

Baltimore Evening Sun
May 19, 1911

The Free-Lance

Why all the hubbub about that little carnival of black-balling in the Metropolitan Club at Washington? Certainly the members of a social club should be perfectly free to exclude any person who doesn't please them, and for the sole and simple reason that he doesn't please them. They are under no obligation whatever to explain to him why they don't like him, nor to apologize for being unable to acquire a taste for him.

The one aim of a social club, in fact, is to provide an asylum wherein those who do enjoy one another's society may take refuge from those whose society they do not enjoy. Membership in such a club is by no means a right that any man may claim. It is, on the contrary, a privilege that may be offered or refused at the will of the board of governors, acting for the members in general, and the applicant who is refused admittance has a grievance no more real than that of the man who asks a pretty woman to yield her face to his kisses and is ordered out of the house for his pains.

Such things go by favor—and favor loses nothing of its validity by being utterly unreasonable. A club has a clear right to exclude a man on the ground that he is bow-legged or a politician, just as a woman has a clear right to refuse to kiss a man on the ground that he is bankrupt or a Swedenborgian. Neither case is reached by the law of the land, nor even by the common rules of justice and fair dealing. One chooses one's friends as one chooses one's victuals and neckties—arbitrarily, capriciously, mercilessly. It is absurd to protest when prejudice enters into the matter, for prejudice is the very heart and soul of the matter.

In all cases of black-balling, indeed, the odium, obloquy and opprobrium fall, not upon the black-ballers but upon the man blackballed and the false friend who has exposed him to that humiliation. It is not at all difficult to find out, in advance, whether a given man is wanted or not wanted in a given social club. If, on inquiry, it appears that there is opposition to his election, on good grounds, bad grounds or no grounds at all, then it is certainly a gross offense against decency to propose him for membership, and a gross offense on his part to allow his name to be put up. I heard the other day of a man who had been twice blackballed by a Masonic lodge and yet made new efforts to enter the order. If I were a Mason I should blackball that fellow on the simple ground that he is unfitted by temperament to belong to any organization of civilized men.

Every club has its fixed prejudices, its permanent blacklist. To be on that blacklist, not as an individual but as a member of a class, is certainly no disgrace. If, as Mr. Taft hints, the Metropolitan Club has a rule that no man who wears a hat larger than $6\frac{3}{8}$ shall be elected to membership, then the only thing for the man who wears a $7\frac{1}{4}$ to do is to keep out.

Other clubs have rules equally strange and yet protests are seldom heard. I know of clubs that bar all clergymen, clubs that bar all Protestants, clubs that bar all Christians, clubs that bar all Jews, clubs that bar all Catholics, clubs that bar all Democrats, clubs that bar all married men, clubs that bar all persons of foreign birth. But what is there to object to in such rules? Certainly the members of every club should be perfectly free to decide for themselves exactly what sort of person they will admit. To deny them that right is to deny them the very right upon which all clubs are founded.

Another outburst of enthusiasm for the Seeing-America-First campaign:

STATE OF ILLINOIS.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, SPRINGFIELD.

Hon. Austin L. Crothers, Governor of Maryland, Annapolis, Md.:

Dear Sir—I am directed by Governor Deneen to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant in reference to the “See America First” convention at Baltimore, January 22-27, 1912. The Illinois General Assembly is now in session, and expects to adjourn on the 19th instant, and I have been directed to bring this matter to the Governor’s attention after he has completed the consideration of the legislation passed at the present session of the General Assembly. I shall take pleasure in doing so at that time, when the matters mentioned in your letter will receive the consideration of the Governor.

Yours truly,

JOS. WHITTAKER, Secretary

May 15, 1911

I wonder who the humorist was that gave that letter to the reporters.

During the decade from 1900 to 1910 the population of Baltimore increased by 49,528. During the same time 19,904 new dwellings were built within the city limits, at a cost of \$28,246,707.40. It is fair to assume, I suppose, that the average Baltimore dwelling gives shelter to four or five persons—say, to be conservative, to 4½. It thus appears that the actual demand, between 1900 and 1916, was for just 11,000 new houses. But the number built was 19,904.

The marks of that madness are now upon the town. In the older residence sections—that is, in the area bounded by Broadway, North Avenue, Carey Street and Fort Avenue—there must be fully 6,000 tenantless dwellings. Half of them, perhaps, have been emptied by the exodus to the suburbs. But the other half must be credited to excessive building within the city boundaries.

And the process is still going on. The open lots of West and North and East Baltimore, even the open lots of Locust Point, are fast disappearing. Endless rows of little houses are constantly going up. And day after day the number of empty dwellings in the older streets increases. Every third person one meets has just moved or is moving or is about to move to some new street that one has never heard of.

What is to be the end? Business will be slow to occupy the empty dwellings. In the first place, they are scattered all about, and in the second place there is still plenty of room in the present business section. Scores of vacant lots remain in the burned district. Scores of

warehouses lack tenants. How is the problem to be met? Here is a chance for the boomers to try their hands!

In politics it's funny how a man may tell you one thing now and say tomorrow that he meant to voice another sentiment and vow a very different vow.

The written and spoken laws allow each individual to endow his words with underground intent—in politics.

Thus he who leads in verbal prowess sports the laurel on his brow. So if you wish to represent the acme of the eminent learn lying ere you make your bow in politics.

Freight seen on street car platforms:

A baby carriage	A bucket of whitewash
A bucket of apple butter	An ironing board
Forty bricks	Two kegs of nails
A gates ajar	A potted palm
Three hams	A parrot in a cage