

**EMPEROR  
NORTON**

*OF*

**UNITED STATES**







EMPEROR NORTON





EMPEROR  
NORTON



Life and Experiences  
of a Notable Character  
in San Francisco  
1849-1880

ALBERT DRESSLER  
SAN FRANCISCO  
1927



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To  
JOHN J. NEWBEGIN  
My faithful friend, I dedicate this  
book in the spirit of Good-  
fellowship.  
—ALBERT DRESSLER.



### THANKS

To California State Library Staff  
for thoughtful service rendered in locating in  
its archives a large part of the material in  
this book. —THE EDITOR

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Emperor Norton

## EMPEROR NORTON

**L**MPEROR NORTON I, of the United States, whose real name was Joshua A. Norton—an individual synonymous with San Francisco's youth—was a native of England, probably of Jewish parentage, born February 4, 1819. His early life was spent on the West Coast of Africa, the details of which are rather vague. He arrived in San Francisco on the steamer Franzika,\* in December, 1849, with a capital of about \$40,000.00. Establishing an office on Montgomery Street, he engaged successfully in the Real Estate and General Brokerage business. Later he had offices on the northwest corner of Jackson and Sansome Streets, and was the owner of a frame building on the north side of Commercial Street below Montgomery, which for years bore his name.

Heir to the influence of childhood impressions, as is mankind's wont, Norton was an enthusiastic advocate of "The Divine Right of Kings," particularly in America. And, because of his convictions on the subject which he freely voiced, his friends jestingly called him "The Emperor."

His successful career in California, following the Will o'-wisp of Fate, reached its financial zenith in 1853, at a quarter of a million dollars, at which time he eagerly speculated with a view to cornering the rice market; in association with a man named Thorne and with several other firms, but failed. In the wake of litigation and indebtedness which followed, his hitherto strong mentality seemed to waver, and in this weakened state, the title formerly used in jest by his friends, and then used in a well-meaning effort to raise his spirits, gradually became to him a reality.



\*STEAMER FRANZIKA



EMPEROR NORTON  
After a water color by Virgil Williams

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

From 1853 to 1857 Norton retired into obscurity, from which he emerged and began to go about the business of enacting the various duties associated with his office as Emperor. He claimed that by an act of the Legislature in 1853 he had been made Emperor of United States, and his first proclamation was issued in September, 1859. The San Francisco Bulletin of September 17, 1859, printed the following article :

“Have We An Emperor Among Us?

“The world is full of queer people. This forenoon a well-dressed and serious-looking man entered our office, and quietly left the following document, which he respectfully requested we would examine and insert in the Bulletin. Promising him to look at it, he politely retired, without saying anything further. Here is the paper:

“At the peremptory request and desire of a large majority of the citizens of these United States, I, Joshua Norton, formerly of Algoa Bay, Cape of Good Hope, and now for the past nine years and ten months of San Francisco, California, declare and proclaim myself Emperor of these U. S., and in virtue of the authority thereby in me vested, do hereby order and direct the representatives of the different States of the Union to assemble in Musical Hall, of this city, on the 1st day of February next, then and there to make such alterations in the existing laws of the Union as may ameliorate the evils under which the country is laboring, and thereby cause confidence to exist, both at home and abroad, in our stability and integrity.

NORTON I,

“17th Sept., 1859

Emperor of the United States.”

## EMPEROR NORTON

With the advent of some Mexican trouble shortly after, he adopted the additional title "Protector of Mexico." Later he dropped this title because, as he said, "It is impossible to protect such an unsettled Nation."

Norton seldom issued proclamations of a personal nature, though in February, 1860, being desirous of visiting Sacramento where the Legislature was then in session, and being denied transportation by the Steam Navigation Company, he issued an order to the commander of the revenue cutter to blockade the Sacramento River until the offending company could be brought to terms.



He frequented the "Free Lunch Restaurants," then in their initial stage. Norton was always treated with courtesy, but generously and dismissed airily without charge, as was befitting one of his station.

