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EDITORIAL

## NEEDED, A GUARDIAN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**I**N the course of a severe criticism of brutal vivisection methods Mr. Sidney Trist, editor of the English *Animals' Guardian*, puts the pertinent and pointed question: "In the whole history of the world has any man or woman ever been found who was fit to be trusted with unlimited power and unrestricted opportunity?"

The abuses which called forth Mr. Trist's article are no doubt grave; but there are graver. To strap a dog's fore-leg back against his body, cement it down in a plaster-of-paris jacket, and keep him in that condition for weeks without food is no doubt unspeakably cruel; but it is not as bad as throwing a workingman out of his job because the "markets are poor," leaving him without a roof or even a plaster-of-paris jacket for shelter, and making him go foodless till he die of starvation or take the quicker route of the gas-tube. To drop a rabbit repeatedly, back down, upon an iron bar to determine the effect of mechanical shock upon the spinal cord and nervous system is the conduct of a ghoul; but it does not begin to compare for sodden brutality with compelling a crew of workingmen to operate a steel furnace known to be in bad condition, and when it is only a matter of time when it will blow out and kill or maim them all. To inject foreign substances into a guinea-pig's spleen, leave them there for a longer or shorter period, and then remove the organ to investigate the ravages of the consequent degeneration, is a piece of cold-blooded fiendishness; but it is a mere bagatelle compared with herding the working class in unsanitary workshops, at disease-breeding trades, and housing them after work in air-less, sun-less, and congested tenements. These are things "to brood on with more potency than the death-day of" animals, even un-anesthetized ones. "If THESE things," to quote again Mr. Trist's words, but with a slightly different application, "are to continue, then our civilization is mere barbarism, and our Christianity a mockery."

What else but barbarism and a mockery can a civilization and Christianity be which are based upon the exploitation of a million by one—one, moreover, who exploits by virtue of that very “unlimited power” and “unrestricted opportunity” which Mr. Trist asks whether anyone has ever been found “fit to be trusted with”? That one is the capitalist. A guardian is needed, not for the animals, but for the *Animals’ Guardian*, who would lead the indignation against present abuses off into such trivial channels.

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