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FIRST EDITORIAL

COXEY'S ARMY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHEN the keen-sighted Lord Chesterfield returned to England after a tour through France in 1758, he announced that he had seen all the signs that portended a speedy and severe social revolution. What would not Lord Chesterfield say were he alive to-day, and had he taken a tour through our country!

Not the least of the portentous signs of the impending social upheaval here is Coxeys' Army. At first, the newspapers took the thing to be a huge hoax, but by degrees all the fun has been oozing out of the reports, and Coxeys' move has assumed a serious aspect.

"What shall be done with it?" This question has engaged the attention of District Attorneys all along the line of march. "Lock them up as tramps," was the answer, but the answer has become ridiculous. The jails are not large enough to contain the crowd. The wealthy have ridden down in carriages and on bicycles to the roads by which Coxeys was to march, expecting to have fun at the sight, and have returned awe-stricken. Ever longer grows the trail of the body that is marching upon Washington, and when that living petition shall reach the capital, that living petition, which, however in the dark as to the cause of the Nation's trouble, is not fooled by any capitalist theorists into the belief that a starving nation of wealth producers with a handful of riotous wealthy idlers is in prosperity and should be content, when that living petition reach Washington and is found to be too much alive for the waste-basket and too numerous for the jails, what then?

Ah, there is the rub!

Call out the militia? Shoot them down? Sweep them away with grape and

canister?

Hitherto the workingmen who have been loudest for redress were said to be Huns, Italians, Dutchmen, Irish—Dagos in general and, whether so or not, were ruthlessly mowed down. But Coxey's band is conspicuously American; no lying upon this head will go down; the fact is notorious. What, sweep them too away with grape and canister ?

Altho' the demands borne by Coxey's army sound and are ridiculously trivial—"Good Roads and No Interest-bearing Bonds"—yet, many such trivial demands have helped to ripen, and themselves ripened into most important ones, into demands that have marked epochs in history.

Whatever may be the immediate fate of Coxey's band, it is a sign of the times that portends the dawning of the day when native and foreign-born Americans will stand shoulder to shoulder doing battle at the ballot-box for freedom from the Capitalist and Wages System of Plunder, and will stand ready to pursue their victory to whatever logical extreme the brigand class of capitalists may drive them.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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