He was easily identified by his appearance. His uniform was a well-worn and faded blue suit of regimentals, with gold-plated epaulettes (tarnished), flower and leaf in the coat lapel, a small blue cap which was later replaced by a brown hat thoughtfully sent to him by one of his subjects from Oregon, and decorated locally with a rosette and bright feather. In his hand he carried a carved cane fashioned to the likeness of an entwined serpent; when the weather was threatening, to the cane was added a tri-colored umbrella. Short, notorious for size and generously punctuated, he always walked in pursuance of his regal business.

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

At his heels voluntary attaches generally might be seen in the figures of Bummer and Lazarus, the two town dogs. Bummer was brought to the city by a newspaperman named Knight, but the dog soon disowned his master. Another dog, called Lazarus, appeared about the same time without sponsor. The two dogs struck up a friendship and became inseparable.

Most aggressive and uncanny dogs they were, and stories have been passed along the years which place them in a distinct canine category. Denizens of the "Free Lunch," also; usually giving preference to the places of more bountiful fare they could be seen regularly in the company of Norton at meal times.

Edward E. Jump, one of California's most noted cartoonists, who was then young, drew a caricature of the three friends, the "Emperor" at the lunch table, and "Bummer" and "Lazarus" waiting for the crumbs, which was painted. A copy was placed in a downtown window and much admired. Norton, passing, glanced into the window, paused a moment to remark, "An insult to the dignity of an Emperor," and crashed his cane through both window and picture. This is the only report of any drastic act during his reign.





THE THREE PACKS

Carrying a pack of mules and horses and pack animals leading by the pack. By Edward E. Lang.

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

Many proclamations were issued and published by other people under Norton's name, and false telegraphic news, apparently the handiwork of joking telegraph company employees, merely served as a bracing stimulant to local interest. Norton received telegrams supposed to have come from Lincoln and from Jefferson Davis—one from Lincoln saying that the President thanked the Emperor for his support, and that he had a good story to tell, but at present was too busy settling accounts with a seedy individual named Davis. Norton was instructed to proceed to Petaluma, there to remain until further official notice. He was fond of speaking of these dispatches, some received from the crowned heads and dead-heads of Europe, and was particularly delighted at the prospect of wedding Queen Victoria, and blending the two nations into one.

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[Daily Alta California, Dec. 23, 1862.]

The subjoined sarcastic proclamation of the renowned Emperor Norton was picked up on the street yesterday. The rumored disruption of the Cabinet is a matter in which the Emperor evidently takes deep interest:

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### PROCLAMATION

We, Norton I, do hereby decree that the office of President, Vice-President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States are, from and after this date, abolished.

We further decree that the Senate of the United States elect a prominent Democrat as their presiding officer, to act as President until the next election, and to reconstruct the Cabinet according to our wishes hereafter to be declared.

Done at our palace this 21st day of December, A. D., 1862.

NORTON I.

EMPEROR NORTON



Jeff Davis

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES



(Daily Alta California, March 29, 1864)

Important Telegraphic Correspondence — Considerable prominence has lately been given to the correspondence between Jeff. Davis and certain European potentates, and we presume that the following dispatches, for the genuineness of which we can vouch, will be read with equal avidity by all classes of the community:

“Richmond, Va., March 11th (2½ P. M.), 1864— To His Excellency Emperor Norton, San Francisco, Cal.: It is with pain and regret that I learn that you are holding communications with the arch-traitor, Abe Lincoln, the so-called President of the United States. Is this true? If so, I cannot longer count you among my friends. The South has long looked to you as their guiding star to finally settle the present war. Please answer at once. With high consideration, I am,

JEFFERSON DAVIS,

President C. S. A.”



To this dispatch his Majesty the Emperor returned an answer, directing both Messrs. Lincoln and Davis to come before him at once, and state their respective cases, and receive his decision, to which Mr. Lincoln replies as follows:

“Washington, March 23rd (4 P. M.), 1864— To Norton: It is the wish of the President that you visit Sonoma tomorrow, and stay at Petaluma until further advice.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President.  
By Wm. H. Seward, Sec’y. of State.”



