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EDITORIAL

SECOND EPISTLE AT THE LAMBERTIANS.

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THE subject of this second epistle on the article against Socialism by Father L.A. Lambert in the *Freemen's Journal and Catholic Review* of last April 16, was foreshadowed in the first epistle. Father Lambert, in that article, defends himself against the charge of having set up a man of straw in a previous article in which he declared that Socialists would lodge the ownership of the instruments of production in the State. Father Lambert's defence is:

“Had we said ‘the State as now constituted’ there would have been reason for the charge of straw.”

And the Father considers this a complete justification of his use of the term State. In other words, he is of the opinion that the critic of a subject addressing an audience that is uninformed upon that subject, may with propriety use a term that his audience understands in one way—the common, every day prevalent way—while himself is understanding it in another way, a special way.

It should not need any argument to show the impropriety, moral and intellectual, of such a principle. To state it is to indict and condemn it. Nevertheless, seeing that the rest of Father Lambert's criticism, which will be exposed in subsequent epistles, is at every turn tainted with the false-reasoning of measuring the Socialist system of administration with the yardstick of the capitalist State, it will be well, before taking up that error, to demonstrate the impropriety of the reasoning given above with which Father Lambert seeks to justify his use of the word State, without warning his audience that he thereby means something different from what the word suggests to their untutored minds.

In the carpentering trade there is an instrument which is sometimes called a “horse,” and the carpenter will say about it that it need cost barely a dollar. Could

anyone, addressing an audience of non-carpenters who know nothing about the carpenter's "horse," assail the opinion that the "horse" must cost more and reason without violating moral and intellectual propriety, by using the word "horse" without warning that he does not mean the thing usually known by that name?—If he did he could be justly charged with trifling with his audience, or with not understanding his subject.

In astronomy there is a constellation known as the "Ship," and astronomers will maintain that its various angles are many thousands and thousands of miles apart from one another. What would be said of the man who, finding fault with that, were to address an audience of people who know nothing about astronomy or its nomenclature, and were in his argument to use the word "ship" and with not a shadow of a warning keep his audience's mind from thinking of the thing ordinarily called a ship? Such a person obviously knows not the subject he is discussing, or if he does seeks to mislead his hearers.

Examples could be multiplied. But there is no need. These two make sufficiently clear that, seeing Father Lambert admits he would be open to the ugly charge of raising a man of straw if he were to assail Socialist doctrine by declaring "the State as now constituted" was to be vested with the ownership of the instruments of production, some serious charge does lie against him, seeing that, addressing an audience of non-Socialists, he used, without warning, the word "State" and thereby allowed a conception to rise in their minds, that was false in the premises—the everyday conception of the word State.

What exactly the charge is that would lie in this instance we know not and care not. If Father Lambert's conduct was intentional, then it would be the ugly charge of raising a man of straw that would lie; if unintentional, then the charge would be that he understands his subject so little as to incur fatal inaccuracies of statement—In either case, and that is the point of importance, he is unfit as a teacher, except as a living illustration of where civilization would land if the Father Kresses had their way, and could so besot our people as to have "deference and submission" for the Father Lamberts in matters of science, or sociology and politics, raised to a social institution.

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