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Fight, draw the sword, O city of the light,  
Which fosters art, defends the cotter's right.  
Let, O proud home of man's equality,  
Howl round thee the foul hordes of bigotry--  
Black props of throne and altar--hypocrites!  
Who, in all ages, have proscribed the lights;  
Who guard all gods against th' inquiring mind;  
Whose screech in every history we find--  
At Thebes, Mycenae, Delphi, Memphis, Rome--  
Like bark of unclean dogs from distance come.

-Victor Hugo

Excerpt from Paris Slandered
OUR fair readers must forgive us if we halt a moment here and endeavor to unearth the idea hidden under the Archdeacon’s enigmatical words:

_This will kill That. The Book will kill the Edifice._

To our mind, this thought has two aspects. In the first place it was a view pertaining to the priest—it was the terror of the ecclesiastic before a new force—printing. It was the servant of the dim sanctuary scared and dazzled by the light that streamed from Gutenberg’s press. It was the pulpit and the manuscript, the spoken and the written word quailing before the printed word—something of the stupefaction of the sparrow at beholding the Heavenly Host spread their six million wings. It was the cry of the prophet who already hears the far-off roar and tumult of emancipated humanity; who, gazing into the future, sees intelligence sapping the foundations of faith, opinion dethroning belief, the world shaking off the yoke of Rome; the prognostication of the philosopher who sees human thought volatilized by the press, evaporating out to the theocratic receiver; the terror of the besieged soldier gazing at the steel battering-ram and saying to himself, “The citadel must fall.” It signified that one great power was to supplant another great power. It meant, The Printing-Press will destroy the Church.

But underlying this thought—the first and no doubt the less complex of the two—there was, in our opinion, a second, a more modern—a corollary to the former idea, less on the surface and more likely to be contested; a view fully as philosophic,
but pertaining no longer exclusively to the priest, but to the scholar and the artist likewise. It was a premonition that human thought, in changing its outward form, was also about to change its outward mode of expression; that the dominant idea of each generation would, in future, be embodied in a new material, a new fashion; that the book of stone, so solid and so enduring, was to give way to the book of paper, more solid and more enduring still. In this respect the vague formula of the Archdeacon had a second meaning—that one Art would dethrone another Art: Printing will destroy Architecture.

In effect, from the very beginning of things down to the fifteenth century of the Christian era inclusive, architecture is the great book of the human race, man’s chief means of expressing the various stages of his development, whether physical or mental.

When the memory of the primitive races began to be surcharged, when the load of tradition carried about by the human family grew so heavy and disordered that the word, naked and fleeting, ran danger of being lost by the way, they transcribed it on the ground by the most visible, the most lasting, and at the same time most natural means. They enclosed each tradition in a monument.

The first monuments were simply squares of rock “which had not been touched by iron,” as says Moses. Architecture began like all writing. It was first an alphabet. A stone was planted upright and it was a letter, and each letter was a hieroglyph, and on every hieroglyph rested a group of ideas, like the capital on the column. Thus did the primitive races act at the same moment over the entire face of the globe. One finds the “upright stone” of the Celts in Asiatic Siberia and on the pampas of America.

Presently they constructed words. Stone was laid upon stone, these granite syllables were coupled together, the word essayed some combinations. The Celtic dolmen and cromlech, the Etruscan tumulus, the Hebrew galgal, are words—some of them, the tumulus in particular, are proper names. Occasionally, when there were many stones and a vast expanse of ground, they wrote a sentence. The immense mass of stones at Karnac is already a complete formula.

Last of all they made books. Traditions had ended by bringing forth symbols, under which they disappeared like the trunk of a tree under its foliage. These symbols, in which all humanity believed, continued to grow and multiply, becoming more and more complex; the primitive monuments—themselves scarcely expressing the original
traditions, and, like them, simple, rough-hewn, and planted in the soil—no longer sufficed to contain them; they overflowed at every point. Of necessity the symbol must expand into the edifice. Architecture followed the development of human thought; it became a giant with a thousand heads, a thousand arms, and caught and concentrated in one eternal, visible, tangible form all this floating symbolism. While Dædalus, who is strength, was measuring; while Orpheus, who is intelligence, was singing—the pillar, which is a letter; the arch, which is a syllable; the pyramid, which is a word, set in motion at once by a law of geometry and a law of poetry, began to group themselves together, to combine, to blend, to sink, to rise, stood side by side on the ground, piled themselves up into the sky, till, to the dictation of the prevailing idea of the epoch, they had written these marvelous books which are equally marvelous edifices: the Pagoda of Eklinga, the Pyramids of Egypt, and the Temple of Solomon.

