinct in the State. It was assumed that the term "election precinct" was used in a generic and descriptive sense, so as to permit an inquiry into elections of all kinds—in one election precinct, or in a ward of several election precincts, or in a city or county, or the State. But when the Haynes case was taken into court it was urged that the application for an investigation of frauds that extended all over the city must be by election precincts. That means as many separate suits as there are polling places in the city, with twenty-five petitioning freeholders in each. In Newark, where there are seventy precincts, seventy suits would be necessary, on that basis, and nearly 1,800 citizens would have to be induced to act as complainants.

To the surprise of everybody, the Supreme Court upheld this contention. The fact that its judgment was rendered by Judge Jonathan Dixon, a straight-backed Republican who ran against Abbett for the Governorship in 1883, removes the decision from the suspicion of having been influenced by partisan considerations, and the only comment made on it is the utter failure of the law in a point in which it was expected to be especially strong.

Of course the embarrassments the ruling has thrown in the way practically bar the further prosecution of the suit against Haynes. How much more difficult it would be to contest a gubernatorial election can be easily realized. Suppose Gov. Abbett should be again elected by such ballot-box frauds as in 1889 gave him the impossible majority of 13,515 in Hudson. It would be necessary to lumber the calendars of the court with nearly 1,000 suits—for there are nearly 1,000 polling precincts in the State—and, as twenty-five complainants are needed for each case, it would be necessary to back the

movement with 25,000 litigants. The vaunted ballot-reform law is seen now to be the hollowest kind of a mockery of the people. Even if the securing of 25,000 complainants and the commencement of 1,000 separate proceedings, were within the range of possibilities, it would take a half century at the pace at which the New-Jersey courts move to clear the calendar.

Somehow or other, too, the division in the Hudson County Court that has enabled the two Lay Judges to overbear Judge Lippincott for lighter sentences for the convicted ballot-box stuffers is everywhere ascribed to gubernatorial influence. The explanation made by Judge Hoffman, one of the lay Judges, stops short at the very point where explanation was needed. He says that he cannot say why he did not uniformly vote for the imposition of the usual sentence of eighteen months, because it would lead to the revelation of confidential communications. His lay associate Paxton, as well as Judge Lippincott, says that these "confidential communications" were not in the privacy of the court chambers, and the public will not feel quite satisfied with his explanation till he has told whom the "confidential communications" were with or from. The milk in that cocoanut is just there.

KILLED ON THE ELEVATED ROAD.

SUICIDE OF MARTIN BIEDERMAN, WHO WAS A CIGARMAKER.

Martin Biederman, a cigarmaker, threw himself in front of a train on the Third Avenue Railroad yesterday afternoon, at the Eighty-ninth Street station, and was killed. There seems to be no doubt that the case was one of deliberate suicide.

Biederman lived with his wife and two little children at 162 East Eighty-seventh Street. He was an American and according to all accounts was a hard-working, intelligent fellow, who gave all his earnings to his wife to be used for the family. He was not a drinking man.

It was hard for Biederman to make a living, however. In addition to working at his trade he had to work nights as a waiter. In this way he managed to keep his wife and children respectably, but it was a hard struggle. He was but thirty-one years old and his wife is twenty-eight.

Biederman left his wife yesterday morning about 10 o'clock to go down town. As he left he said, "Good-bye, Mollie, I will see you very soon." He seemed to be in his usually cheerful frame of mind. After he had gone his wife took the children around to call on her brother-in-law, a Mr. Borzelt, who lives in Third Avenue, just below the Eighty-ninth Street elevated railroad station.

City Hall Train No. 95 left One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Street at 1:32 o'clock. It was drawing into the Eighty-ninth Street station at 1:41 o'clock. Biederman was standing on the platform, at the northern end. According to the statement made by Samuel H. Tucker, the engineer in charge, who is now under arrest, Biederman deliberately threw himself in front of the advancing locomotive.

His body was struck in mid-air and the top of his head was knocked clean off. Then the body fell to the track and a part of the train passed over it, mangling it horribly. It was taken from beneath the wheels and laid out on the track, in the centre. A stretcher was secured and the remains were carried on it to the Eighty-ninth Street Police Station. Mrs. Biederman, the wife, was sitting with her children and the Borzels in the window of the latter's apartments. They saw the body being carried off on the stretcher, but had not the remotest idea that the sorrow in which they sympathized was at their own door.

The police identified the body by a membership card of the Order of the Iron Hall found in one of the pockets. Then they sent for Borzelt, and later Coroner Levy permitted the removal of the body. Nothing else of consequence was found in the pockets, and only 20 cents in money.

As a matter of course most of the employes of the elevated railroad who saw the tragedy declared that their backs were turned at the time. The engineer, however, positively declared that Biederman threw himself, and did not fall, in front of the locomotive.

CRAZY IN THE BOWERY.

AN UNKNOWN MAN FOUND VIOLENTLY INSANE IN THE STREET.

A man about 26 years old, shabbily attired and with a handkerchief tied around his head, attracted a large crowd by his insane actions in front of the Bowery Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association yesterday. When he was first seen he was trying to butt his head against the wall of the building, and when some of the passers-by tried to restrain him he attacked them violently and tried to bite them. One young man had his coat torn into shreds by the maniac, who foamed at the mouth and snapped like a dog.

Word was sent to the Mulberry Street Police Station, and several officers were sent to secure the madman. After a hard struggle, he was taken to the police station and thence to Bellevue Hospital, where he was placed in a padded cell in the insane pavilion.

In the crazy man's possession were found \$92 in cash and an envelope bearing the address of Alexander Horroth, 657 Driggs Street, Brooklyn. Inquiries were made by the police at that address, but no such person was known there.

Dr. Douglas, who has charge of the insane man, said last evening that he was suffering from acute mania, but there were no symptoms of hydrophobia.

ERICSSON'S PATENT INFRINGED.

The equity suit in the United States Circuit Court of the Delamater Iron Works against Robert Deeley & Co., for infringement of Capt. John Ericsson's patent for the well-known Ericsson hot-air pumping engine, which has been for so many years before the courts, has been decided against those defendants by their submission to a decree for perpetual injunction.

This suit was begun in 1888, before the death of Capt. Ericsson or Cornelius H. Delamater. Several thousand pages of evidence were taken in the case, and among the seventy-odd witnesses were some of the most eminent experts in the country upon the subject of steam and calorific engines, including E. S. Kenwick, Charles E. Emery, Stephen Wilcox, Myers Corryell, and Thomas J. Rider.

The decision gives the Delamater Iron Works the exclusive right to manufacture and sell these engines.

MRS. DOWD STILL UNCONSCIOUS.

Mrs. Catherine Dowd of Third Street, Brooklyn, who was shot on Saturday night near her home by a worthless fellow named James F. Feeney, who also assaulted her husband, still lies unconscious at the Long Island College Hospital. The physicians yesterday morning probed for the bullet which entered the left eye, but were unable to locate it. They believe that it has lodged close to the brain, as the woman has not regained consciousness since she was admitted to the institution.

Feeney, the assailant, is in jail. He says that he has no recollection of the affair, and does not know why he did the shooting. Dowd says that he never saw Feeney until Saturday night, when he assaulted him and his wife.