EDITORIAL

# SEVENTH EPISTLE AT THE LAMBERTIANS.

**By DANIEL DE LEON**

IN our last epistle at our beloved Lambertians we promised to demolish Father Lambert's second fortification—in his attack upon Socialism published in the April 16 issue of the *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*—upon a different plan from that pursued in the demolition of his other fortifications. The plan of attack in this instance is to pick the important bricks and knock them out brick by brick. One of these leading bricks was knocked out last week. Here goes the next:

Father Lambert is of the opinion that under the Socialist Republic the ballot will be as futile as it is now in redressing wrong. We should not deprive the Father's dialectics of their own terms and shall quote the passage literally. This is his reasoning:

> "If the use of that ballot can not protect the people from the wrongdoings of their public servants now, how can it do it then [under the Socialist regime], since the means of protection is the same in both cases?"

The story is told of an Eastern Pasha, who, learning that one of his subalterns had a sword with which, at one stroke, he could cut off a bull's head, ordered the subaltern to forthwith send him the sword. The subaltern obeyed, but the pasha, unnerved and worn out with wine and women, do what he might, could not cut off a bull's head with the sword at even a score of strokes, let alone a single one. Enraged, he ordered the subaltern to be brought before him and ordered him to strangle himself for having disobeyed orders. "I ordered you," screamed the Pasha, "to send me the sword with which you cut off a bull's head at one stroke, and you disobeyed; the sword you sent me does not cut!" "You ordered me to send you the sword," humbly expostulated the subaltern, "BUT NOT THE ARM THAT

WIELDED IT. I sent you the sword!"

The story goes no further, and need not for our purpose. It illustrates that in point of reasoning faculty, the Lambertian's is just abreast of the Pasha's in the story and not an inch higher or further. Just as the Pasha had no thought but for the sword to accomplish a result, Father Lambert has no thought but for the ballot. One can distinctly hear the Pasha in Father Lambert's reasoning and vice versa—"Since the means of protection is the ballot under Capitalism and would be the ballot under Socialism, THEREFORE the people who wield that weapon will not be better off," argues Father Lambert, and the Pasha argues: "Since the means of felling an ox is the sword, THEREFORE I can do the same thing if I but have the same weapon." As the Pasha blundered in overlooking the fact that it needed a robust arm to wield the sword effectively, and that a weak arm could not do the work, so does Father Lambert blunder in overlooking the fact that it requires a capitalist-professors-politicians-and-fakirs-besotted people to so miserably wield the weapon of the ballot as to wield it in their plunderers' behalf; and inversely, as the same sword, which in the Pasha's nerveless hand was ineffective, proved powerful in the powerful grip of the subaltern, so will the weapon of the ballot, that to-day the in ignorance artificially kept people can not use effectively, make short work of any form of oppression or chicanery so soon as it is in the hands of an economically free and therefore intelligent population.

Obviously the "sameness" of the weapon, the ballot, under Socialism and Capitalism, is the falsest of premises to conclude from. Obviously the real question is, Who is to wield the ballot? Nor can there be any question that the ballot of an economically free people would be a sword very different from that which the nerveless arm of the Pasha wielded: it is the trenchant falchion that would give but short shrift to the bull's neck of political wrong.

And therewith another brick drops on the Lambertian head. More will follow.