The parent idea, the Word, was not only contained in the foundation of these edifices, but in their structure. Solomon’s Temple, for example, was not simply the cover of the sacred book, it was the sacred book itself. On each of its concentric enclosures the priest might read the Word translated and made manifest to the eye, might follow its transformations from sanctuary to sanctuary, till at last he could lay hold upon it in its final tabernacle, under its most concrete form, which yet was architecture—the Ark. Thus the Word was enclosed in the edifice, but its image was visible on its outer covering, like the human figure depicted on the coffin of a mummy.

Again, not only the structure of the edifice but its situation revealed the idea it embodied. According as the thought to be expressed was gracious or somber, Greece crowned her mountains with temples harmonious to the eye; India disemboweled herself to hew out those massive subterranean pagodas which are supported by rows of gigantic granite elephants.

Thus, during the first six thousand years of the world—from the most immemorial temple of Hindustan to the Cathedral at Cologne—architecture has been the great manuscript of the human race. And this is true to such a degree, that not only every religious symbol, but every human thought, has its page and its memorial in that vast book.

Every civilization begins with theocracy and ends with democracy.

The reign of many masters succeeding the reign of one is written in architecture. For—and this point we must emphasize—it must not be supposed that it
is only capable of building temples, of expressing only the sacerdotal myth and symbolism, of transcribing in hieroglyphics on its stone pages the mysterious Tables of the Law. Were this the case, then—seeing that in every human society there comes a moment when the sacred symbol is worn out, and is obliterated by the free thought, when the man breaks away from the priest, when the growth of philosophies and systems eats away the face of religion—architecture would be unable to reproduce this new phase of the human mind: its leaves, written upon the right side, would be blank on the reverse; its work would be cut short; its book incomplete. But that is not the case.

Take, for example, the epoch of the Middle Ages, which is clearer to us because it is nearer. During its first period, while theocracy is organizing Europe, while the Vatican is collecting and gathering round it the elements of a new Rome, constructed out of the Rome which lay in fragments round the Capitol, while Christianity goes forth to search among the ruins of a former civilization, and out of its remains to build up a new hierarchic world of which sacerdotalism is the keystone, we hear it stirring faintly through the chaos; then gradually, from under the breath of Christianity, from under the hands of the barbarians, out of the rubble of dead architectures, Greek and Roman—there emerges that mysterious Romanesque architecture, sister of the theocratic buildings of Egypt and India, inalterable emblem of pure Catholicism, immutable hieroglyph of papal unity. The whole tendency of the time is written in this somber Romanesque style. Everywhere it represents authority, unity, the imperturbable, the absolute, Gregory VII; always the priest, never the man: everywhere the caste, never the people.

Then come the Crusades, a great popular movement, and every popular movement, whatever its cause or its aim, has as its final precipitation the spirit of liberty. Innovations struggled forth to the light. At this point begins the stormy period of the Peasant wars, the revolts of the Burghers, the Leagues of the Princes. Authority totters, unity is split and branches off into two directions. Feudalism demands to divide the power with theocracy before the inevitable advent of the people, who, as ever, will take the lion’s share—Quia nominor leo*. Hence we see feudalism thrusting up