## EMPEROR NORTON

His Majesty the Emperor, ever ready to oblige, starts at once for Petaluma and Sonoma, and on his arrival at Petaluma receives the following from Jeff:



"Richmond, Va., March 24th (12M.) 1864—To His Royal Highness Emperor Norton I, Petaluma: If you wish me to appear before you in appropriate costume, you must send me at least five hundred dollars (\$500), gold or greenbacks, as I have but one pair of breeches left, and they, I am sorry to say, are minus a seat. Yours, with great respect,

JEFFERSON DAVIS."



And the following from Mr. Lincoln:

"Washington, D. C., March 24th (12 M.) 1864—To Emperor Norton I, Petaluma: Your demand reminds me of a little story which I will relate to you next November. I have no time to spare now, being busy settling accounts with a seedy individual by the name of Jeff Davis; do you sabe? Yours every time,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN."



## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

[Daily Alta California, March 9, 1864]

Despairing of settling the affairs of the nation under the circumstances, His Majesty went to Sonoma, in accordance with the request of the citizens of that loyal city, and then received the following from the head "Manager" of the grand state ball given in his honor:

"Sonoma, March 25, 1864—Emperor Norton. Your Royal Highness is respectfully invited to attend the ball given in honor of you at the Union Hall, Sonoma, no excuse will be taken on your part.

J. C. WEBSTER, Manager."



THE GRAND STATE BALL  
IN HONOR OF EMPEROR NORTON  
SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

After the ball was over his Majesty returned to "Frisco" and now remains in his capital city, waiting to see what will turn up next.

FUNERAL OF LADY RIGGS



## DEAD DOGS

Once Bummer, the older and more venerable dog, was alone and seemed to be acting strangely. On leaving the restaurant he was followed, and was observed carrying the proceeds of his meal-time vigilance to Lazarus, who was ill and unable to take his accustomed place beside the tables with his friend. And later, this particular service of love was returned in the same manner when Bummer was suffering from some affliction.

The dogs were worthy of recognition not alone as town notables, but also for public service, as they excelled in relieving the storekeepers along the waterfront of their rats.

A new deputy of the poundmaster once arrested Lazarus, only to be mobbed by a crowd. Money was raised immediately for the dog's release, and Lazarus was never arrested again. The Board of Supervisors even issued a special ordinance that gave these two dogs the freedom of the city.

Lazarus was poisoned by some unknown chance, and Bummer was inconsolable. After that he worked the lunch counters only when hunger drove him. He met death by accident soon after the death of Lazarus, both dogs died in the year 1865. Their presence was sincerely missed by the people of San Francisco.





POOR OLD BUMMER!!

By Street G. D.

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

Through all Norton maintained his friends, and became a rather genially accepted figure in the public eye. Noticeable, though never intrusive, he attracted a response of sympathy and indulgent tolerance.

Norton was a regular attendant at church, giving no preference, in fact attending one of a different denomination each Sunday, and he appeared to enjoy a good sermon. He was a member of the Occidental Lodge, F. and A. M., which made provision for his lodging at the Eureka Lodging House (Hotel), Sacramento Street. The chief decorations of his room were the portraits of the foreign rulers and Norton's collection of hats. During the day Norton spent his time upon the streets, traveling from one part of the city to another, possibly to see that the policemen were on duty, the sidewalks unobstructed, and the various city ordinances enforced. He liked to visit markets and the docks, and to view buildings in process of construction.

He was a good conversationalist, and, having free access to the libraries and reading rooms, he kept well informed on topics of the day. He spoke readily upon almost any subject, and his opinions were usually very accurate, except when relating to himself. He gave proof of more than ordinary intelligence, was quite familiar with history, in general, and his scientific knowledge, though sometimes "shimmed" was considerably extensive.

