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EDITORIAL

SENATOR BACON'S TRAGIC (COMIC?) AMENDMENT.

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GUSTAVE DORE, the talented artist who illustrated Dante's *Inferno*, the Bible, Poe's "Raven," and many another work of tragic import, on one occasion indulged a vein of humor that he was not suspected of. He illustrated a condensed History of Russia. From start to finish this work keeps one roaring. Among the cartoons there is one which, in due chronological order, reproduces an episode in Russian history when the numerous heirs in line of succession to the throne, being impatient to "get there," fired off one another as fast as seated. The cartoon represents a throne, and, in a line curving over the throne, the string of heirs are seen, kicking each other off, each heir having the toe of his boot planted against the slack of the pants of the one before him, and himself treated in the same fashion by the one behind.

Senator Bacon of Georgia is preparing material for some coming Dore of later days' American history.

As things now stand, by an Act of the 49th Congress, in case the seat of both the President and the Vice President is vacant, the line of presidential succession is to run from Cabinet officer to Cabinet officer in specified order, beginning with the Secretary of State. This Act, accordingly, creates outside of the Vice President, nine possible heirs to the President. Together with the Vice President, that makes ten. The number does not seem plentiful enough to Senator Bacon. He has proposed an amendment to the Constitution, and the amendment has been favorably reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, permitting Congress by law to provide the manner of succession where there is no person entitled to hold the office of President or Vice President. The purport of the amendment is to provide for an heir to the Presidency beyond the limited number of nine, and make the number of heirs

as numerous as it is in a monarchy, where, in default of a near heir, remotely collateral ones may be “hit by lightning”—or set up as “pretenders,” if the maggot so bites them.

That this is a “long look ahead,” born of the anguish that obsesses the plutocratic heart, is transparent. All the same, while the Bacons are seeking to guard against possible danger from one quarter, are they not positively inviting danger from another?

Already Congress has de facto ceased to represent territorial demarkations. Already Senators and Representatives are, in fact, representatives of industrial “interests”—“Interests,” for short; conflicting “Interests,” as a matter of course, each straining to the top.

Imagine such a collection of buccaneers with power to determine a line of succession for the Presidency! The “Act of Settlement,” that would be born of the log-rolling among them, would only be a prelude—to what? To just such a performance as Dore cartooned. The only difference would be that, instead of Grand Duke Vladicomlikoff kicking out Arch Duke Rodkourokolineff, and being himself, in turn, kicked out by Grand Duchess Katerinoslavitch—instead of that, we would witness the spectacle of Iron Prince This, driving off Railroad Count That, and himself fleeing before Bank Marquis This-That, who, in turn, is hotly pursued by Viscount Liquor That-This, after whose scalp Baron Smelting Ore Rigamajig would be seen rushing “with burlood in his eye”; and so on.

Senator Bacon's plan is fraught with tragic-comic prospects—unless the danger that he is purblindly and fatuously seeking to guard against overwhelm{s} him, and the Working Class, united upon the political as well as the industrial field, put a summary kibosh upon the political tinkering.

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