

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 10, NO. 191.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 1910.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## A LESSON IN ENGLISH TO TOM WATSON.

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**W**ATSON'S JEFFERSONIAN MAGAZINE for the current month "disemboweling" Marx presents, if anything, a droller picture than it did when engaged at "disemboweling" Bebel.

Marx is correctly quoted as stating that "that which determines the magnitude of the value of any article is the amount of labor socially necessary, or the labor-time socially necessary for its production." Thereupon Mr. Watson cites the instance of two cotton plantations, one "level, free of stumps, fertile and easy to work," the other "rolling, rocky, stumpy and thin"; and he cites the instance of two sawmills, one "an up-to-date plant, with powerful engine" and equipped with a lightning saw that splits off plank after plank "with a 'zip, zip, zip,'" the other "one of these portable fellows" of which "the engine is small"; and he cites a string of other "homely examples," after each of which he asks whether the output of the inferior land or plant will sell for as much as the output of the superior land or plant? Correctly he answers: "You know that it does not"; and from that he takes a clown's tumble arriving at the conclusion: "Then the Socialist theory isn't worth a hill of beans."

Whereat Socialism takes Mr. Watson on its knees and addresses him as follows:

"Tommy, dear, cool down. In your heated state of mind you can't understand and won't learn English. Your error is primarily an error in English. Just read over again that Marxian theory which you quoted. 'That which determines the magnitude of the value of any article is the amount of labor socially necessary, or the labor-time socially necessary for its production.' Good boy, that was nicely read. Now, do you see that word 'socially'? It occurs twice—the amount of labor, or the labor-time 'socially' necessary—do you see that word? Yes? Good. Whatever may be

said of your undeveloped mind, your eyes are true. Now, Tommy, spell that word. Hard to spell? Well, I'll help you. S, o, so; c, i, a, l, cial; social; l, y, ly; socially. Good boy. Now do you know what that word stands for in English. No? I thought so. Let's turn to page 1701 of the Standard Dictionary. Here it is. Now read: 'Socially, adv., with reference to society.' Good! Your enunciation is clear, clear as your eyes. What you need is to polish up your mind, too. You see, 'socially' is called an adv.' Do you know what that abbreviation stands for? No? It stands for 'adverb.' Socially is an adverb: Adverbs qualify verbs and adjectives. You know that? Good. Now we can proceed. A thing that is 'necessary' for production is a thing that production can not get along without. If I put the word 'socially' before 'necessary,' I there by qualify the 'necessary.' I then mean that the 'necessary' is not absolute; production can be carried on without that thing. A thing 'socially necessary for production,'—do you catch on, Tommy?—is a different thing from the thing 'necessary for production.' The labor-time expended on an old time mill, or on a field, from which the stumps have not yet been removed, is 'necessary for production,' but it is not 'socially necessary.' Society having reached the point where it operates improved engines to saw plank 'zip, zip, zip,' it follows that society does no longer depend upon the labor-time formerly needed to saw planks when no 'zip, zip, zip,' could do the job. Now, Tommy, you will perceive that the Socialist theory is worth all the hills of beans in the world. He who, to-day, when improved machinery makes things go 'zip, zip, zip,' chooses, or is compelled, to work with old style machinery, can naturally not expect to get as much for his work as he who operates the 'zip, zip, zip' engines. The reason is obvious, the labor he expends in production is no longer 'socially' necessary. So that the very illustrations you cite knock you out. They prove that what 'isn't worth a hill of beans' is, not the Socialist theory, but is your denial, due to your weakness in English grammar. The labor socially necessary for production is what determines the value of goods. And much flows from this fact. The man who owns plants, that enable him to turn out goods with an amount of labor vastly below the amount of labor required by the man who owns no such plant, will outsell and ruin the latter. The reason being that the labor, 'socially' necessary for the turning out of the said article, is vastly below the labor which the other fellow requires. So, you see,

Tommy, how important grammar is to the understanding of economics. And, now, Tommy, here is a cooky {cookie?} for you; and next time don't be so cocksure in your ignorance. Modesty is a jewel. Now, go and take a run in the woods."

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Uploaded January 2011

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