

# SIMEON FORD SAYS HE'S GETTING OLD

Hotel Proprietor Declares He Is  
the Senile Survivor of  
the Old Guard.

## RECALLS THE PALMY DAYS

"Don't Blow Out the Gas and No  
Flatirons in the Bedrooms," Was  
the Joyous Era for Hotel Men.

Simeon Ford "came back" last night. After two years of retirement he appeared among the speakers at the thirty-fifth annual dinner of the New York City Hotel Association at the Waldorf. "Last year," began Mr. Ford, "I was not with you. The very day you had your legs stretched under Boldt's mahogany my leg was being pulled by a high-priced surgeon up at St. Luke's. While you were seated at tables groaning with good things, I was a good thing groaning on an operating table.

"At that trying moment," he continued, "it was a great comfort to me, however, to realize that I had led a pure and blameless life and never charged the public for bread and butter or for hanging up their hats and coats. I was cheered, too, by the thought that if I woke up in heaven it would be different from Forty-second Street, because I'd have no opposition.

"However! For years I was exploited at these dinners as an infant prodigy—the boy wonder of the Hotel Association. Suddenly I wake to the realization that I am almost the Sole Senior Senile Survivor of the Old Guard, the Last Lingerer Landlord in captivity.

"Of all the hotels that flourished when I began business the Broadway Central and the Grand Union are about the only survivors. We belong to the early Victorian pitcher-and-bowl, don't-blow-out-the-gas, no-hot-flatirons-in-the-bedrooms period. In our palmy days the chief requisites of the successful hotel landlord were a team of trotting horses, a bunch of wistaria springing from the Adam's apple, and a gift for holding three of a kind. We were expected to show up at the hotel once in a while, but not often enough to become de trop.

"When we pass away the plain man will have no place to lay his head. The plain man will have to buy a Tuxedo suit and a wrist watch, carry his handkerchief up his coat sleeve, cease promiscuous expectoration, and learn how to pronounce 'hors d'oeuvre.'"

Mr. Ford then turned to Gustav Baumann, the President of the Biltmore Hotel Company and also the President of the Hotel Association, and said:

"Let me have men about me that are fat," said Caesar, and I believe he was right. All hotel keepers should be and generally are fat. Of course, there are exceptions; but Baumann carries conviction. He looks the part, 'his fair round belly with good capon lined.' Now George Boldt and I look more like a couple of pepsin tablet advertisements than we do like landlords. I don't dare to show up at meal times for fear of discouraging the boarders.

"I am at a loss to understand why Baumann took up hotel keeping again. It was generally supposed that he had made a fortune by taking in the public at the Holland House. Can it be possible that he enjoys the business? Perhaps so, because he is a Swiss, and the Swiss are born innkeepers."

"They are a great people, and have a lovely country, and if I were as rich as Baumann I'd go home and buy a chalet on some mountainside and cultivate chamois and pursue the nimble edelweiss as it bounded from crag to crag, and if any one showed up that

looked like a boarder I'd lure him to some beetling precipice and push him over.

"I would avoid the cares and rush of American life. If I wanted to travel I'd get on a glacier and move an inch a year. I'd practice yodling and have Secretary Bryan come over and practice with me. I'd take it easy.

"I advised Mr. Baumann to adopt this simple life instead of coming up in our neighborhood to put us all out of business, but he would not listen to me. I think the key to his reason may be found in the name he selected for his new hotel—the Biltmore. You remember Bert Williams's old song:

"Every little bit, added to what you got,  
Makes just a little Bilt more."

Mr. Gustav Baumann called the diners to order when the speaking time arrived, and introduced Edward M. Tierney, the toastmaster. Mr. Tierney introduced himself as the first speaker and touched upon "the high cost of living and its influence upon the cow and the hen," "the two latest modes of dining room service, à la cabaret and à la Thé Dansant," and "the early closing movement." The Rev. Dr. David James Burrell and the Rev. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson were other speakers.

Among the prominent hotel men present were George C. Boldt of the Waldorf, E. M. Statler of Buffalo, Copeland Townsend of the Imperial, John McGlynn, President of the New York State Hotel Men's Association; J. M. Frazier of the Bellevue-Stratford, Philadelphia; Walton H. Marshall of the Vanderbilt, L. M. Bocmer of the McAlpin, Fred A. Reed of the Park Avenue, William C. and Fred A. Muschenheim of the Astor, and Paul B. Boden of the Manhattan.

There were also many men from the judicial and other departments of the City and State Government and also prominent politicians.