

masters in several other places, had always hoped that the supreme position won in 1870 for their 'Fatherland' (which they all adore) would result in a century of peace, and in the cultivation of really friendly relations with all other European States, and especially with France and England; Russia, I am bound to admit, they always spoke of with fear—her vast size, her unlimited resources, her supposed Asiatic leanings, all combined to make her look like an ogre. But it has all gone just the other way. The magnitude, and the comparatively small cost, of the German victory of 1870 threw far too many Germans, even those outside the charmed circle of Prussian noblemen and financiers, very much off their balance. While some of them have said, 'We gained so much by the sword that we ought to have another try and gain a lot more in the same way,' others have said, 'We gained so much by the sword that it is impossible that we should keep it long, unless our sword is incessantly shaken in the faces of those whom we then robbed.' And so I am sure that the victory of 1870 has been, if we take its effects all round, a most disastrous thing for the German people. On France, on the other hand, the defeat, cruel as her suffering was at the time, has had a purifying effect, not unlike the effect that a far shorter period of suffering, in 1806–1815, had upon Prussia. The 'Second Empire' in France, namely, that of Napoleon III, was a very corrupt and a very frivolous period, and Paris was then almost as wicked a city as Berlin is now. Outwardly it has always been a frivolous-looking city, and French life has always seemed to sober English people too gay and pleasure-loving to be sound. But few English realize how deep and true, under the surface of wit and gaiety (and too often of profanity), French home-life has always been. Very few English