

**FRANCE AND THE FRENCH
IN THE SECOND HALF OF
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649587834

France and the French in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century by Karl Hillebrand

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

KARL HILLEBRAND

**FRANCE AND THE FRENCH
IN THE SECOND HALF OF
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

20127

FRANCE AND THE FRENCH

IN THE

SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY.



BY

KARL HILLEBRAND.

Translated from the Third German Edition.

LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL.
1881.

[All rights reserved.]

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
INTRODUCTION	xi

SOCIETY AND LITERATURE.

CHAP.

I. FAMILY LIFE AND MANNERS	1
II. EDUCATION	40
III. PARIS AND THE PROVINCES	72
IV. INTELLECTUAL LIFE	108

POLITICAL LIFE.

I. THE IDEAL AND ITS REALISATION	137
II. NAPOLEON III. AND THE REPUBLICANS	171
III. THE DICTATORSHIP OF THIERS AND THE SEPTENNATE	201
IV. CONCLUSION	239

APPENDIX.

THE WORKING-CLASS IN PARIS	247
--------------------------------------	-----

PREFACE.

30
THESE "impressions and experiences" of French life have been so kindly received and so considerately judged, even by those who differ from me, that it will not be out of place in a few words to express my thanks and clear up some misapprehensions.

The beginning, nay, the bulk of this little book was written in the summer of 1872, when the impressions of the great war were still fresh in men's minds, while the last chapter dates from December 1878, when the decisive victory of the French Radicals over the Conservatives had been won. The French translation of it was published in 1880, and the English makes its appearance in 1881. It is but natural that the disposition of mind in which the author wrote and the public read these pages should have undergone great alterations in this long space of time, and that, if the book were to be entirely rewritten, the tone would be different, although it would be impossible for the author to change any of the views or statements which he has put before the public. It was indeed his constant endeavour, even in the midst of all the passions roused by the war, to keep himself free from those passions, though his efforts may not have been

entirely successful. He sought to indicate the points in which the intellect, character, and manners of the French differ from those of the Germans, not to allege any superiority of the one over the other, and (in accordance with Spinoza's counsel, neither to praise nor to blame, but to understand), he has never thought of making his sympathy or antipathy for particular views on moral subjects the standard of their worth. He would, indeed, be most unwilling to be suspected of having assumed a hostile attitude towards France, when he has a lively sense of the debt he owes to that great country, and gladly acknowledges to her—

“Quod spiro et placeo (si placeo) tuum est.”

A lady once reproached him because this little book was “too French for a German, and too German for a Frenchman.” No praise ever gratified him so much as this blame. Had his friend added, that it was too liberal for an absolutist, too absolutist for a liberal, too free-thinking for a religious person, and too religious for a freethinker, his satisfaction would have been complete. For if a writer has made it the task of his life to study the history of his time, it must be his highest aim to attain and preserve a point of view which places him outside and above the prejudices of a national, religious, or political partisan.

The reader must also remember it is only of modern France—a country which has been convulsed by eighty years of revolution—that the author is speaking; for ancient France he has as sincere an admiration as any one. Every cultivated person knows what she once did

in philosophy, science, and literature; and it is only necessary to omit the names of Scaliger, Montaigne, Pascal, Descartes, Bayle, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Laplace, and Cuvier from the history of European culture, to gain some conception of the grand, and on the whole beneficent, influence which the French mind has had on Europe and mankind. And even more by the form than by the matter of her productions was France for many years the instructress of Europe, without whose aid the literature of England and Germany in the last century would have been impossible. No less admirable were the traditions of French government, as long as they were really living traditions. The history of few nations can show such statesmen and administrators as Henri IV. and Sully, Richelieu and Mazarin, Louvois and Colbert, and the whole of the Napoleonic school.

There is yet another point which the author would be glad to clear up, if it could be done in the limits of a preface, or indeed be done at all; but, as a fact, no discussion is possible between two views of life which start from entirely different principles. He has been credited with the naïve object of reconciling two hostile nations by his writings, averting future wars, and with other such estimable intentions. But no one who has understood a syllable of his book can imagine that he has, or could have, any such aim. He has no more intention of exercising a practical influence by making the Germans acquainted with France, than he had when he endeavoured to make Germany known to the French. He has known too long that good advice and moral reflections have but little weight in the scale against passions and interests, the ruling forces in

politics. Certainly, if the greatest men of a great time, the noblest and most gifted English and French writers of the eighteenth century, strove in vain to draw the two nations closer by a better understanding of each other, the author of these slight studies could not well labour under the illusion that anything he might utter would avail to bring about more peaceful sentiments between France and Germany. But it was, and still is, his belief, that notwithstanding the serious loss of higher intellectual culture, which we have witnessed in the last thirty or forty years, there still exists in every nation of Europe a number of really cultured men, who do not allow coarse national hatred to assert its influence over them, and for whom politics are neither the only nor the highest form of human activity. Such men may, however, take the same interest in them as they would in history or anthropology.

For the edification of such, not "to reform or convert mankind," have these observations and reflections been noted down by the author, who knows only too well how much men can learn and how little they can change.

KARL HILLEBRAND.

FLORENCE, 1st March 1881.

INTRODUCTION.

WITHIN the last few years French life and character have been treated by several different writers in Germany from many different points of view. The interest of the Germans had been aroused by the sudden fall and rapid recovery of France, by the deeply rooted evils which the catastrophe laid bare, and by the many noble elements which they so unexpectedly discovered in the national life during their involuntary invasion. There was a general desire to study historically and psychologically the good and bad alike in the character and the intellectual temperament of the people. Some of these writers still thought it necessary to caution us against the vices and bad habits of our neighbours, while the eloquent, liberal, and sympathetic voice of others reminded us of all that we had to learn from the conquered nation. Yet for nations, as for individuals, learning has its limits. Technical and scientific methods, a knowledge of facts and information, even individual ideas, may be gained from others; but can a philosophy of life be learnt, can a particular temperament be acquired? Yet from these flow all that is good or bad in men, whatever in them is to be followed or avoided. We need not on that account