

The career of Napoleon III., the originator of the spectacle which rendered 1867 so memorable, will doubtless hereafter be employed, after the traditional fashion, to point a moral and adorn a tale. He will be one more conspicuous instance of the instability of human greatness. He will be paralleled perhaps in sentimental strain with Cræsus. Solon had said to Cræsus, when displaying to him his magnificence as King of Ionia, "No one while he lives is happy." When in the grasp of Cyrus, Cræsus recalled with groans this saying of Solon. The oracle had said to Cræsus, "Go up against Persia, and thou shalt destroy a great empire." He went up accordingly, but with the fate that has befallen Napoleon. With reason did he, when in durance, send to ask of Apollo if he were not ashamed of having encouraged him, as the destined destroyer of the empire of Cyrus, to begin a war with Persia, of which such were the first fruits; and with equal reason did Apollo reply, "When the God told him that if he attacked the Persians, he would destroy a mighty empire, he ought, if he had been wise, to have sent again and inquired which empire was meant, that of Cyrus or his own." Again, *mutatis mutandis*, the words of Cræsus to Cyrus might be addressed by Napoleon to William of Prussia, "What I did, O King, was to thy advantage, and to my own loss. If there be blame, it rests with the God of the Greeks, who encouraged me to begin the war. No one is so foolish as to prefer to peace war, in which instead of sons burying their fathers, fathers bury their sons. But the gods willed it so." And this convenient shifting off from human shoulders of the burden of responsibility would probably be accepted with complacency by the Prussian King.

The words, however, of Napoleon III., which in connexion with the Exposition of 1867, I was purposing to quote, when this digression was induced, were these:—"The Exhibition of 1867," he said, in the really noble address which accompanied the delivery by himself of the medals to the successful exhibitors, "will, I hope, inaugurate a new era of harmony and progress. Assured that Providence blesses the efforts of all those who, like ourselves, wish to do good, I believe in the final triumph of the great principles of morale and justice, which, by satisfying all legitimate aspirations, can alone consolidate thrones, elevate the people, and ennoble humanity."

These words, heard now amid the dreadful echoes which every hour reach us from what was beautiful and comparatively prosperous France, have a strange and hollow sound. They may, in spite of appearance,