

# THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS



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[SIXPENCE.]

## THE BONAPARTIST REACTION IN FRANCE.

The reaction in France—the reality of which is no longer matter of doubt—has taken, if we are to believe the organs of the French Government, the very unexpected shape of Bonapartism. It does not, however, seem very clear that this is the fact. PRINCE Louis Napoleon—as he is still called in that country which professes to have abolished all titles—has undoubtedly been returned as a deputy for three several departments, as well as for Paris itself. It is equally true that the crowds at the polling-places shouted his name amid cries of “*Vive l’Empereur!*” and “*Down with the Republic!*” and in one of the rural districts the polling-papers were inscribed for “*Louis Napoleon as Emperor*”—a method of voting which would clearly invalidate his return, if his majority depended upon votes so worded. All this is disheartening enough to those who wish well to the French people, and who have sympathised with them during the antiquated tyranny of the Bourbons of the elder branch—during the shameless profligacy and unblushing corruption of the branch of Orleans—and during the difficult times that have succeeded the overthrow of Louis-Philippism. But if, in addition to these predilections for a great name—which was, after all, nothing but a curse to France and to Europe—a considerable portion of the French people should manifest that they are still so smitten with the abominable phantom of military glory, that they would try a Bonaparte as their ruler, merely because he is a Bonaparte, disheartenment would give way to a more positive feeling of shame and anger, that, with all their boast of superiority to the rest of Europe, they should show themselves so immeasurably and so mischievously behind it. To boast of being free, and yet to offer their necks to the yoke of a man merely because he is related to another man that was once a great conqueror and a scourge of France, as well as of the rest of Europe, would be a pitiable spectacle indeed for a nation to offer; and would show, at all events, that a portion of the French people might have a marvellous praise of liberty in their mouths, and yet in reality have the smallest possible conception of its meaning. Whatever the depth of the Bonapartist feeling may be, Paris was kept in a state of suspense for two days by fear of an insurrection, which had already commenced or was to commence immediately, in behalf of this merest shadow of a great man’s memory. The *rappel* was beaten in all the streets; troops were poured into the capital from the surrounding country; the Garde Nationale and the Garde Mobile were up in arms; Paris presented the aspect of a city in a state of siege, and the immense masses of its population, moving to and fro from point to point, showed themselves ready, should occasion serve, to re-enact the scene of the 15th of May, and proclaim some *thing* or some *body*, it did not seem to matter what. In the midst of the confusion something was done: the uproar was not utterly fruitless. M. de Lamartine took advantage of the panic—asserted that shots had been fired—that blood had been shed—and proposed in the Assembly that the laws of 1816 and 1832, forbidding the entry of the Bonaparte family into France, should be enforced against this particular pretender. The motion was received by the Assembly, which is believed as a body to be anything but favourable to the Revolution, amid deafening shouts of “*Vive la République!*”

