

mous indemnity (£240,000,000) which the victorious German Empire had exacted. The army and the defences of the eastern frontier were put upon a satisfactory footing; and these were only the more striking manifestations of the new spirit of reform which was in the air. The nation, no less than the Government, set to work with amazing energy and success to build up national prosperity on new foundations. The French put away their old illusions and vaingloriousness; they cultivated the clearness of thought and thoroughness in action which had given victory to the Germans. It was for France a time of melancholy, of regrets, of stern self-examination, but any patriotic Frenchman, as he looks back upon the work of those ten years, must feel that there never was a more creditable period in the history of his people.

In foreign policy France did little during the years 1871-80. She stood in constant dread, perhaps exaggerated dread, of a new attack from Germany. The French people would never formally acknowledge the title of the German Empire to Alsace and Lorraine; it was hardly to be expected that they should, while the population of the ceded provinces remained obstinately French in sympathies—as it does to this day in Alsace at least, if not also in Lorraine. But on the whole the French people were wise enough to obey the warning of Gambetta, their most popular statesman in those days, who said: 'Think of it (*Revanche*) always and never speak of it.' A German historian complains that the German Empire, from the day of its birth, has always been 'burdened with a French mortgage', that is, with the danger implied in the latent hostility of France; and Bismarck taught his countrymen, only too well, the lesson that, for their own safety, France must be kept