

PARIS AFTER TWO SIEGES

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Paris After Two Sieges by William Woodall

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WILLIAM WOODALL

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TWO SIEGES**

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NOTES OF VISITS DURING THE ARMISTICE, AND
IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SUPPRESSION
OF THE COMMUNE.

BY WILLIAM WOODALL.



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PARIS AFTER TWO SIEGES.



PART I.

AFTER THE GERMAN SIEGE.

"The Parisian is under the impression that his city is a species of sacred Ark, which it is sacrilege to touch. To bombard London, or Berlin, would be an unfortunate necessity of war, but to fire a shot into Paris is desecration. For a French army to live at the expense of Germany is in the nature of things; for a German army to live at the expense of Frenchmen is a barbarity which the civilized world ought to resent. If the result of the present campaign is to convince Frenchmen that, as a nation, they are neither better nor worse than other nations, and to convince Parisians that Paris enjoys no special immunity from the hardships of war, and that if it sustains a siege it must accept the natural consequences, it will not have been waged in vain, but will materially conduce to the future peace of the world."—*The Besieged Resident in Paris.*

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PART I.

AFTER THE GERMAN SIEGE.



It is Saturday, the 4th of March, and we catch our first glimpse of the Prussian helmets at Noyelles. Away on our right lie St. Valerie and the English Channel, and we are still 120 miles from Paris. Our train travels slowly and cautiously on over temporary bridges, and a track which has been hastily replaced. We are thus able to note the contrast between the picturesque hamlets, which look as undisturbed as if they had never heard

of Sedan, and the many silent factories which are paying its penalty. We stop at every roadside station, and the time-tables bear, ominously, the date of August, 1870. Everywhere the invader is in unequivocally absolute mastery. Surely, nothing could indicate more complete and hopeless conquest than the fact of apparently not more than a dozen Germans being left in possession of each place, and there—with the inevitable porcelain pipe, or the alternative cigar—placidly permitting or forbidding, as their pleasure may be, our passage along the chief highway to the capital.

In due course we reach Amiens, to find that familiar Rugby of the Chemin de Fer du Nord swarming with an excited throng. The aspect of the station is startling in its incongruity. Mingling with the crowd of soldiers, or side by side with them, looking on, are groups of idle workmen in blouses, while native peasant women—voluble as ever—jostle their way through the multitude. An officer of Mobiles, from the Pas du Calais, travels in the same