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EDITORIAL

## OH, FOR AN AESOP!

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE January number of *The Ladies' Home Journal* has an article by "His Eminence, J. Cardinal Gibbons," entitled "The Restless Woman." The article argues against that social manifestation that consists in the appearance of woman in the walks of life, formerly considered to be masculine, and reserved for men. Does "His Eminence" condemn the causes at the bottom of the ominous manifestation that he castigates? Not in the faintest. The only impression left when one has reached the last word is that the "New Woman," as the specimen is frequently called, is "restless" because she likes it. The conclusion is inevitable that the "restlessness" of the woman is a fad, a notion, a caprice, a bad habit, that can be corrected by the salve of sanctity. A wondrous "Eminence" must that be from which such pearls can drop!

Aesop was no whimsical character. By the means of fables, planted squarely on facts in animal life, he placed his fingers on human follies. Had he lived to-day, and been afflicted with the monthly visitation of a "Ladies' Journal," and read the article on "The Restless Woman" by "His Eminence, J. Cardinal Gibbons," can it be doubted that he would have portrayed "His Eminence" with a fable? He surely would have told a story of how some mud-eel, reveling in all the luxury of its semi-liquid element, complacently passed judgment upon, and condemned the tree-climbing eel, the eel that, by a long continued change in its original surroundings, was forced, despite all its original inclinations, to learn to climb trees in its struggle for existence. It needs no extraordinary powers of imagination to imagine the "crack of the whip" with which Aesop would have scourged the comfortably placed mud-eel for twitting his ill-starred tree-climbing eel cousin with "restlessness." The scourge would have been well merited by all the humans whom the cap fitted. How much more so by an "Eminence!"

The “restlessness” among women to-day is not a manifestation of “original sin.” It is the product of a social system whose effect is to render ever more precarious the existence of the masses. In the struggle for life, that this social system inflicts upon humanity, man is kept down to the brute state. How intense the struggle has become is gatherable from the circumstance that, like the eel which is driven from its natural element and forced to climb trees, woman is to-day driven from her natural element, the home, and forced abroad into masculine pursuits for existence. As if this fact were not a damnation deep enough of a social system that can beget such monstrosity, *The Ladies’ Journal* furnishes an insight into the depravity that such a system breeds at the other end of the line. At the other end of the line stand the “Eminences,” not only mud-eel-like passing flippant judgment on their ill-starred fellow beings, the tree-climbing human eels; not only mud-eel-like assuming an authority to condemn; but, infinitely worse than the mud-eel, themselves upholding the system that breeds such evils, and blessing it with a text!

Oh, for an Aesop to hold the mirror up to nature and show the very age and body of the time his form and pressure!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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