

### 3. "Labor's Great Army," 1889

An army, with banners flying and music sounding, on its march to the battlefield, is a grand and inspiring spectacle. . . . An army in days of peace, with its pomp of ordered motion and its glowing colors and glitter of weapons, is always an attractive sight, charming the gazers, young and old, for a little while, away from the commonplaces of the everyday struggle for bread and wealth. . . . But an industrial army, such as Boston witnessed yesterday parading its historic streets, with a record of invincible patience, an ever widening purpose of righteous achievement, is a sight more attractive, a spectacle more impressive. It means more for the future than all the battlefields that have been drenched with human blood. It is a celebration of the partial reign of the common people.

So excellent were the exhibitions of all the different crafts that it would be almost invidious to particularize any as the chief ornaments. Yet, perhaps to most

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people, the "floats" of the carpenters, by their striking contrast of the old log cabin of the fathers with a modern building caused the greatest impression and suggested, in addition, the immense strides in quality of work made by the workers in the last few years, just as the procession suggests in a larger way the immense strides made by the workers themselves in securing the recognition of their important position in the body politic. The industrial army of yesterday seemed to feel that the workers are the base of the heaven-seeking pyramid of civilization, and that, if that is not well founded and secure, the top must topple. . . .

Union 33 of Boston was most profuse in its exhibition of mottoes. . . . One was a huge saw made of wood and painted quite realistically. On one side was the inscription, "We are organized to elevate," and on the reverse, "Set on eight hours." Another device was a carpenter's square enlarged to a fairly heroic size. The inscription was: "We are all square union men; non-union men are not square."

Other mottoes which attracted especial attention were these: "Honest labor never rusts: up with wages, down with trusts." "Nine hours a day has paved the way: eight hours a day has come to stay." "Less work, more recreation." "We build the cities." "Those who build palaces should not dwell in hovels."

The Operative Tailors' Union gave some very sharp raps. They were accompanied by two large open wagons, trimmed and decorated, one drawn by four horses, and bearing a representation of a tailor shop in active operation with men engaged in cutting, sewing and pressing. The other wagon was fitted to resemble the interior of a room in a tenement house, with all its squalor and misery. The first wagon bore a large sign inscribed: "Away with the filthy scab tenement house labor. We will investigate a few tenement houses for \$20." The second bore simply the pregnant remark: "Twenty coats a day's work."