

ORATORS TAKE A WALK.

BOSTON SENDS A CONTINGENT TO SWELL COXEY'S ARMY.

Worked Up to the Proper Pitch by Agitators, They Start for Washington—Gone to Join the Cranks, Tramps and Crooks from the West—Something About Swift.

Boston, April 24.—The common was one great black mass of excited humanity, Sunday afternoon, a crowd in which every type of Bostonian was represented, and every man, woman and child was there out of curiosity.

I say every man, woman and child, and in fact of the tens of thousands there this can truthfully be said of all, but perhaps, one hundred or so, the members of the New England Industrial Army, were those who sincerely believe in its leaders, and methods.

There was no brass band, no cannon, not even a uniform to look upon, Boston was simply interested, curious over the Coxe army movement.

Does it mean anything? Yes.

When "armies" of 50 or 100 men start out from nearly every section of a large country like the United States; start out without money, to walk to one point and that the capital of the nation; start out too, to make demands upon the government, led by men of more or less ability, and apparently sincere, there must be something wrong. It must mean something. Coxe, you know, comes from Ohio. He intends to demand that the government issue non-interest bearing bonds, and that millions of dollars be expended on public highways.

The latter will give work to thousands of unemployed, the former will cut off a source of income from the people who make their money do the work they themselves should do.

Comparatively few people take Coxe seriously, yet press dispatches say men of means and good purpose are joining the army, all bound for Washington. Each of the other armies have like demands to make, and all expect to arrive at Washington about the same time.

The country is in a state of great unrest. Thousands upon thousands have been out of work all winter and comparatively few have secured employment with the opening of spring.

The people are prepared for anything, they have been listening something during the winter, they have been listening to socialist orators and agitators, men who believe the present social system is all wrong, men who have tried to show them that there is enough money, enough food and clothing in the country for all, but that a certain class gets everything, wants for nothing, while they, the wage earners, get nothing, and when a financial crisis comes have to see their families starve.

During the winter the people were in that condition when they could ponder over these things, see how much truth there is in them, and become thoroughly imbued with the essence of socialism. They are now willing to do anything that will bring about a change.

What kind of men are they? During the winter the throngs which met on the common, the alleged rioters at the State House, and the excited mobs in Faneuil hall were called foreigners and tramps by the newspapers, and the general remark was that an offer of work or a bar of soap would break up an assemblage and drive every man into it out of the city.

It was thought the industrial army would be composed of tramps, but the newspapers all agree that the men who started on the march yesterday were respectable looking workmen with none of the earmarks of the tramp.

It was a great day in Boston, but the events of the winter all led up to it.

You've heard of Morrison J. Swift, the leader of Boston unemployed, the man who has become known all over the length and breadth of the land for his connection with the alleged riot at the State House, here, a few months ago, when the unemployed swarmed the building to urge the legislature to give them something to do.

I remember meeting Swift last fall, when he was comparatively unknown in Boston, when he delivered lectures to a handful of people in a back parlor of the now famous Equity union house, at 20 Oak street.

At that time he had a co-worker in Herbert Casson, a tall, slim young man with glasses and pompadour hair. They were generally known as Swift and Casson, and it was my impression at that time, that if either of them became prominent as a leader it would be Casson. He was a better speaker, earnest, and seemed to captivate the people, and a month or so later when he addressed a hungry mob in Faneuil hall there was no doubt that Casson was the idol of the crowd.

But he drifted off, Swift remained and kept up the agitation.

Swift is not the wild eyed, depraved anarchist one would imagine from all that has been written about him. He is a thorough believer in socialism, a well educated young man, who has studied in Europe, and travelled considerably. He is thoroughly sincere, rather ahead of his time, and more sanguine as to the near approach of a new order of things that circumstances seem to give reason for.

Equity union house, where he lives, is a tenement on Oak street off Washington street, rented by a Mrs. Harding, a frail

little woman with gray hair, who has some money, which she is devoting to the spread of socialism. Lectures are given there nearly every night. Two rooms, with folding doors, are filled with chairs, and perhaps 40 or 50 attend the lectures, although some of the best known thinkers in Boston had spoken there.

The place has been described again and again, sometimes with an air of mystery thrown about it, which would lead one to believe that every hole and corner of the building secreted a dynamite bomb or some infernal machine, but the fact is 20 Oak street does not resemble an arsenal in the least.

The people who meet there are mainly working men and women, social reformers and those who believe in their ideas; and one of the things that has always impressed me at the Equity union was the invariable absence of beer. I do not think I ever saw a man there who was under the influence of it.

On the whole, Boston's social reformers as seen at the Equity union house, are a respectable, earnest lot of enthusiasts, and while the present leaders hold on I do not think there is any great danger of explosions or that sort of thing.

But for all this they have raised the very devil, hereabouts.

Now that the west has started the movement toward Washington, Boston is ready to do its part, and today 50 or more moneyless men are tramping toward the capital.

I do not believe half of them really know what they are going for, but there is no doubt that the undertaking will sow seeds of discontent in places, where such theories as these men have, are almost unknown.

They stop at every town and village, and the leaders make speeches. They always talk socialism, oppression, and hurrah for industrial freedom, and in out-of-the-way places they will probably set people thinking who never could have been reached in any other way.

The arrival of all these armies in Washington is awaited with a good deal of interest. The chances are the whole movement will end in a fizzle, but no matter what the outcome, this year and this month will go down in the history of the United States, and it is hardly likely that an agitation of this kind will die out all together.

