

# The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &  
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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## EDITORIAL

### Wall-street Presidentialities.

Gratitude from the whole country is due the New York Evening Post for its report upon Wall-street preferences for President. The reported order of preference is (1) Harmon, (2) Taft, (3) Underwood.

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### Woman Suffrage in Great Britain.

In the latest militant demonstration of suffragists in London there is an excess of the flavor of toryism. If the leaders of that demonstration are seeking suffrage for women as an extension of democracy, they have a poor way of showing it under the circumstances. Their apparent policy is much less significant of a democratic intent than of aristocratic designs—of a purpose to strengthen toryism in British politics by perpetuating the plural vote for property owners and preventing the extension of the single vote to all men and all women.

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### Race Snobbishness.

When rich persons refuse to meet or courteously to behave toward poor persons in places of common use, or the "high-born" slam public doors in the faces of the "low born," this is a species of snobbery. Not that the rich or the "high born" may not choose their associates in freedom. They may. It is no snobbery to exclude from one's privacy the uncongenial, be the reason for it poverty

or wealth, birth or breeding. But he who demands the exclusion of his social "inferiors" from places of public accommodation—such as theaters, railroad trains, sleeping cars, the common schools, or hotels—is a snob. The test of this snobbery? Any person who is fit to meet with you in places of public accommodation as a servant is fit to meet you in places of public accommodation upon equal terms. If you draw proscriptive birth-lines, breeding lines or race lines in public places to exclude persons against whom you would not draw those lines there as servants, you are a snob.

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Snobbery is much more common along race lines than any other. Though the nobility draw it tight in their private companionships, as they have a right to, they do not draw it candidly in respect of public places. The commoner may go to hotels that cater to nobility, and if he can stand the low temperature he will not be ordered out. So the poor man may go to the rich man's hotel if his taste is so far perverted and he "has the price"—he will not be excluded. But Jews are excluded from some hotels—yes, and from some countries; and Negroes are excluded from most of our hotels. It is folly to hold hotel managers responsible for this. The fault is not with them; it is with their patrons. In other words, there is some anti-Jewish snobbery in this country, and with anti-Negro snobbery Americans overflow. Please do not overlook, however, the distinctions we have drawn. No man is a snob for making any kind of discrimination, however absurd, with reference to his personal companions. Nor would we call that man a snob whose daughter is in such imminent danger of marrying "a nigger" that she cannot be trusted to catch glimpses of Negro gentlemen in the cosmopolitanism of a theater or hotel—except as servants—lest she marry one of them offhand; every white man must of course be conceded the inalienable right of choosing the color of his own grandchildren. But as a rule the all-round proscription of a race for racial reasons, like the all-round proscription of any other class for class reasons, is snobbery.

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It is the most comical kind of snobbery. Like the snobbery of the person who, conscious of his own uncertain social standing, scrupulously avoids all relations with "inferiors," except the relation of master to servant, race-snobbery is the species that falls most snugly into the dictionary definition of a snob—"one who is servile in spirit or conduct toward those whom he considers his

superiors, and correspondingly proud and insolent toward those whom he considers his inferiors." Your true aristocrat is guilty of no such absurdity. Acknowledging no superiors, he insists upon no inferiors. He is so democratic that he would as soon "kick his butler down stairs" as the president of his club; so sure of his own status that he can associate in public places with the uncongenial of whatever fortune or level of birth without the slightest fear of losing social standing. Were he to find a Negro in his hotel as a guest, it would give him no more concern than it gives a snob to find Negroes there as servants. Indeed, if he had any antipathy to the Negro race, he would rather see a Negro in the hotel dining room as a guest, or in a sleeping car as a passenger, than in either place as a servant; the personal association would be so much less intimate.

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But there are not many true aristocrats, not many persons who acknowledge no superiors and therefore need no inferiors to "save their face," not many who are sure enough of their own social standing to put it at risk by tolerating "inferiors" without their labels of inferiority. Consequently hosts of white men who patronize hotels refuse to patronize those that accommodate Negroes—that do their public duty by persons whom these white men, uncertain of their own social status, wish to be snobbishly insolent to. We have no fault to find with such hotels. If they want white men's patronage, they *must* exclude Negroes. It is a necessary business policy. Their hotel business would collapse if they did not discourage Negro patronage; for white patronage would be withdrawn and Negro patronage could not sustain the establishment. No law will reach this kind of case. That has been abundantly proved. The only remedy is the development by Negroes of Negro hotels—with that superior cleanliness of which the Negro is capable, that superior service for which he is famous, and that delicious cookery which has always commended his products of the table to the American palate—a hotel withal to which white men are admitted only as a favor and with the clear understanding that it is for Negroes first. This policy would soon wipe out the color line at hotels—or else we overestimate the American white man's propensity for "butting in."