Of evenings he could be found at the theatres or in the lecture room, a cool observer and attentive listener. His face was a free ticket for him to all places of amusement and public gatherings, and he often made extensive journeys with no expenditure. Sacramento was a favorite rendezvous, particularly during the sessions of Legislature. He was on familiar terms with all officials, high and low, and unless crossed on the one idea of his being "Emperor of the United States," he was disposed to be congenial.

## EMPEROR NORTON

Before the culmination of his business career he had always been known to combine splendid judgment with great business acumen. He was enterprising and versatile in business matters, and at one time was buying partner for three or four mercantile houses in the interior of the State, and at another time, judging from the records of city and county, he was one of the largest land speculators of the day. Details as to the disposal of his properties have always remained obscure. His former business partner disowned any knowledge of Norton's history in California, and persons to whom he transferred his interest in valuable real estate "knew nothing of his real estate transactions."

He occasionally called at the offices or places of business of acquaintances, stopping for a few minutes, talking on general subjects, giving valuable business advice on request, never calling so often as to be unwelcome, or to be considered offensive. He seemed to know the proper method and moment for approach, as well as that of a timely exit. He was fond of children and was always gentle and courteous to them. He liked the ladies, and sometimes imagined himself the beau of some popular belle of the day.



Norton was never to meet with royalty but once, and that in the person of Don Pedro, Emperor of Brazil.

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

[Daily Alta California, March 9, 1866.]

An Important Document—It has pleased his Most Gracious Majesty Norton I to issue the following

### PROCLAMATION:

“Honesty is the best Policy.”

Understanding that Mr. Perkins or his employees have had the audacity to detain important dispatches from abroad, addressed to Norton I, Emperor; and whereas, it is dangerous to the peace of the people of this continent to permit such treasonable acts with impunity; therefore, we, Norton I, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico, do hereby decree, that Mr. Perkins be dismissed from the Post Office, and Frank Pixley take the place, and that Mr. Perkins be condemned to 12 months' imprisonment in San Quentin.

NORTON I.

San Francisco, Cal., March, 1866.

A Matter for Investigation—Our beloved monarch, Max, we mean Norton I, has forwarded us the following communication, which we hasten to put in print, as it is of the utmost importance that the matter referred to should be officially investigated:

EDITORS ALTA—Unfortunately for myself, I broke through my resolution of not visiting the men-of-war without receiving a visit from the Commodore, and on visiting the Monadnock, this morning, I was very rudely and ungentlemanly ill-used by one of the officers of that vessel. Now, as I don't care a straw for unmerited ill-treatment, I should like, however, if you mention this affair, to inquire if it was intended as an official insult, as I may then act accordingly.

Your friend,

NORTON I.

## EMPEROR NORTON

Once only he was arrested. In 1867 a newly appointed young deputy apprehended Norton and had him locked up. The next day when brought before the proper authorities he was promptly discharged with an apology. The verdict was "that he had shed no blood; robbed no one; and despoiled no country; which is more than can be said of his fellows in that line." There were returned to him the key of the palace, and the imperial funds amounting to \$475 lawful money. For these the Emperor gave his royal receipt.



Daily Alta California, Dec. 19, 1868

### QUEEN ISABELLA AND THE SPANISH DIFFICULTY

Opinion of His Majesty Norton I, D. G., on the Comparative Merits of Republics and Monarchies.

His most serene majesty the Emperor Norton I, Emperor of the United States, Sovereign Lord and sole owner of Guam Islands and Protector of Mexico, being always ready to say a good word for brother or sister sovereign, has consented to give the benefit of his friendly counsel to the people of Spain and help Isabella out of her little unpleasantness, as will be seen by the following royal proclamation:



LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

AN OPINION ON SPANISH AFFAIRS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF QUEEN ISABELLA

San Francisco, Cal., December 7, 1868.