For while the common people are marching to Washington to present petitions to the president personally, and ask the government to enact laws tending to socialism, men of standing in this city and other cities for that matter, are discussing the same problem in the dining rooms of leading hotels, and organizing for better municipal government, government conducted on socialistic ideas, and which they expect in turn to apply to national affairs.

Meanwhile, the city having compelled the gas companies to reduce the price of gas to one dollar, the gas bills are larger than ever.

Something is going to happen. When? Ah, that's the question.

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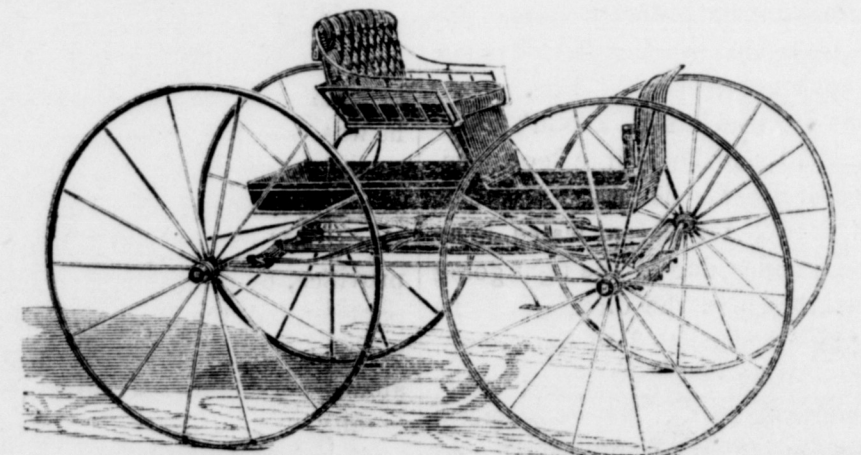


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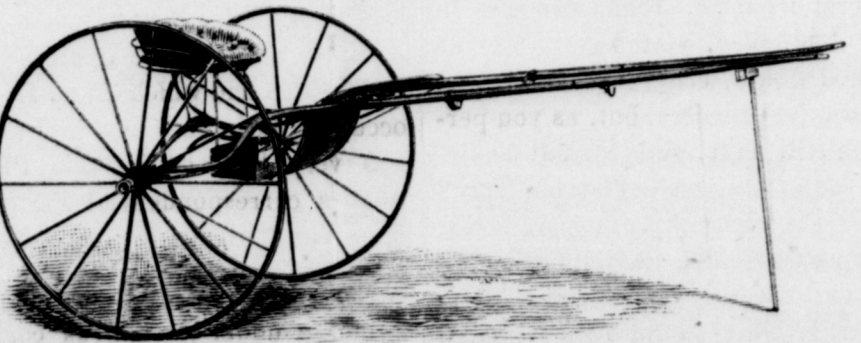
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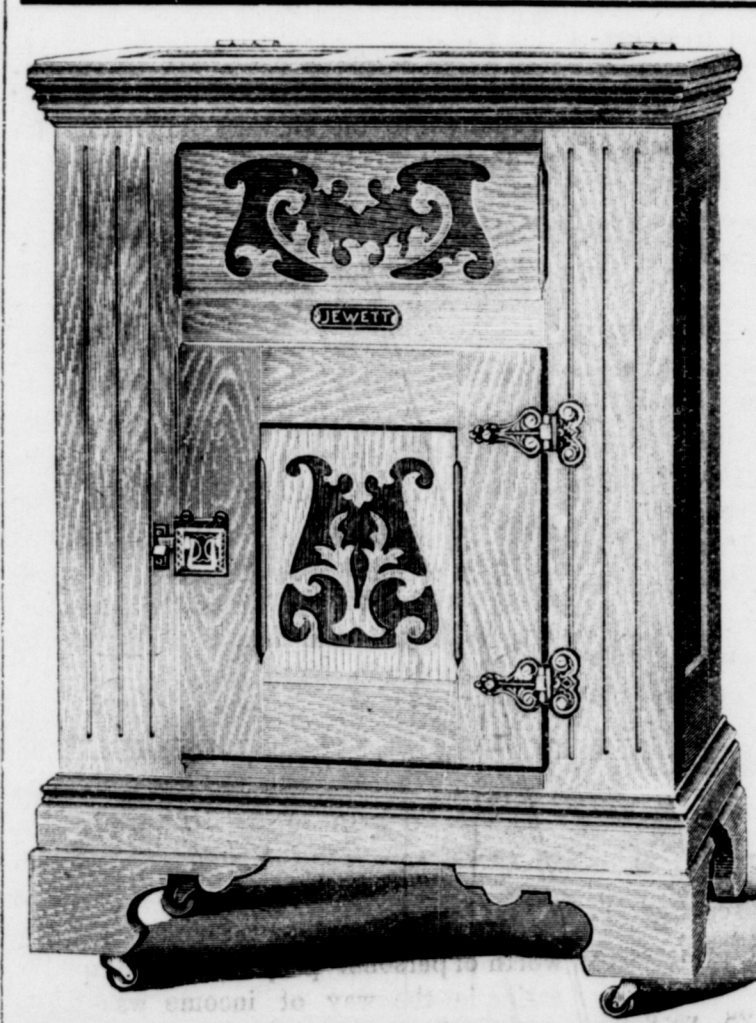
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