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But meanwhile, conceding the business necessity of excluding Negroes from hotel dining rooms, except as servants—always remember that

your American snob has no objection to Negroes anywhere *as servants*—conceding this necessity, why exclude Negroes from the private dining rooms of white guests at hotels? If an organization which is composed mostly of white persons, yet does not bar Negroes from membership—if such a body engage private rooms for a private dinner at a hotel, how can it hurt the business of the hotel if Negro members participate? They are in that case not guests of the hotel; they are guests of the organization dining there in private. In such a case is it not the hotel rather than the general public that makes the exclusion? At any rate, this was the question which the Singletax Conference of last week found itself suddenly forced by the La Salle Hotel of Chicago to decide. This Conference refused to draw the color line with reference to its own delegates and guests in its own private dining rooms when the hotel made the demand, and for that reason was obliged to cancel its arrangements. If this plan of exclusion persists, the hotels that enforce it will have to refuse dining accommodations to political gatherings, to religious gatherings, to civic gatherings, to all gatherings of organizations and movements which do not wish, or else do not dare, to “draw the color line.” Either that, or all those gatherings will have to find accommodations where no such absurd rule exists. If hotels exclude Negroes in the regular course of business between themselves and Negroes, that is an affair between the Negroes and the hotel, and of nobody else except as public opinion may seem to make it a business necessity and therefore a reason for public agitation. But the hotel which carries this anti-Negro policy to the length of dictating to any of its otherwise acceptable patrons, the conditions of race, color or other social status that shall govern the admission of their own guests to their own private apartments in the hotel, must be considered as having a management superiorly comic in its lack of the saving sense of humor.

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### Jurors and Judges.

Some fun has been made in the newspapers over the reluctance of a woman jury in California to find a verdict of “not guilty” in a criminal case in which they believed the defendant to be guilty but were ordered by the judge to acquit. So far from having made themselves fair subjects for male mirth, those women did the sensible thing until they yielded. Could any custom be more absurd than this of judges in ordering sworn jurors to find verdicts contrary to their own judgment and conscience? Could anything open the door wider

to judicial maladministration? Jurors ought to be willing to go to jail for contempt rather than yield to such usurpation, moss-grown with age though it be, on the part of the judiciary.

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That no judge should be allowed to order a verdict of “guilty,” goes without the saying. We haven’t yet reached a time when the judiciary undertakes to compel criminal *convictions* by supposedly independent juries. But the vicious practice of *ordering* verdicts of acquittal leads straightway in that direction. If a jury’s verdict of conviction shows prejudice—as very well might be,—the judge is in position to protect the outraged prisoner by setting the verdict aside and ordering a new trial. By that procedure the responsibility is upon himself, where it belongs; and the jury’s remains with them, where that belongs. All the power a judge needs or should have over verdicts is thereby conceded. In civil cases he may set aside verdicts whichever way they go; in criminal cases he may set them aside if they are for conviction. He needs no further authority in the interests of justice. But when judges *order verdicts*, whether civil or criminal, they confuse responsibility and assail the independence of juries. When juries acquiesce in such orders, contrary to their own judgment and conscience, they help judges to make a mockery of the jury system—a worse and more dangerous mockery than any for which it is criticized by the autocratic-minded who wish to abolish it.

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### WOMEN AND WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

Among the fallacies of the opposition to woman suffrage is the argument that it makes no civic improvement where it has been introduced; and some vitality is given this fallacy by advocates of woman suffrage who allow themselves to become entangled in futile controversies over petty, local and temporary questions of fact with nothing in them but confusing irrelevancies.

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An instance in point is the following from The Remonstrant, an anti-suffrage periodical tract published in Boston. Under the fallacious title of “The Proof of the Pudding,” The Remonstrant for October said:

The Colorado legislature, which enjoys the distinction of being the only legislature with women members, passed at its recent session, in spite of the indignant protests of the decent element of the public and the strong opposition of the Governor, a bill to legalize race-track gambling. The deplorable