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EDITORIAL

## “GENERAL” BINGHAM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**C**APITALISM has been concisely termed a Big Bluff. Often has the proof thereof been given. Is there another proof wanted? The spectacle of General Bingham, the New York Police Commissioner, suing Judge Gaynor for libel furnishes an additional proof.

The frequency with which men holding military titles are recently placed in executive offices, private and public, must have called attention. The confessed theory of the policy is that men of military grade are “trained in soberness of mind,” a quality needed in posts of command “where a man must always keep cool, and never grow rattled.” The placing of such personages in important executive offices is said to be a guarantee of safety and of dignity. How false the theory is appears from the headlong conduct of General Bingham.

Judge Gaynor made public certain strictures against the General in the specific case of the lad Duffy, whose picture the General refused to remove from the Rogues Gallery although the lad had never been convicted—only arrested, but regularly acquitted. Judge Gaynor’s strictures on the matter rather sinned in moderation. Even if Duffy had been a man of mature years, the treatment he received from the General was an outrage. The same treatment inflicted upon a lad, whose character is yet in the making, betrayed a narrow mind, dizzy with power, to say nothing of a heart stony in point of human sentiment. Judge Gaynor lashed the General on the score of Duffy.

A real General, not a bluff-counterfeit, may also grow dizzy with power and betray inhumanity; but one quality, indispensable from the training that earned his title, is cool-headedness. To grow rattled betrays the counterfeit. This is just what “General” Bingham did. A libel suit in a civil court for \$100,000 damages to character by a public officer is as prime a case of “rattledness” as can be conceived.

Fact is, these “Generals,” “Colonels,” and what nots who are made executive officers in corporations, or, lately, in Police Departments, are just Big Bluffs—types of a social system that needs intimidation for its safety, seeing it lacks the strength of character therefor; and that, being the Big Bluff it is, needs bluff weapons to carry out its bluff policy. These “Generals,” “Colonels,” etc., have of General, Colonel, etc., only the name. For the rest, they lack all the roses, so to speak, that accompany the thorn of the distinctive military career. They are cowardly, they are unchivalrous, they are easily rattled—like “General” Bingham.

Bluffs are good only so long as the bluff is not called. Bluffs collapse at the card table when he upon whom the bluff is attempted is not to be bluffed. The bluff of the “Generals” Bingham can impose only temporarily. When the Socialist Movement is ready, the Big Bluff of Capitalism will be called in short order. What role the “Generals” Bingham will then play the libel suit of “General” Bingham for \$100,000 damages gives a foretaste of—they will lose their heads.

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