

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 271.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 1908.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

CATTLE'S PRICE, AND WORKERS'.

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THE price of meat goes up and is expected to go up higher. The explanation given by the dealers is very simple. The scarcity of money prevented the cattle raisers from investing in lean cattle for winter fattening, and compelled them to sell what cattle they had. The result is that the supply of meat has sunk away below the demand. Saying this the wholesale dealers in meat sit down meekly obedient to the providential visitation that, against their will, compels them to demand higher prices. The gist of the "explanations" given by the dealers is that, plentiful, or small supply, their revenues must not be affected. If the supply is plentiful, well, then the prices may be safely lower: the smaller profit made upon a large scale foots up as much as a larger profit made upon a smaller scale. If the supply is small, why, then the prices must go up, in order to make up in steepness for what is lost in numbers.

So with meat or cattle. Not so with the human merchandise Labor.

If the human merchandise Labor is plentiful, the capitalist purchaser looks reproachfully at the merchandise when it kicks at its low price. "Wouldst have us break all the canons of political economy," the purchasing capitalist would plaintively ask, "and pay for Labor a higher than its market price?" If, on the contrary, through some accident or other, the demand for Labor should rise so high as to exceed the supply, then the same capitalist purchaser looks indignantly at the merchandise Labor when it puts in its claim for the even-handed application of the aforementioned canons of political economy. "Shame upon you, miscreant disrupters of the Nation! Shame upon you caitiff smashers of the sanctity of the family! Shame upon you impious and sacrilegious contemners of religion!" the purchasing capitalist then thunders at the merchandise Labor. "Go back to the shop! Fall upon your knock-knees! Pray to the God Capital to intermit the plague that needs must light

upon your sacrilege!"

And if the merchandise Labor does not heed the order p.d.q., its obedience is promoted by policemen's clubs, besides bayonets and bullets.

Capitalist law is based upon the theory that he is helped who helps himself. A consequence of that theory is this other theory that he who can "speak for himself" should help himself. There is a third theory, it is made to flow from the second, to wit, that seeing Labor "can speak for itself" it needs no protection. Capitalist economics upset the principle. Cattle can't speak for itself, yet the price goes up when the supply is low; Labor, supposedly able to speak for itself, must submit to its price going down, be the supply high or low.

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Uploaded January 2010

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