

THE ARTS IN CAPTIVITY.

M. JULES SIMON lately reminded us that there is a chapter of history yet to be written. In his Address to the French Institute in October last, he lamented the vandalism of the Allies of 1814, and "especially of the English," who, as he informed his countrymen, "robbed the Galleries, Museums, and Archives of Paris of invaluable treasures, monuments of French Artistic and literary genius." Few things would, perhaps, be more instructive than a correct and minute statement of what there was at that time to be taken away from Paris, and of what was actually taken. Men own and claim property by a variety of titles, and especially by "the old and simple plan, that those should take who have the power, and those should keep who can," a principle which, in Yankee slang, makes everybody's luggage his "plunder." It is desirable, therefore, to know by what chance the French of 1814 had come by what they called their own; for there may be genius in "appropriating" as well as in creating art, and it took all the wisdom of Solomon himself to distinguish real from assumed maternity.

If it is true that all men are liars, it may also be asserted that all nations are, or have been, robber bands. The life of the conquered is, according to the laws of war, forfeited to the victor. How much more his property? Ancient monarchs carried whole nations away into captivity. Red Indians hang the scalps of slain warriors to their saddle-bows. Mere tourists have been known, when they had a chance, to chip off a nose from a bas-relief, or strip the bark from a sacred tree. International robbery, however, on a large or small scale, should have an object. You take booty from your neighbor, or a trophy; a keepsake, or a curiosity. The Romans of old plundered Egypt or

Greece to enhance the splendor of a triumphal entry. Columbus brought gold from Hispaniola as evidence of a new world. The Crusaders shipped cargoes of earth and water, that their children might be christened in Jordan, and themselves buried in the dust of Jehoshaphat. But no one ever burdened himself with other people's property without considering what he was to do with it. The same may be said of destructive instincts. Omar *may* have burnt a library to give glory to the Koran; the Iconoclasts waged war to Art out of hatred to idolatry; Savonarola made bonfires of the classics by way of a protest against Pagan licentiousness; and Knox fired the nests that the crows might "flee awa."

But there is something in French nature altogether out of the laws of human gravitation. The fires of the late Commune revealed a new bump in man's skull. One wonders what men like Ferré would have done had time and courage been given to them; if the Louvre had gone with the Tuileries, and Notre Dame with the Theatre of the Porte St. Martin. What if all Paris had really been "in ashes," and what if it had been the Paris of 1814, instead of that of 1871? There have been at all times revolutions in the world, mad passions let loose; the dregs of society wrought up to the surface; Jack Cade in London; Masaniello in Naples; but there is no instance of a population cutting off its nose to spite its own face. It must, at all events, be somebody else's nose, an obnoxious nose. The Parisians alone wreaked a mad spite upon what did them no harm, upon what gave them no offence.

It is necessary to bear in mind all these peculiar features in the French character to understand the causes of all the mis-