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EDITORIAL

DECIDEDLY ELEMENTARY.

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THE printers' strike for the eight-hour day in the book and job trade furnishes the rifle-diet-for-the-workingmen *Evening Post* the occasion for some philosophic thoughts on elementals. It says:

“The union is within its rights in demanding higher wages; the employers in demanding that men willing and anxious to work at the rate now paid be allowed to do so. That is elementary”.

There can be nothing more elementary than that—from the capitalist view point.

First dispossess the peasants from their holdings; then tax and undersell the middle class out of existence; then further increase the supply of labor in the labor-market at home by luring hither the workers from Europe or anywhere else; and, then, when the supply sufficiently exceeds the demand and men are not only willing but “anxious to work” for the merest pittance, sing out “free field and no favors”, and let the employer profit by the standard of starvation that the employing class itself raised. That certainly is elementary.

And it is also elementary that, when—despite the capitalist's process of overstocking the market—, the over-supply insists upon herding together in cities, leaving a dearth of hands on the fields, the capitalist class should throw fits through its *Evening Posts*, and curse the under-supply in the fields for insisting upon a wage-scale in keeping with the low supply of the locality. That is so elementary that it hardly needs more than to be mentioned.

There is something else equally elementary, and that is that people will not for ever accept as current coin the hypocritical pretenses of fair play in which the capitalist class wraps up its iniquities; that they will see through the sham, perceive how things stand, and then give short shrift to a social system in which large

numbers of men, women and even children are systematically driven to such desperate straits that they are “willing and anxious”, especially anxious, to look upon the merest starvation wage as the drowning man looks at a straw. This is probably the most elementary of the three propositions.

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