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EDITORIAL

NEW YEAR SERMON AWRY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHO wouldn't sing contentment? Evidently the Editor of *Dressmaking at Home* would, for in his New Year issue he puts up to his feminine clientele the masterful recommendation: "Resolved: I will be content—I will be satisfied with my lot in life."

Every once in a while the capitalist press appears with a flippant article scoffing at the "historical method" of argument. The scoffer knoweth not—or is it that he knows only too well?—whereat he scoffeth. He who neglects the pages of history deprives himself of many a piercing ray by which to disentangle the knotted pathways of the present. For instance, when Rome was yet a village, there was a shortage of women. The community was in danger of dying out. Did the Roman warriors rest content with their lot—compulsory celibacy, childless homes, a vanishing people? Not much! They marched upon the neighboring town of the Sabines, forcibly carried off such women as they desired, and made them their honored wives and the mothers of a race which, whatever ill it may have done, spread organization and law over the face of the then known world.

Or, again, when that same Roman race, grown arrogant, rode over the face of Europe crushing the peoples, burning, massacring, pillaging, exacting tribute, did the subjugated nations adopt an air of resignation, announce themselves "satisfied with their lot in life," and let the ravisher have his sway? Once more, not much! One by one, as fast as they could, the victim races knit their energies, raised their heads in revolt, and flung the invader out of their lands; following him even into his Imperial City to complete their victory by pulling its temples down over his head.

But why wander so far afield when so glowing an example rests right to hand? The Editor of *Dressmaking at Home* himself, to name but not to cash unknown—where would he to-day have been had he followed his own doctrine of

satisfaction and contentment? Surely not in the Editorial chair he now so ably ornaments. He was not born there. He was not taken up by the New Year's blasts and deposited there. He arrived there only after a long process of "pushfulness," "resourcefulness" and "ability." Surely he will tell us so himself some day—but all that is as opposite as the two poles to the satisfaction and content he preaches. How to square his preachment with his practice?

The two can not be squared. Satisfaction, "contentment with one's lot in life," is the deadly foe of progress. Where the posture is honestly struck, it is but the refuge of the supine and the spiritless. Where it is struck dishonestly, it is but the cover behind which the astute pillager pursues his acts of pillage.

The learned Editor's New Year sermon is all awry.

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