

Lettre de Geol Meek à Émile Zola du 20 septembre 1899

Auteur(s) : Meek, Geol

Les folios

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Les mots clés

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Centre d'Étude sur Zola et le Naturalisme & Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes, CNRS-ENS ; projet EMAN (CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne Nouvelle)..

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Notice créée par [Jean-Sébastien Macke](#) Notice créée le 22/07/2020 Dernière modification le 21/08/2020

25 Dennis Rd.

Earthcote, England.

20th 9th 99

To M. Zola.

Dear Sir.

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The last note I sent you (for which I must apologise as also for this) was written under the influence of great distress caused me by the iniquitous verdict of the Rennes Court martial; for which reason I trust you will forgive both its form and the bitter things it expressed.

I have for many years been a careful reader of your books which I admire greatly, and I believe in common with most of my countrymen it was the brave stand made by you on behalf of the martyred Captain which led me to take so deep an interest in the case.

Although your work is in some ways unlike that of our own great novelist Charles Dickens you have one or two characteristics in common. You both put real work into your books. They are not the idle fancies of idle men but the result of laboured determination to get at and to depict the truth. While Dickens possessed a vein of broad humour well appreciated by our people, you have a remarkable facility in depicting masses of men in movement. You have both achieved immortality, for as long as the two languages are spoken on earth Zola and Dickens will be read.

By the way that curious M. Luesmy de Beaurepaire has the exact appearance of a half-killed character in one of Dickens' novels as portrayed by the illustrator. I refer to "Mr. Dick" in ~~the~~ "David Copperfield".

With regard to those Generals
public opinion has —
Put in every honest hand a
whip.
To lash the scoundrels naked
through the world."

Mr Robert Blatchford the editor
of the "Clarion" and a great
admirer of your work says that
"men who wear such trousers
(as the Generals) are capable of
anything."

I am simply a working man
but I feel justified in saying that
you have endeared yourself to
the English nation by your
nobly conduct. As a long time
admirer of yours I have been
proud of you and as a Socialist
I am more than proud of my
comrades the Socialists of France.

Some time ago an American wrote
a book depicting a Society the
members of which undertook
never to lie or to commit a

dishonourable action. Such a
Society is needed now. an Interna-
tional Freemasonry. the members of
which should undertake never
to utter a falsehood or to do an
unjust thing. The old ideals of
Christianity are dying out. a
new ideal is need to keep man-
kind from the moral rot which
alas! too prevalent. Honourable
men, it is true, will always be
honourable, but flesh is weak
and no man's rectitude is
so any the worse for some support
and stimulation. An International
League of Honour with your
self. Mr Labori and Col Piquet
as patrons would at this moment
be an unqualified success in the
English speaking world and
would do immense good.

Yrs respectfully,
Geo E Meek.

P.S. I know that in compiling your
herbs you are glad of all the
information you can obtain. At
any time I can supply you with
any I shall be most happy to
do so. A letter or post card
addressed.

L E Meek
Poste Restante.
13 Carlisle Rd.

Eastbourne Eng.

will always find me.

If people in France say the demon-
stration here against the verdict
at Rennes was owing only to news-
paper agitation you may safely
contradict them. Had it not been
or had our army or navy had suffered defeat could
there have been more widespread
sorrow and distress among all
classes. I saw strong men who
could hardly speak from emo-
tion. Men sat down and could
do no more work, some drank
glass after glass of strong spirits
in silence. others cursed the

Generals and Judges in unmeasured terms. I heard a German sobbing and another trying to comfort him. "Never mind" he said "The Truth must come." Others said "What a terrible blow for M. Zola!"

What crimes have not been committed in the name of the Papacy! I am not a Protestant. I am an Agnostic, but I was reared a Protestant and I am very glad those of that faith in France have acted so well in this matter. If there had been no St Bartholomew massacre, no revocation of the Edict of Nantes, no Dragonnades, no Siege of Rochelle how different might France have been today? But deprived of so much noble blood how impoverished she is! We sometimes cail at the Puritanism of our people, but give us that and cleanliness rather than the filthy literature of the Boulevers and the demoralization of the General Staff. JEM.