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EDITORIAL

SATIRIZING WOMAN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE frequent reader of newspapers cannot fail to be impressed by the increasing shafts of satire that are directed against woman. Some of these shafts are positively venomous, most of them caustic; all of them seem to reflect a morbid condition of affairs. Why this increasing raillery at woman's foibles—this savage delight in holding her weaknesses up to laughter and scorn, instead of regretting their presence and making provisions for their mitigation or removal? Possibly we are in another war of the sexes growing out of changing economic conditions, such as overthrew the ancient matriarchal system and made man the dominant creature, by transferring the line of descent to his side of the family. There can be no doubt that the destruction of domestic industry and the introduction of machinery, which have taken woman out of the home and forced her into factory, office and profession in competition with man, is in part responsible for this bitterness. It has developed a sentiment which seems to say "Well, woman wants to 'play the game.' Then let her stand its knocks and prove that she knows how." So also are those pernicious results of a bad economic system, the childless family and divorce, in a measure to blame. These deprive woman of the veneration and respect due to maternity, reduce her to the level of a purely sexual creature, and, as such, make her the plaything and gibe of man. Again woman—married woman—is dependent on man. This dependence is not only galling to woman, but it often is also, by way of reflex, galling to man. Often unable to meet his economic responsibilities, the married man is prodded into an activity that too often finds expression in criticism that is neither accurate nor just, as it does not consider first causes, but is devilishly cutting and altogether deplorable. Then take the unmarried man. He meets a young woman who, thanks to woman's enlarged opportunities for self-employment and education, is independent and in no haste to wed. So he, poor

disappointed chap, caricatures the sex, while the young lady enjoys the performance in a manner that only adds to the intensity of his feelings. So it goes all down the line! The economic revolution is also revolutionizing sex sentiment. The latter can only be prevented from running its evil course through the superior economic conditions of Socialism, which, insuring the means of livelihood to both man and woman, without the subjection of one or the other, will promote equality and better feeling between them.

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