

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 9, NO. 344.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 1909.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE DUFFY CASE.

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WHILE it is true that New York could at any time fill the biggest hall with idle curiosity seekers, yet would it be to miss a sign of the times to impute to mere curiosity the crowd that packed the City Hall to overflowing when the Mayor, sitting as a magistrate, heard the case of Duffy—a decent lad whom the Police arrested half a dozen times, who was each time acquitted, and whose picture, nevertheless, Police Commissioner Bingham caused to be placed and insists in keeping in the Rogues' Gallery.

It is a sign of the times that the forcible manner in which this Police outrage was brought to general attention, has enlisted so much interest. It is not a case of idle curiosity; it is not even a case of a moral revolt; it is something of still graver import; it is an evidence that, somehow or other, Duffy Cases are numerous, that, somehow or other, vast numbers of people are victims of Police overbearing despotism, and that it is that that attracted them to the hearing.

And 'tis no wonder.

From the time that the Police officers were taken out of civilian clothes and put in uniform, the "force" has steadily deteriorated in point of respect for the civic rights of the people. The "force" was going downhill fast enough when its downward course received a powerful impetus during the Theodore Roosevelt administration as a Police Commissioner. Roosevelt brutalized the Police; "General" Bingham has further demoralized them.

Police officers now dare to set themselves up as censors at public meetings, where they act as judge, jury and swaggering executioners; they have presumed to break up meetings of inoffensive unemployed men; they swagger along the streets with more insulting brutality than soldiers do in Europe in the immediate neighborhood of their barracks. As a matter of course, corruption has broken out

among them like a veritable epidemic. Numbers of them have become speculators of blackmail; others have been caught mounting guard while their pals rifled a store; still others have been guilty of extortion; and—as in this specific Duffy case—they have developed a knack for persecution.

The New York Police, while calling itself “The Finest,” is, to a perceptible extent, an ulcer on the City’s face. Who has not witnessed some brutal or criminal act committed by these alleged guardians of the peace, who have become a veritable menace to the City’s peace?

The surprise is not that the City Hall and all its corridors were packed with a crowd anxious to witness the hearing—the surprise is that a thundering howl has not long ago gone up against the janissaries of “General” Bingham, men, who, taking their cue from a superior who does not hesitate to insult whole nationalities of the City’s population, are themselves utterly insensible to the dictates of humanity, even towards children.

In a properly organized Commonwealth it is the picture of the Bingham that should occupy first row in the Rogues’ Gallery.

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Uploaded September 2010

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