By request of some Spaniards, we write an opinion relative to the difficulties in Spain, but not having proper (official) information as to the causes of Queen Isabella's Government having been dethroned, we can say nothing on that affair; but can give some idea, from past experience, as to which we believe is the best form of government for a nation. Take the history of the United States for the last sixteen years, during our reign over the American nation, bringing in the decrees, proclamations, manifestoes, telegraphic messages and opinions of Norton I, and it will prove—

First—That an Empire is profound tranquillity and prosperity, provided the Government is impartial and pure.

Second—That a Constitutional Monarchy is the next best form of government, because the King is like a Judge or Independent Power between the two parties.

Third—That a Republic is anarchy. Prey of one party against the other causes mobs, factious parties and improper influences of those political sects on the Government, and that the citizen has not that protection for his person and property that he is entitled to by paying his pro rata of the expenses of the government, and ends, eventually, in making its citizens the Ishmaelites amongst other nations.

NORTON I.

## EMPEROR NORTON

San Francisco Bay was ordered bridged by Emperor Norton in 1869; the following Proclamation appearing in the Oakland Daily News, August 19, 1869:

probably thought a great appeal  
who suddenly decamped, climbing the fence  
and leaving all their punder except the fifty-  
cents

### PROCLAMATION FROM HIS HIGHNESS.

NORTON I.—Whereas, reliable information has reached us to the effect that our neighboring sovereign, the reigning Queen of the Friendly Islands, is desirous of annexing her dominions to the United States, and herself to our royal person, and whereas, it is our pleasure to acquiesce in all means of civilization and population, now therefore we, Norton I, *Dei Gratia*, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico do order and direct, first, that Oakland shall be the coast termination of the Central Pacific Railroad; secondly, that a suspension bridge be constructed from the improvements lately ordered by our royal decree at Oakland Point, to Yerba Buena, from thence to the mountain range of Sausalito and from thence to the Farallones, to be of sufficient strength and size for a railroad; and thirdly, the Central Pacific Railroad Company are charged with the carrying out of this work, for purposes that will hereafter appear. Whereof fail not under pain of death.

Given under our hand this 18th day of August, A. D. 4869, and in the 17th year of our reign, in our present Capitol, the City of Oakland.

NORTON I.

REMARKABLE PHENOMENON.—Last evening, from the going down of the sun until

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## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

Among the proclamations of national and international purport, distributed through the press, or in pamphlet form, we find the following:

Paris, September, 1876—Norton I: Through diplomatic circles, we understand that Queen Victoria will propose marriage to you, as a means of uniting England and the United States. Consider well, and don't accept. No good will come from it. Watch for letters. GREVY.



St. Petersburg—We are advised that Queen Victoria will join you in wedlock, to bind closer the ties of the United States and England. We approve most heartily, and congratulate you. ALEXANDER, Czar of Russia.

City of Mexico, November 12, 1879—Norton I, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico: Conference adjourned and am sustained by the people. Place bonds at earliest moment up to \$25,000,000. Your salary is fixed at \$20,000 per annum, payable quarterly in advance. DIAZ.

Mexico, December 4, 1879—You are no more authorized to act for our Government. Sam Brannan will take your place, and will negotiate for the \$20,000,000 bonds. You have deceived us, and appropriated funds belonging to the Mexican Government. If you do not return the same I shall have you arrested, and the people here will take advantage of your necessities. The Mexican Government cannot pay for all your telegraphing; you must stand half the charges. DIAZ.

