

A Sure Means to Pluck Joy Immediately: Destroy Passionately

Zo d'Axa

The Bourse, the Palace of Justice, and the Chamber of Deputies are buildings of which there has been much talk these past few days. These three buildings had been especially threatened by three young men who were fortunately stopped just in time.

Nothing can be hidden from *messieurs* journalists; they revealed the triple conspiracy, and their colleagues in the prefecture immediately apprehended the conspirators.

One again the men of the press and the police have earned the gratitude of that part of the population that doesn't yet appreciate the picturesque charm of palaces in ruin, and the strange beauty of collapsed buildings.

The public won't be sparing in its thanks. The services rendered will be recognized with solid cash. Civic virtues must be encouraged. Secret funds will dance, and the cotillion will be led by society's saviors.

All the better! For it is edifying to note that if there are, among our adversaries, a small number of clever exploiters, the great mass of them is made up of imbeciles who push the limits of naiveté to the horizon.

How could these uncouth ones believe that the anarchists thought to blow up parliament at this moment?

At a time when the deputies are on vacation!

You have to be lower than the low to think that revolutionaries would choose such a moment.

If only for the sake of common courtesy, we would wait for everyone's return after the vacation season.

Nevertheless, the other morning the storekeepers of Paris, while straightening up their goods, said to themselves, with their robust good sense:

“There's not the least chance of error. They want to undermine the foundation of our centuries-old monuments. We are confronted with a new plot.”

Come, come, brave storekeepers! You wander on the plains of the absurd. This conspiracy you speak of isn't new. If it's a question of tearing down the worm-eaten edifices of the society we hate, well, this has been in preparation for a long time.

This is what we have always plotted.

The temple of the Bourse — where the faithful Catholics and the fervent Jews hold their meetings for the rites and things of petty commerce — the temple of the Bourse must, in fact, disappear, and soon.

The money-handlers will in their turn be handled by the heavy caress of the crumbling stones.

Then the game of the Bourse will no longer be played; those skillful strokes that bring millions to corporations — whose reason for being is to speculate on wheat and to organize famines — will be no more.

Those who work behind the scenes: the brokers, all the bankers — gold's priests — will sleep their last sleep beneath the ruins of their temple.

In this reposeful position the financiers will be pleasing to us.

As for the magistrates, it's well known that they are never so handsome as when they march towards death.

It's a real pleasure to see them.

History is full of striking sketches in honor of prosecutors and judges who the people, from time to time, made suffer. It must be admitted these men had a decorative agony.

And what a superb spectacle it would be: a commotion at the Palace of Justice. Quesnay constrained by a column that will have broken his vertebrae, trying hard to assume the look of a Beaurepaire struck down during the Crusades; Cabot, quoting Balzac with his dying breath; and Anquetil, next to the witty Croupi, crying out:

“Nothing is lost...we lay below our positions.”

The scene would have such grandeur that the good souls that we are would sincerely feel bad for the defeated. We would no longer want to remember the ignominy of the red robes — dyed with the blood of the poor. We will forget that the judiciary was cowardly and cruel.

It will be the ineffable pardon.

And if Atthalin himself — this specialist in political trials — his head slightly cracked, were to ask to be taken to a rest home, we would gallantly accede to this sick man's wish.

In truth, it isn't indispensable to feel oneself an anarchist to be seduced by the coming demolitions.

All those who society flagellates in the very intimacy of their being instinctively want vengeance.

A thousand institutions of the old world are marked with a fatal sign.

Those affiliated with the plot have no need to hope for a distant better future; they know a sure means to pluck joy immediately:

Destroy passionately!

ATabula ARasa

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From *L'En-Dehors*, Paris, 1892

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