

thwarted hopes of 1848-9, that English public opinion thought that the Continent had settled down into quiet. But it is certain that the most confident language was used concerning the future reign of peace and goodwill among the nations of

Europe. The success of the first great international exhibition, held in London in 1851, was, by a rather shallow train of thought, interpreted as a sign of the advent of a new era, in which war was to be abandoned as an anachronism, and the nations were to contend against each other only in the peaceful field of industry, settling all their disputes by arbitration.

This foolish confidence was first shaken by the events of December, 1851. Louis Napoleon, showing himself in his true

**The Second
empire in
France.**

colours after three years of dissembling, suddenly suppressed the French republic. He had packed the army and the civil service with his hired partisans till all was ready for a *coup d'état*. He struck promptly and most unscrupulously; the republican leaders were thrown into prison, their partisans who attempted resistance were shot down by hundreds in the streets (December 2), and a military dictatorship was set up. Twelve months later the usurper declared himself emperor under the name of Napoleon III. (1852).

The President's stroke for power brought about, by a curious chance, the dismissal of Palmerston from office. The great

**Recognition
of Napoleon
III. by Lord
Palmerston.**

foreign minister had more than once of late years drawn down rebuke on himself, for taking important political steps without giving either the queen or his colleagues fair warning. Now he offended them more bitterly than ever, by notifying to the French ambassador his recognition of the new government, without taking the trouble to obtain the previous sanction of the sovereign and the ministry. His conduct was indeed deserving of much blame, for the recognition of the new Bonapartist *régime* was not a thing to be lightly and heedlessly granted;