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EDITORIAL

HARD ON MILWAUKEE.

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TOM WATSON, in *The Jeffersonian* for the first week of May, speaks of the victory in Milwaukee as the “So-called Socialist Victory.” He calls it “so-called Socialist” because he claims that its principal plank and features were Populist, hence, “Populism has won another victory,” not Socialism. Such treatment should be hard enough on the Milwaukee victors, but Mr. Watson is still harder on them. He actually “rubs it in.”

After having justly claimed all that was good in the Milwaukee Social Democratic platform for Populism, Mr. Watson picks out the plank which demands that “washerwomen, who are widows, shall have the use of the water of the city free of charge,” and he declares: *That* is Socialism—many a widow who does washing is strong and robust and needs no charity, whereas many a married woman, loaded with children and having a sot of a husband on her hands, is much more in need of the city charity of free water for washing.”

For once Mr. Watson is right—but such is the falseness of the man’s position that even when right, he beats a tattoo on his own head.

No doubt the “widows clause” in the Social Democratic platform is absurd,—and, by that token, it is not Socialist at all but a chip of the reform block of Populism.

It is a feature of Reform that, whichever way it utters itself, it gets pinched in its own cleft stick. This is a consequence of Reform being sentimental, and never reasoning from fundamental principles. The “widow” and the “married woman” cases illustrate the point.

Sound reasoning, Socialism, in short, disregards consequences; it looks mainly at causes. Neither widowhood nor “a sot of a husband” is necessarily a state of distress. If either happens to be a state of distress, the cause lies further down. The

Socialist looks for the cause; the Reformer contents himself with scratching the surface. As a consequence, the Reformer will either incur the blunder pointed out by Mr. Watson in the Social Democratic platform of Milwaukee concerning widows; or he will incur the equal blunder that Reformer Watson forthwith proceeds to incur of putting the plaster of free water on the wooden leg of the “sot of a husband”—in both instances, the cause of the distress being left untouched, the relief is truly populist, that is, inefficient and, what is worse, a stimulator of the cause to blossom into some fresh manifestations.

Otherwise does the Socialist proceed. He sponges off the blood of “widowhood,” in one instance, of “a sot-of-a-husband,” in the other, and looks at the wound itself. That wound he perceives is inflicted by the lethal weapon of economic dependence, which class-rule sharpens upon the modern grindstone of the private ownership of the necessaries for work and wealth-production. That once perceived, the Socialist will aim at the removal of the cause. While he will not disregard the necessity of alleviating distress in the meantime, his main thought will be directed towards the attack of {on} the root of the evil. Thus soundly poised, whatever alleviation the Socialist may recommend, never will be exposed either to the arrows that the Milwaukee Social Democratic platform is exposed to, nor to the arrows that may proceed from the Pot of Populistic Reform aimed at the Kettle of the Milwaukee S.D.P.

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