YALE LECTURES ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP. POLICEMAN AND PUBLIC

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649676293

Yale Lectures on the Responsibilities of Citizenship. Policeman and Public by Arthur Woods

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

www.triestepublishing.com

ARTHUR WOODS

YALE LECTURES ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP. POLICEMAN AND PUBLIC

Trieste

YALE LECTURES ON THE
RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP

POLICEMAN AND PUBLIC

·Policeman and Public·

by

Arthur Woods, A. M.
Colonel, Air Service, U. S. A.
Formerly Police Commissioner of New York City
Author of "Crime Prevention"

New Haven:
Yale University Press.
London: Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press.
Mdccccxix.

Contents

Policeman and Public

I

The Puzzling Law

WHAT is the average man's conception of the policeman's job? How does he think the guardian of law and order spends his time?

Most people probably picture to themselves the rather traditional officer that is seen strolling carefree up and down the street, with no particular aim, swinging his club, good-natured, yet with a certain degree of menace. It is known, of course, that he sometimes makes an arrest, and once in a while a brave deed he has done is read of in the paper, or an allegation of graft. It is known, too, that there are detectives, but the general idea of detective work and methods is a bit vague, and is apt to have been formed more from absorbing books or films than from the actual performances of flesh-and-blood detectives. An opinion commonly held about the policeman, and freely expressed, is that he's never there when you want him. That is perhaps the most fre-

quently administered police bromide. Another, for children only, is the bogie idea. "If you are not good the policeman will get you!" is a patent medicine used under stress even in our best families.

On the whole, however, people probably don't think much about policemen anyway. They are rather taken for granted, like a lamp-post, or a letter box, or any other feature of the natural scenery of a city. Yet no one hesitates to find fault, and every one is ready to believe anything bad about them, as is exemplified by the advice given a cub reporter once by one of the old-timers on the newspaper. The younger scribe was sitting at the long writing table, looking bored and disconsolate.

"What's wrong, boy?"

"Oh, bored. There's nothing to do."

"Nothing to do! Why don't you write a story for a change?"

"Nothing to write."

"Oh, go on. Now listen: when you've got to write about something, and there isn't anything to write about, just reel off a story boosting the firemen, or knocking the cops. Both always go!"

The reasons for this are probably not far to seek. We see the fireman gloriously pounding down the street on his way to save property, to save lives,—that is our picture of him, our conception of his duties, and naturally we "boost" him. The police-

man, however, we don't see distinctly doing anything definite at all, but we probably remember that our stolen pocketbook was *not* recovered for us, that a policeman rudely and absurdly stopped us once from crossing a parade line, or upbraided us for not seeing a traffic signal he didn't make—we are certain he didn't—and "they say" that policemen are so dishonest. No wonder we are ready to read "knocking" stories.

The policeman as he is, few persons see and know. This is partly his own fault, for he is apt to be none too frank about what he's doing, and isn't likely to open wide the door to those who come to inform themselves as to what manner of man he is. It is also the fault of the public, for they have been content to leave him as he is, without bothering to find out whether the failings they see in him are inherent, or are curable, and theirs to cure.

His duties as laid down by law are important; in fact, they must be reasonably well performed or our lives and property are not secure; and, unlike the duties of the fireman, they are complicated and of endless variety. The New York City Charter specifies:

"Sec. 315. It is hereby made the duty of the police department and force, at all times of day and night, and the members of such force are hereby thereunto empowered to especially preserve the public peace,