## EMPEROR NORTON

### NATHAN PEISER'S STORY

A man by the name of Nathan Peiser of Vallejo once told an interesting story to a reporter for the Vallejo Chronicle, concerning the Emperor's early life. It seems that Mr. Peiser was on his way from London to Australia and was shipwrecked off the coast of Africa. He was taken to an English hospital at Cape Town, having been seriously injured. Some Jewish merchants called at the hospital, among them a Mr. Norton. Peiser was also a Jew and he became acquainted with Mr. Norton, who kept a ship-chandlery store in Cape Town. Peiser knew some of Norton's relatives and friends in London, and Norton immediately had him taken to his residence to recuperate. Mr. Norton's oldest son was named Joshua Norton, a young man between twenty-five and thirty years of age. Joshua spoke of his birthplace having been London, and he made fun of the Jewish prayers, which were frequently said, to such extent that once his father punished him for it. Peiser remained at Cape Town eleven months, and became quite friendly with Joshua who was about his own age. Joshua assisted his father in the ship-chandlery store as a clerk and had a keen, business-like air, and was much admired by the young as well as the old people in the settlement. Peiser left Cape Town on a German vessel bound for Hamburg, and after considerable travelling arrived in California in 1850, where he stayed until the Civil War. He enlisted and served during the whole conflict, returning to California in 1866.

One day soon after his arrival in San Francisco he happened to go into the Eureka Lodging House, and there he met Emperor Norton. He recognized him immediately as his old friend Joshua Norton of Cape Town, the same stout

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

figure, though now bent with age, and still the same striking countenance. The Emperor did not at first recall Peiser until he was told about the shipwreck and various other incidents of that time. Norton then said he remembered him distinctly and the correction he received for raising a disturbance at the Jewish prayer meeting. Peiser was invited to Norton's room, and they talked for some time about Norton's family. Finally Peiser asked him why they called him Emperor, upon which Norton's attitude immediately changed. He cautioned Peiser never to tell anyone about his folks at Cape Town, and when Peiser promised Norton told the following story. He said he was not the son of Mr. Norton at Cape Town, but that he was Crown Prince to the throne of France; that he had been sent to Cape Town to save himself from being assassinated; that he was adopted by Norton and he had retained Norton's name for the love he had for him, and had taken the title of Emperor, which he was rightfully entitled to bear; that the uniform was presented to him by Queen Victoria, and all the people, both in the United States and in Mexico, were his subjects.

He said shortly after Peiser left Cape Town that Mr. Norton presented him with a brig loaded with goods, which he took to Chile and Peru and disposed of, making considerable money.

He then came to California, and after some success, lost all the money he had and concluded that as he possessed such a strain of noble blood it would not do for him to work any more, and he should not until the day of his death.



## EMPEROR NORTON

(Daily Alta California Sept. 26, 1871)

It was a cruel thing to practice on the credulity of poor old Emperor Norton, as the ingenious rogue did on Saturday. He approached the Emperor and said he wished to fit out an expedition to take possession of the Sandwich Islands in the name of the Emperor of the United States and the Protector of Mexico, and had bought a first-class vessel at Mare Island. Would the Emperor kindly make him Admiral of the fleet, and honor him by sailing on the vessel with him? "Certainly." "Well, Emperor, I have brought the vessel for \$100,000, and have the sum all but a half eagle. Could you let me have that to complete the purchase?" And the unsuspecting Emperor went after his buckskin bag, brought out the amount lacking, paid it to the Admiral, and he has since learned that all the scoundrels have not gone to Congress.

Simon was always considered a man of good moral attributes, and, measured by what he tried to attain, even in his deficiency, he came as near to perfection as is commonly accorded the ordinary man. As Emperor, his subjects rendered him esteem, service and even devotion. Their loyalty was sincerely pronounced, and many times solicitous. His fancied import was sanctioned by the City, and the Board of Supervisors, amid fitting ceremony, voted him a new uniform at the expense of the City Treasurer when he began to look shabby.

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

The Emperor, with the good of the public ever at heart, was continually endeavoring to effect some monstrous loan to pursue a grand national work. He would walk into some friend's office, attempt to negotiate a loan for several hundred million dollars, and leave, evidently satisfied with a two or a four-bit piece. He was always courteously received, his attempted negotiations gravely considered, and generally given an answer that the parties had just made a large loan to the Emperor of Brazil or the Queen of Sheba, but if the funds of the Empire were low a small contribution would willingly be given. He never complained, but was grateful for the smallest donation.