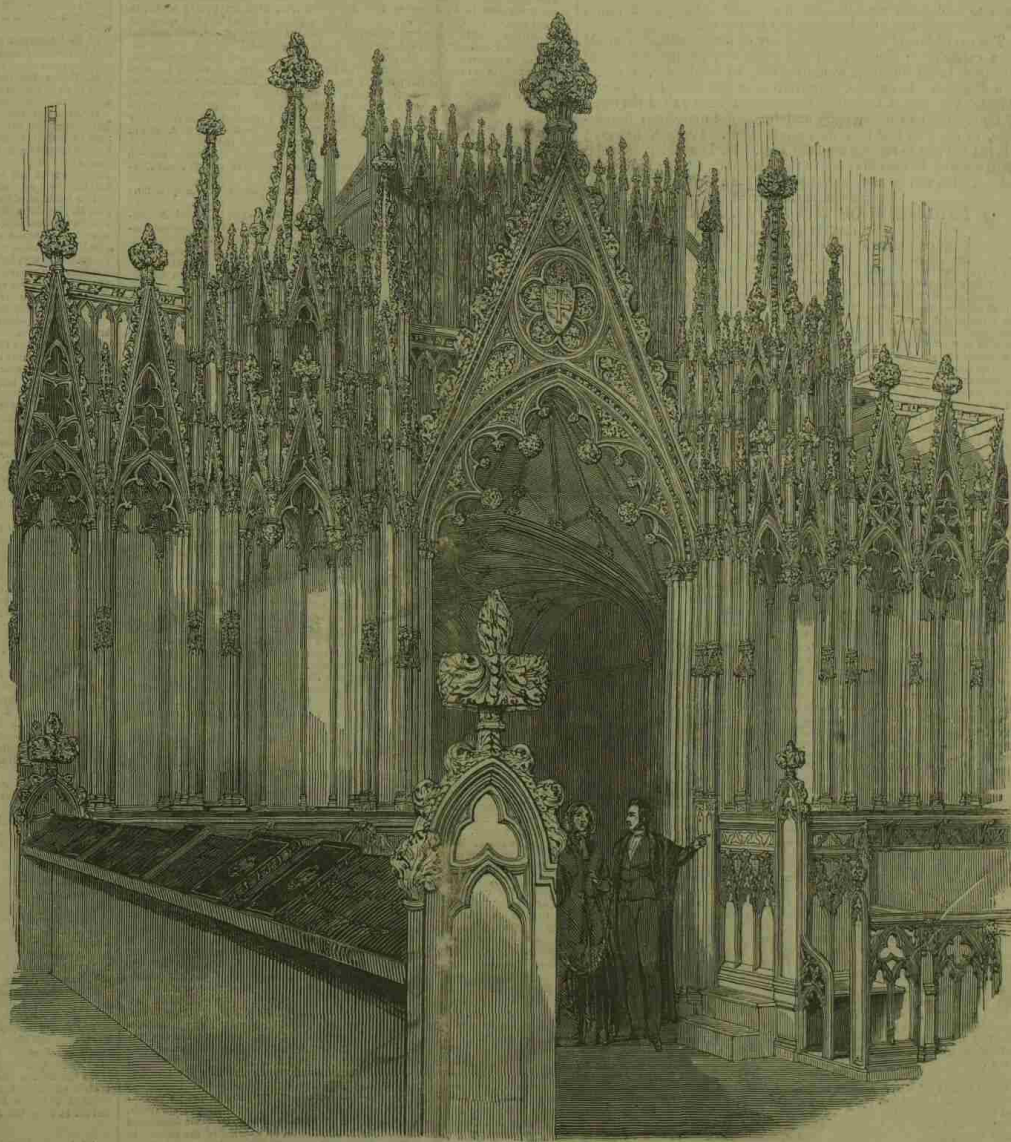
It has since been made tolerably clear that there was in reality no Bonapartist insurrection at all; that the Executive Committee, feeling its own weakness, took advantage of the election of M. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte for Paris, and of a few stray cries by a portion of the capricious and insensate mob in his favour, to make this show of strength, and thus endeavour to re-establish its position in the Assembly—a position which its own dissensions, vacillations, and incompetency had been daily impairing since its first establishment.

It has been proved that there was no occasion to beat the *rappel*; that the whole affair was a trick; and that only one shot was fired in the crowd, and that accidentally. It has also been alleged that Louis Napoleon and his best friends were utterly unconnected with and uncognizant of any such demonstration in his favour; and that it neither was nor is the wish of any member of that family to trade upon the name of their great relative, by making any attempt whatsoever, except as independent members of the Assembly, to exercise any power, influence, or control over the French people.

The Parisians themselves are not quite decided upon the latter point, as there is evidently a Bonapartist predilection among the people. But either this version of the affair is true or false. If true, it shows a deplorable state of weakness in the Government, and will prepare Europe for its speedy downfall from sheer incapacity. If it be proved that the Executive Government invented the demon-

stration, ordered the *rappel* to be beaten without cause, and thus drew the people together, and put thoughts of *émeutes*, insurrections, and revolutions into their heads, the veriest *gamin* of the streets will confess that they took a very clumsy and irrational mode of proceeding. If they were really afraid of the pretensions of Louis Napoleon, and took this means of nipping future insurrection by bringing it to a head at once, and crushing it in the bud, they defeated their own object. They have elevated Louis Napoleon into importance, and set people thinking about him who might otherwise have held him in contempt or indifference. They have, in fact, prepared the way for a real insurrection, by manoeuvring to produce a sham one.

If, on the other hand, the government did not invent the affair, but merely exaggerated it; if there was a veritable and unmistakable insurrection in favour of a Bonaparte; if the cries of



WESTMINSTER ABBEY.—THE NEW ORGAN SCREENS, WITH SEATS FOR THE DEAN AND SUB-DEAN, AND STALLS.—(SEE PAGE 389.)