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ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC TO THE LAW COURTS.

The following correspondence which appeared in the *Times* is of general interest:—
37 Temple, E.C.: June 5, 1891.

MY LORD,—Since it appears there is little or no chance of gaining admittance into your Court without a ticket, I now formally apply for one. I base my application on the ground that although a judge is indeed absolute emperor over his Court, yet his power does not extend to the selection of what body of people shall represent the 'public' in cases which are not heard *in camera*. Although a judge has the undoubted right to take such measures as to insure the convenience of those having business in the Court, even to the exclusive issuing of tickets of admission, yet such tickets should be distributed impartially to all applicants. I have no personal knowledge that such has not been actually the case. This I know, that I have been told that Lady Coleridge has distributed most of the tickets among her friends. I say this, not because I in any way wish to be insulting or disrespectful to a lady, but simply as a statement of fact as to what I heard a Templar say. I also say it in order to call attention to a fact I am sure your lordship will admit to be true, and that is, your lordship's personal friends have no more right to represent the public than the friends of John Smith. It would seem that this ticket issuing, or rather its distribution, has practically resulted in the above mentioned undesirable outcome. I also maintain that if there is room in the well of the Court, any member of one of the Inns of Court has a prior right to a seat therein over an ordinary member of the public—whether provided with tickets from the judge or not. This system of admittance by tickets only, if tolerated, will practically confer on the judge the power of selecting his audience—a right which up to now, I labour under the impression, has not

been conferred on them either by statute or any other law. It is not within my province to find fault with your lordship for taking the best means in your opinion to insure the comfort of those who are bound to be in your Court, any more than to do so with reference to the degrading of the bench to the level of a grand stand; but I consider that no one, by virtue of holding a ticket of admission, has the right to take precedence of those who are standing much nearer to the door than he is—in other words, no member of the public having no *locus standi* in your Court has the right to have the seat kept reserved for him, the first seventy-two members of the public who present themselves at the public gallery have the right to be admitted. I say seventy-two, because I believe that is the number which can be accommodated in the public gallery of your lordship's Court. I believe I am not wrong in saying that there is no denying my assertion. The Court, so far as I know, takes no notice of the difference between peer and pauper in the question of admittance therein. If J. Smith, labourer, is in front of Lord Knows Who, and there is only one seat vacant in the public gallery, the peer has no prior right to occupy that seat. Your lordship probably knows all this better than I do, yet, in the face of recent events, it is well to mention all that I have. I respectfully propose to your lordship that orders be given to the officials at the door to admit members of the Inns of Court (on presentation of their cards of membership, or on their otherwise satisfying them of the person being such), giving them precedence over members of the public possessing a ticket which, strictly speaking, gives them no more right to be admitted than a piece of wastepaper. If the tickets only admit by 'courtesy' and not by 'right,' then I claim, my lord, that such courtesy should be extended first to members of the Inns of Court.

Be that as it may, but since admission to the Court has been by ticket, I think I may safely conclude that as many tickets as there are seats have been already distributed. If that is so, in order to show such distribution did not practically amount to a selection of the 'public' among your lordship's friends