With a strong desire to secure everyone who advanced him money, he gave promissory notes which he denominated "bonds of the Empire," and on payment of four-bits would sign bonds for millions of dollars. He afterwards issued printed bonds, which he signed, payable in 1880. When embarrassed by request to redeem his notes, he overcame the difficulty by issuing a new set, payable in 1890, of which the following is a copy:

Facsimile of an Emperor Norton note  
No. 3042

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### THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES—NORTON I.

Promises to pay the holder hereof, the sum of FIFTY CENTS in the year 1890, with interest at the rate of 4 per cent per annum from date, the principal and interest to be convertible, at the option of the holder, at maturity, into 20 years, 4 per cent Bonds, or payable in Gold Coin.

Given under our Royal hand and seal this 8th day of January, 1880.

NORTON I, Emperor

THE IMPERIAL GUARANTEE OF  
LONDON 1875



Provision to pay the holder hereof the sum of Fifty pounds in the year  
1880, with interest at five per cent. annum, for each, the principal and  
interest to be convertible into any form of the value of security into  
20 years 5 per cent. annuities or for other use as herein.

Given under our Royal hand and seal.

this 27th day of May 1875  
at London

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

### CURTAIN

For twenty-three years Norton was as notable a figure about San Francisco as a real Emperor in a foreign capital, until on the evening of January 8, 1880, while walking up California Street Hill, he paused a moment at the corner of Du Pont Street, staggered a few steps further and fell. Passersby came to his assistance, but the world's greatest humorist, or its most successful failure, had passed into another realm.

Among the Emperor's effects, at death, were found a \$2.50 gold piece, \$3.00 in silver, and a franc piece of 1828. There were also a number of official documents and papers of greater importance, which he always carried on his person. One of these was a queer looking telegram supposed to be an autographed communication from the Emperor of China, asking for the banishment to that country of Dennis Kearney, upon hearing of his refusal to be decapitated on Norton's order. This was especially pleasing to the old fellow, and he regretted Kearney's absence that he could not ship him. (Kearney was an offending party, known for his sand-lot statesmanship and anti-Chinese oratory.)

Just before his death Norton was nettled over the new Constitution adopted by the State of California which he denounced as high treason. He would have destroyed it but was willing to have the eminent attorney, Hall McAllister, legally annul it.



HOUSE OF CORRECTION  
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THE TABLES TURNED

YOU SAY HIM? KEARNEY MUST GO. EMPEROR FORGIVES SAYS SO.

## LIFE AND EXPERIENCES

### CURTAIN

The passing monarch left no property of value, though a certificate of 98,200 shares of a White Pine mine was among his treasures, and probably was held as a sinking fund. The City, as a corporation, owed him only a pauper's funeral; yet there were numerous men of high standing in the city who had known him as a clever business associate and a man possessing strong intellectual faculties; they felt they owed him some mark of respect as a relic of early California days—of these, Mr. J. G. Eastland, a pioneer, volunteered to raise a collection to pay the expenses of a worthy burial.

Reverend W. L. Githens, of the Church of Advent, read the Episcopal Burial Service, and interment was made in Mr. Eastland's plot in the Masonic Cemetery.

Ten thousand loyal subjects viewed the body of their dead Emperor, and, in all, thirty thousand paid tribute to his mortal remains.

A lady, well-known and of high social station, with her own fingers pinned upon the lapel of the sleeping monarch a beautiful boutonniere of hyacinth and a spray of fern, remarking quietly that Norton had been kind to her when she was a child and he was in the heyday of his success.

