

EDITORIAL

EASY LESSONS—NO. 3.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AMONG the features of Socialism that shock the Rev. F.X. Van Nistelroy is its “injustice.”

Last week’s “Easy Lesson,” which we hope the Father will have digested by this time, will enable him to profit by the easy lesson that we propose to give him to-day.

On the fourth page of the very issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*, in which Father Van Nistelroy piously inveighs against Socialism as “unjust” appears a certain advertisement. The advertisement is headed:

“This Money Making Book is Free!”

“Tells of an Investment Safer and More Profitable Than Bank or Rail-road Stock.”

“Endorsed By Leading Bankers, Government Officials and the Catholic Hierarchy and Laity.”

The book thus advertised is said to inform its readers that any of them, with \$20 to spare, will be directed to “a line of business that has and is paying enormous dividends,” some of the “original investors receiving 100 per cent. dividends.”

Now, Father dear, what are “dividends”?

Dividends are the “profits” that are derived from capital invested in stocks. Dividends, accordingly, belong to the genus “profits.”

Now, what are profits?

Profits is wealth produced by Labor and appropriated by the owner of capital. Profits, accordingly, is the name that designates the stolen goods which under the legalized robbery of capitalism, the capitalist class appropriates to itself.

When the owner of that portion of wealth that is used to produce more wealth,

loans that wealth, capital, to another, the proceeds of the loan is called “interest.” When he buys stock, then,—if the stock is not a swindle, gotten up by some brother capitalist to defraud his brother capitalists—the proceeds of such stock are called “dividends.” These are different names for the same thing—profits; and profits, as explained to you in the last “Easy Lesson,” are the consequence of the private ownership of the necessities for labor which, thereby, enable the private owner to fleece the workingman.

Now, what is “justice”?

Justice is a thing imbedded in the maxim “Do unto others as you would wish to be done by.”

There are such things as lunatic asylums. They are buildings in which people of weak or sick minds, unable to take care of themselves, are put. Inside of such buildings it is quite possible to find folks who would like to be plucked. Outside of such buildings such folks do not bide.

Now, Father dear, unless you are a recruiting agent for some lunatic asylum, you had better quit using for your journalistic pulpit a publication that gets paid to advertise a concern in which “enormous dividends” are said to be paid. The more enormous the dividends the larger the robbery of the worker. “Tell me what company you keep and I’ll tell you who you are.” You can’t preach “justice” and associate with folks whose hands are, or try to be, deep in the pockets of others.

This lesson, Father dear, is simply a lesson on elemental logic. We shall return next week to elemental economics in the hope to straighten you up.

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