

**LETTERS OF "AN  
ENGLISHMAN" ON LOUIS  
NAPOLEON, THE EMPIRE,  
AND THE COUP D'ÉTAT**

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Letters Of "An Englishman" on Louis Napoleon, the Empire, and the Coup D'état by Various

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LETTERS OF "AN ENGLISHMAN"

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ON

LOUIS NAPOLEON,

THE EMPIRE, AND THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

I PUBLISH these Letters for these reasons. They are calculated, I believe,—they are meant, I know,—to elevate the tone of public life; to fortify the sense of public honour; to brand a paltry and a huckstering statecraft; to blow up political quackery and shams.

Is that a worthy aim?

To denounce tyranny; strip the tinsel from success; tear the mask from the leprous visage of hypocrisy; aroynt the juggling fiend of Jesuitism; champion the rights of intelligence and reason; and trumpet the historic and eternal truth, that Despotism is national degradation and decay—Freedom, prosperity and virtue.

Is that a noble object?

Why should I speak of myself? Like Beppo,

“I am but a nameless sort of person,”

and my individuality neither adds to the truth of what I write nor takes from it. The force of these Letters derives from the convictions—their indignation issues from the

conscience—their accuracy from acquaintance with the present—their predictions from the study of the past.

Good or bad, they are the work of one whose only interest is that of truth—whose whole ambition is to serve his country—whose faith is an undying love of liberty—whose pride is to be worthy to sustain her banner—whose boast is never to desert her ranks—whose trust is serene and unfaltering in her victory—and whose simple title is the highest he aspires to or these times can give,

AN ENGLISHMAN.

## TO MEN OF ALL OPINIONS.

IF Europe now comprehends M. Bonaparte, and the coup d'état, it did not on the 2nd of December. It dreamt that society was really in danger from millions of banded brigands; that parliamentary sedition was *en permanence*; and that Louis Napoleon solicited the revision of the Constitution, to save the world from anarchy and communism, himself from conspiracy and vengeance.

The real character of that Prætorian revolution and imperial plot was slowly seen, more slowly owned, and still more inadequately understood. It was imagined to reflect the wish of France—it represented only the audacity of its contriver; it was supposed to re-establish order and authority—it crowned treason, perjury, and anarchy; it was expected to decapitate the communistic hydra—it sowed the dragon's teeth of pillage and of murder; it was hoped to sustain the altar and the throne—it has made the Jesuit the flamen of the first, a mountebank the opprobrium of the last; it was believed to be the harbinger of peace to Europe—it inaugurates an Iliad of confusion or of war.

The world owes something to the press. It has nobly vindicated the eternal principles of Christianity, morality, and



justice—the inalienable rights of humanity itself. It has already received one instalment of its triumph. The Parliament and “statesmen” of Great Britain, forgetting what was due to their traditions and themselves, denounced journalism, flattered a criminal, and excused a crime. With Machiavellian policy and shifty craft, unsuited to the country, and unworthy of the age, they professed their confidence in the intentions of a man, against whom their conscience and their common sense have driven them to national defence. The blasés pupils of an used-up school, whose chivalry is the *St. Leger*, whose principle is the thimble and the *little pea*, had to learn, it seems, that in politics, as in geometry, the right line is the shortest, that the honest is the bold course, and the bold course is the safest.

The acts of men obey a logic, as rigorous, at the least, as the disputations of the books. A political convulsion is the natural conclusion of recognizable premises, or a link in the demonstration of a social problem. Revolutions do not shoot, like meteors, from the clouds, to bury themselves in the soil.

When Tarquin the Proud was driven from Rome, and replaced by the Consular Republic, its civic virtues, its military glories, its genius, its wealth, its corruption, and its fall, were a chain of natural sequences. The usurpation of Augustus was the symbol and effect of a profligate senate, a debauched soldiery, and a pauper plebs. The base and effeminate descendants of Camillus cared only for their suppers and their fishponds—the legions clamoured for lands in Italy, not for combats on the frontiers—and the tribes of Rome craved only idleness, largesses of corn, and the Circensian games. For such a people there *could* only be a tyrant.

The Augustan age and the imperial system were the sure precursors of the Lower Empire. Absolute despotism is murder in the palace, rebellion in the camp, demoralization and degeneracy in the nation, domestic sloth, slavery, and subjugation. It is Livia and Messalina—Tiberius and Caracalla—Augustulus and the Barbarians.

The "era of the Cæsars," which we see to-day, was hatched in conspiracy, baptized in blood, mounted by bribery, sanctified by blasphemy, and sustained by force. It sprung from perjury to march by lies. It proscribes capacity, denounces independence, damns intelligence, and strangles liberty. Its conditions of existence are the ignorance of the masses, the obedience of the sword, and the lasting domination of hypocrisy, superstition, and corruption. A military revolution, its cry must be "to arms," and its destiny is either mutiny or war.

There is a class of Politicians who ignore history, despise the past, and recognise no present, nor any future, but their own impossible Utopia. In their horoscope, the autocracy of M. Bonaparte signifies nothing but free trade and peace. From the annihilation of popular liberty, these Sidrophels predict commercial license. The hawk may hatch the dove, the tigress rear the lamb. M. Bonaparte may act the imperial suicide and slay his own power and system. Be it so. The world will be the gainer and these prophets will be right.

While this millennium of brotherhood is in the air, we encounter the fratricides of earth. They gather round us. A league is struck between the chasseur and the priest, and between tyranny and both. The foul triumvirate would divide the world. The crusade is preached, nay, it is begun, against liberty and reason—

the bayonet for the one, the Inquisition for the other. Jesuitism promises the restoration of "authority," and demands the dominion of the intellect. The watchword of each is "thorough." Sacerdotal audacity threatens to pass the whole human race beneath its Caudine Forks.

Men of all creeds and all opinions, up! for the Philistines are upon you. Tyranny musters its savage legions; Jesuitism drills its black recruits. Its hellish net is spread for two generations. It seizes the father and it claims the child. It would indoctrinate the son with hypocrisy, impiety, immorality, and lies—seduce the daughter—and debauch the wife. Conservatives and Liberals, Catholics and Protestants beware, be firm, close *your* ranks; for those of despotism, night, and obacurantism are bristling, serried, and advancing.