The Bohemians gave an evening to his memory, during which was read the tribute of Dr. George Chismore, which expresses exactly the kindly public interest in the strange personage of Norton:

EMPEROR NORTON

NORTON IMPERATOR

By DR. GEORGE CHISMORE

"No more through the crowded streets he goes  
With his shambling gait and shabby clothes,  
And his furtive glance and whiskered nose—  
Immersed in cares of state,  
The serpent twisted upon his staff  
Is not less careless of idle chaff,  
The mocking speech or the scornful laugh,  
Than he who bore it late.  
His nerveless grasp has released the helm,  
But ere the Lethean flood shall whelm  
The last faint trace of his fancied realm,  
Let us contrast his fate  
With other rulers and other reigns,  
Of royal birth or scheming brains,  
And see if his crazy life contains  
So much to deprecate.  
No traitorous friends, or vigilant foes,  
Ruffled the stream of his calm repose;  
No fear of exile before him 'rose,  
Whose empire was his pate:  
No soldiers died to uphold his fame;  
He found no pleasure in woman's shame;  
For wasted wealth no well-earned blame  
Turned subjects' love to hate.  
No long and weary struggle with pain;  
One sudden throe in his clouded brain  
Closed forever his bloodless reign,  
With every man his friend,  
For death alone did he abdicate  
What Emperor, Prince, or potentate,  
Can long avoid a similar fate,  
Or win a better end!

# AVE! Imperator Norton!

L' ALLEGRO!

*(We speak ABOUT the Emperor)*

This was, indeed, a royal fellow!  
An EmpeROAR in gilded YELLOW!  
He put the OY in royalty—  
The JEST in Majesty, you see,  
"To show by one satiric touch."

(From dear old Dean Swift  
this line we lift)

(No nation needs a king "So much")

No nation NEEDS a KING "SO much."  
He proved by his imperial pose  
That royalty is largely "close"  
(Or, after all, "just these and those").  
The starch of stiff and studded fronts  
He liquified with lurid stunts.  
The KING, as comic lead he played,  
Court Jester fearsomely arrayed,  
MaJESTic in his pompous guise,  
To "kid" the solemn and intrigue the wise

*(Endeth here, our Prologue plain  
Now for the swelling after strain)*

"AVE! Imperator Norton" was not received in time by passing a page to the printer and will  
unfollow proper. Mr. McDuff's Epilogue followed the same in an announcement of the  
book. The letter

# AVE! Emperor Norton!

## IL PENSEROSO!

*(We speak TO an Emperor)*

Ave! Emperor, morituri  
We salute thy dateless dync:  
Self appearing, self announcing,  
First and last of all thy line!

Never monarch spread more golden  
Clamour e'er a golden age  
Than thy proud imperial presence  
Poured on our unlordly stage

Other avens, brief of season,  
How their exit at death's dull  
Ere is made, that soaring above word,  
Rise and follow, rise and fall—

Thou alone, O self-creating,  
Thrusting thee in time's realm—  
Darest thou a paradoxical  
Thou nor rule nor overwhelm—

Mummers, e'en like robbers, truly  
Flot and fade, as doeth their day—  
While the deceiver, poor dreaming,  
Lives forever—lasts for aye,  
(Edgar thou—?— O'Reilly's lay)

For while Booth's magnetic blanket  
Trold Macure's magnetic bands,  
Milk, groundings marvel grow'd  
At the grandeur of milk—

The enchantment, from engendered,  
Made of life, itself, a play.  
Siamesing Art and Nature—  
In imperial purple's sway:

While thy sovrenty more potent  
Than the mortal King who quails,  
Spurned those spurious additions—  
Arms, assizes, judges, jails.

Greatening Truth thou teachest, Emperor,  
That the Real is ghost and shade;  
While the shadow, made ideal,  
Likewise is immortal made.

Long as Market Street parades  
Ply the imperial themefare,  
An imperial Impersona  
Will be reverently there.

Majesty, awaiting homage,  
As in years of Auld Lang come,  
When the Emperor dreamed in a dreamland  
An imperial dream divine!

Wm. McDevitt

*The above was submitted to Mr. Dressler by a contemporary. It is with pride, enthusiasm and good thanks, that he is permitted to pass it along—as the latest, and possibly the most appropriate, tribute of all tributes to him, whose life's sacrifice was turned into a charade of pleasures for others.*

LIVE ON! IMPERATOR! LIVE ON!

ALBERT DRESSLER, Editor





EMPEROR NORTON

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