

people. A whole age had to pass before a few writers of the Lanfrey and Erckmann-Chatrian stamp dared to take up the cause of the outraged nations. But at the dawn of the nineteenth century all France acted upon one impulse. The great point was how Paris could be made everything and the world nothing. The idea of sinking Rome to a mere "chef-lieu" of a French department might have shocked a very Brennus; but it had nothing to deter the "Brutus" and "Cæsars" who, as Botta writes, "profaned churches, robbed sacred treasures, pilfered oil-paintings, damaged frescoes, and destroyed the ornaments they could not remove." As Paris was the museum, so it was to become the archive of the world. After the peace of Schonbrunn, all the records and documents of the German Empire were made to travel from Vienna to Paris. They filled altogether 3,139 cases, and the transport cost 400,000*fr.* The archives of Belgium and Holland, those of St. Mark and the Vatican, had gone before. At Simancas, in Spain, the men charged with the execution of the Emperor Napoleon's decrees sent word that the papers to be "*enlevés*" would require 12,000 carts for their conveyance. The work in this quarter, however, began too late, and was interrupted by the advance of the English, Portuguese, and Spanish armies ere it had proceeded very far. The plunderers were almost caught *in flagrante*, and, in the harum-scarum of their precipitate retreat, they did almost greater mischief than, perhaps, they would have done had their work been suffered to proceed undisturbed. For "the presence during four years of a garrison in the castle," says M. Gachard in his account of the Archives of Simancas, published in 1848, "and the free access of the soldiers to all its apartments, threw the papers into the greatest confusion, and caused the most serious losses; nor was this all, for, after the flight of the French, the peasantry rushed in; they tore open the parchments, broke the strings, and made confusion worse confounded." Again, when Spain claimed her own at Paris, in 1815, she vainly applied for many of those Simancas documents, the French retaining them as their own, under pretence of their appertaining,

"more or less," to the affairs of Burgundy and Lorraine: though many of the deeds thus wrongfully withheld consisted of treaties concluded by Spain with France, or of the correspondence of the Court of Madrid with its ambassadors in the same country. They did not say on what grounds they retained the correspondence of Charles V. and Philip II. with the Viceroy of Aragon, and the despatches addressed to this last Sovereign and his successor by their ambassadors at Venice.

As there was to be in Europe only French art, so there was only to be a French version of history. Men as unbiased as Count Daru, as unprejudiced as M. Thiers, were to have the monopoly of all the memorials of the past. Of such events as the Battle of Waterloo or the negotiation of the Spanish marriages there should be only one official account, and that should come from a people whose streets go by ten different names within a quarter of a century; a people who flatter themselves that they can blot out memories when they pull down monuments. There is every reason to believe that the papers taken from all Italy, Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands were of as little profit to France as those for which Simancas was ransacked. French Commissions charged with examining and arranging that vast farrago of heterogeneous documents were appointed at various times; but their work, both at home and abroad, stopped short with the great crash of 1814, and the melancholy result was the hopeless misplacement and dispersion of precious memorials and the fraudulent or forcible retention of ill-gotten goods on the part of the nation which had been bound to restitution. The incomparable collection of diplomatic reports or "*relations*" which Venice had treasured up with the greatest care from the earliest dates of its Republic, and which has caused the revision of almost every page of European history, went asunder from the very moment the French laid their hands upon it in 1797, and its fragments had to be picked up here and there with a toil and diligence only rewarded with partial success. As with papers, so with pictures and statues. They were handled as stolen goods, and valued for what they cost. France was never fully aware of the impor-