

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

THE LABORERS' MISTAKE.

A Denver paper in an attempt to explain and, as far as possible, defend the Coxe movement and Colorado strikers makes the point that in times of business depression the myriads thrown out of employment universally move towards the national capitals. Why, they cannot tell, but they are convinced that the source of the evil is to be found at the seats of government, and they naturally go to the supposed source to find a remedy. "In Great Britain," the paper argues, "the unemployed move on London; in France, on Paris; in Germany, on Berlin. The area of these countries combined is not equal to that of some American states, and therefore the drive of humanity to their capitals is not so remarkable. This may now be regarded as one of the laws of a great business depression; and the movement to Washington is in accordance with it."

This plea for the anomalous movement on Washington by the "armies" may be ingenious, but it is based on a misstatement of facts and can serve no good purpose. It is true enough that in times of depression unemployed naturally congregate in the great centers of population, where the chances of employment are supposed to be greater than elsewhere, but it is not true, as the argument evidently implies, that it is a natural law that drives unemployed to combine in a movement upon the seats of government in order to force legislation their way. The scheme would be utterly impracticable in any of the countries mentioned, and were it attempted, it would be speedily put down as insurrection. Just fancy a handful of hoodlums from Hamburg, Lubeck and other cities starting out for Berlin. How far would they be allowed to proceed before they were all securely locked up? And in England, a similar crowd marching on London from the slums of Hull or Liverpool would fare no better. Some years ago the laborers in the timber yards near Sundswall, Sweden, suddenly struck, assumed a threatening attitude toward the local government and destroyed some property. But before they knew what had happened the whole crowd, several thousand strong, were surrounded by the troops commanded by the governor of the province, and a man-of-war was on its way from the capital to back the governor up if necessary. The rioters had to surrender unconditionally and the leaders were promptly sent to jail. That is how they do things over in Europe. A Coxe movement would not be tolerated in any of those countries, not even in republican Switzerland. It is a possibility only in a country like this, where the greatest liberty is enjoyed and where men may abuse their rights to a certain extent without molestation.

No right minded person can fail to feel the greatest sympathy for the worthy laborers who are suffering the consequences of a depressed trade. But it would be false friendship indeed to encourage in any way

these sufferers to adopt a course destructive to their best interests; and certainly laborers commit grave errors when they rise in arms against capital. The plain reason why so many now are unemployed is that capitalists are timid and capital is idle. Is the remedy for this to create a condition of still greater insecurity and timidity? It cannot be denied that in the degree that strikers and Coxeyites menace and destroy property and inflict losses on capital, in that same degree the chances of employment and a return of prosperity will be lessened. The laborers of this country are intelligent enough to understand that without capital millions of their own class are doomed to idleness because the factories are closed, the fields untilled. Good will and good feelings between men is what is needed, and any movement with a view of promoting these is commendable while the opposite is as destructive to the laborers' interest as to the prosperity of the country.

"PETITIONS WITH BOOTS ON."

Referring to the claim of the Coxe "army" and other similar marching organizations headed for Washington, that they merely intend to present to Congress a "petition in boots," the *Springfield Republican* recalls a vivid incident of the war of the Revolution, not by way of parallel or justification for the recent demonstration, but as showing the superior kind of claims that in times long past was deemed to warrant this extraordinary means of demanding a hearing. No one who has read early American history can fail to remember the sufferings of the American soldiers at Valley Forge in 1778, when for days at a time they were without provisions, clothes, medicines or other lodgings than the rude and uncomfortable huts which barely sheltered them. Many of the men were so deficient in clothes that they could not lie down lest they should freeze to death, but were forced to sit round the camp fires. These soldiers were mainly the intelligent yeomanry of the land, plain farmers and mechanics, of whom Lafayette wrote to his wife, "No European army would suffer the tenth part of what the American troops suffer. It takes citizens to support hunger, nakedness, toil and the total want of pay which constitute the condition of our soldiers, the hardest and most patient that are to be found in the world."

Coming to the incident, three years later, of the threatened march on the national capital, the *Republican* says:

In January, 1781, when the patriot army was encamped at Morristown, N. J.—when Glover wrote to Massachusetts: "It is now four days since your line of the army has eaten one mouthful of bread"—a part of the Pennsylvania line, composed in a large degree of Irish immigrants, revolted and, under the lead of their non-commissioned officers, marched to Princeton en route to Philadelphia, where Congress was assembled. What they deemed indifference to their wants on the part of Congress roused their

indignation, and led them in an orderly manner to demand redress in person. They were under the impression that Congress wasted much precious time in wrangling over questions of minor importance, and that some of the states had grown indifferent and failed to furnish supplies in food and clothing, of both of which their commander, Gen. Wayne, said they were sadly deficient, there being but one blanket between three men in that rigorous winter. The state of Pennsylvania, from which these revolvers had been recruited, had been especially backward in providing for the necessities of the army, though it was probably the richest of all the states, and through its President Reed it had but to come forward and arrange matters in the best way it could, by payment of arrears and promises for the future, to allay the dissatisfaction. Troops of New Jersey, whose ranks, next to the Pennsylvania line, included the largest proportion of foreigners, showed signs of being influenced by the bad example, but Washington interposed and suppressed the revolt with a strong hand.

The troops of New England, which had twenty regiments in the continental service, had equal reason, says the historian, for discontent; but they were almost every one of them native Americans, free-holders or sons of free-holders. The passions of the army were quieted by their patriotism, and order and discipline returned. It should also be said on behalf of the mutineers that many of them were compelled to remain in the service after their time of enlistment had expired, and were true to their country and gave up two of Sir Henry Clinton's emissaries, whom he sent to them with tempting offers, and who, after trial, were hanged as spies. There were no Arnolds among these soldiers.

Finally, adds the *Republican*, "It may also be said, in excuse of Congress, that it could do nothing but resolve and that the states alone could execute and furnish men, money, food and clothing. If it had not been at this period for the aid of Robert Morris and France, the worst, as Washington said in his circular letter to the New England states, that could befall the nascent states might have happened."

THE PLAGUE IN CHINA.

The dispatches bring information that in China a terrible plague which seems akin to the Black Death has made its appearance and is creating frightful havoc. The details at hand are very meager, but are sufficient to show that an alarming situation prevails. The disease first broke out in Canton, and at its appearance was characterized as a strange and remarkably fatal malady. At first it was not recognized as being similar to the awful plague which five centuries ago devastated the eastern hemisphere, but it spread so rapidly and increased in malignancy until there was no doubt in the minds of the Chinese officials that the Black Death was again in the country. Although information regarding the symptoms and course of the terrible malady is far from perfect, yet from available data physicians have concluded that the similarity of the effects of the present visitation and that of former times is so marked as to justify the claim that both are identical in character.

The symptoms of the disease as now described are as follows: A sudden attack of fever, headache, thirst