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EDITORIAL

WATSON AND HIS DUCHESS.

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AGREEABLE to promise we take up this week the second of the Socialist principles that *Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine* for the current month “disembowels,” “explodes,” and “corners into gruntlessness”—the theory of the materialist, or economic interpretation of history.

The theory of the materialist conception of history places the moving spring of the mass-actions of men, and the foundation of social institutions in economic interests, and in the existing systems of production and distribution, respectively. This theory Mr. Watson starts with the promise of tearing to tatters; whereupon he opens fire as follows: “To say that some wars have had their motive in considerations of this sort, [economic interests] would be perfectly true; but a theory which seeks to account for all wars in this way is simply laughable,” and he proceeds to fill four pages with instances of wars and wars only in proof of the laughableness of the Marxian theory. In other words, Mr. Watson flunks from the very start. Setting out with the promise to overthrow the whole theory of the materialist conception of history, which embraces institutions as well as actions, he limits himself to actions only, and actions, at that, of a limited category—war. It should not be difficult to rake out of the store-room of 8,000 years of history a number of instances of wars brought on by mere whims. Even if the instances adduced by Mr. Watson fell outside of the materialist theory they would prove nothing. They would be what biologic science terms “freaks.” Bilge water in the hold of an ocean steamer is no argument against the theory of the ship's being staunch. Unfortunately for Mr. Watson, the bilge water in the hold of the materialist theory is so slight that, in trying to scrape it up, the instances that fill his cup are not “bilge water,” at all, but robust facts that turn the laugh on him.

Mr. Watson cites the siege of Troy—thereby betraying the shallowness of his

reading. The siege of Troy, wrapped in mythologic rhapsodies tho' it be, is the earliest recorded episode in an economic conflict that later took the name of the "Eastern Question," and which, in our days, is speaking the language of railroad ventures.

Mr. Watson cites the Crusades—thereby uncovering vast areas of history that are a closed book to him. Material was the vast political scheme, schemed by Pope Urban II. and which carried off his base the maniacal Peter the Hermit, fittingly nick-named at the time "Cuckoo Peter"; and material were the reasons that prompted the bulk of the men and women who joined.

Mr. Watson cites the "Hundred Years' War" between France and England—thereby letting out the secret that he is not even versed in his Shakespeare, whose tragedies of the Henrys would have, by many a pointed passage, enlightened him.

And so on. Without a single exception, even upon the exclusively and limited field of war chosen by himself, Mr. Watson so far from adducing proofs against, trots out proofs that only make for the materialist theory.

Nor is this the only sample of the bad luck that pursues our Georgia Don Quixote. In his headlong effort to break a lance in favor of an archaic, not even a modern, superstition—the superstition that material facts adapt themselves to sentiments, instead of sentiment to the facts—Mr. Watson unguardedly slides from the special field, the field of war, which he chose, and naively contributes a proof to the materialist theory out of his own, his private household.

In this very article Mr. Watson's hatred of the "Niggers" causes him to digress with the following passage: "As to colored women—they are duchesses. They work when they want to, and quit when they feel like it. No white house-wife in the Southern States can take a comfortable nap, any more. Haunted by anxiety concerning the appearance of Her Grace, the cook, the poor white woman hurries out of the warm bed, down to the chilly kitchen, to see if the duchess has arrived. In case she has, your wife can return to her rooms and perhaps get a snooze. In very many instances, it is the duchess who lies abed, taking the nap, while your wife is in the kitchen making the fire, and starting the breakfast. Isn't it so? THAT'S THE WAY IN MY HOUSE."

O, happy digression! The Evil Genius of anti-materialism, none other could have inspired it.

Mr. Watson is—at least he tires not to assure the public—a Saxon of Saxonville; a Southron of Southronville. The characteristic of the Saxon Southron, boasted about by the species, is its chivalry—a chivalry that finds its highest expression in reverence, respect and solicitude for the female sex of their clan. To the chivalrous Saxon-Southron their wives and daughters are something peculiarly sacred—beings that must be shielded from the turmoil of active life, and whose very names must be left out of the rude contests of men. And yet what do we see? Such is the pressure of economic interests, so imperious are these in dictating men's acts and standards of propriety, that the Saxon-Southron Watson is seen raising the veil over his own wife's sanctum; he is seen placing the lady in the lime-light of evidence as a specimen; he is seen doing worse, he is seen betraying the fact that his chivalry allows him to remain “snoozing” like his duchess, while his own wife has to go “down to the chilly kitchen” and “make the fire.”

There is nothing in potency like material interests. They fire even Saxon-Southron chivalry out of the window—as illustrated by the Saxon-Southron Chevalier Tom Watson himself, driven thereto by Her Grace, the Duchess his cook.

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