*Because I am called the lion.
through theocracy, and the people’s power again through feudalism. The whole face of Europe is altered. Very good; the face of architecture alters with it. Like civilization, she has turned a page, and the new spirit of the times finds her prepared to write to his dictation. She has brought home with her from the crusades the pointed arch, as the nations have brought free thought. Henceforward, as Rome is gradually dismembered, so the Romanesque architecture dies out. The hieroglyphic deserts the Cathedral, and goes to assist heraldry in heightening the prestige of feudalism. The Cathedral itself, once so imbued with dogma, invaded now by the commonalty, by the spirit of freedom, escapes from the priest, and falls under the dominion of the artist. The artist fashions it after his own good pleasure. Farewell to mystery, to myth, to rule. Here fantasy and caprice are a law unto themselves. Provided the priest has his basilica and his altar, he has nothing further to say in the matter. The four walls belong to the artist. The stone book belongs no more to the priest, to religion, to Rome, but to imagination, to poetry, to the people. From thenceforward occur these rapid and innumerable transformations of an architecture only lasting three centuries, so striking after the six or seven centuries of stagnant immobility of the Romanesque style. Meanwhile, Art marches on with giant strides, and popular originality plays what was formerly the Bishop’s part. Each generation in passing inscribes its line in the book; it rubs out the ancient Roman hieroglyphics from the frontispiece—hardly that one sees here and there some dogma glimmering faintly through the new symbol overlying it. The framework of religion is scarcely perceptible through this new drapery. One can scarcely grasp the extent of the license practiced at that time by the architects, even on the churches. Such are the shamelessly intertwined groups of monks and nuns on the capitals of the Gallery of Chimney-Pieces in the Palais de Justice; the episode out of the history of Noah sculptured “to the letter” over the Cathedral door at Bourges; the bacchic monk, with ass’s ears and glass in hand, grinning in the face of a whole congregation, carved on a stone basin of the Abbey of Bocherville. For the thought written in stone there existed at that period a privilege perfectly comparable to the present liberty of the press. It was the liberty of architecture.

And the liberty went far. At times a door, a façade, nay, even an entire church, presents a symbolical meaning wholly unconnected with worship, even inimical to the Church itself. In the thirteenth century, Guillaume de Paris, and in the fifteenth, Nicolas
Flamel wrote such seditious pages. Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie was a complete volume of opposition.

This was the only form, however, in which free thought was possible, and therefore found full expression only in those books called edifices. Under that form it might have looked on at its own burning at the hands of the common hangman had it been so imprudent as to venture into manuscript: the thought embodied in the church door would have assisted at the death agony of the thought expressed in the book. Therefore, having but this one outlet, it rushed towards it from all parts; and hence the countless mass of Cathedrals spread over all Europe, a number so prodigious that it seems incredible, even after verifying it with one’s own eyes. All the material, all the intellectual forces of society, converged to that one point—architecture. In this way, under the pretext of building churches to the glory of God, the art developed to magnificent proportions.

In those days, he who was born a poet became an architect. All the genius scattered among the masses and crushed down on every side under feudalism, as under a testudo of brazen bucklers, finding no outlet but in architecture, escaped by way of that art, and its epics found voice in cathedrals. All other arts obeyed and put themselves at the service of the one. They were the artisans of the great work; the architect summed up in his own person, sculpture, which carved his façade; painting, which dyed his windows in glowing colors; music, which set his bells in motion and breathed in his organ pipes. Even poor Poetry—properly so called, who still persisted in eking out a meager existence in manuscript—was obliged, if she was to be recognized at all, to enroll herself in the service of the edifice, either as hymn or prosody; the small part played, after all, by the tragedies of Aeschylus in the sacerdotal festivals of Greece, and the Book of Genesis in the Temple of Solomon.

Thus, till Gutenberg’s time, architecture is the chief, the universal form of writing; in this stone book, begun by the East, continued by Ancient Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages have written the last page. For the rest, this phenomenon of an architecture belonging to the people succeeding an architecture belonging to a caste, which we have observed in the Middle Ages, occurs in precisely analogous stages in human intelligence at other great epochs of history. Thus—to sum up here in a few lines a law which would call for volumes to do it justice—in the Far East, the cradle of
primitive history, after Hindu architecture comes the Phoenician, that fruitful mother of Arabian architecture; in antiquity, Egyptian architecture—of which the Etruscan style and the Cyclopean monuments are but a variety—is succeeded by the Greek, of which the Roman is merely a prolongation burdened with the Carthaginian dome; in modern times, after Romanesque architecture comes the Gothic. And if we separate each of these three divisions, we shall find that the three elder sisters—Hindu, Egyptian, and Roman architecture—stand for the same idea: namely, theocracy, caste, unity, dogma, God; and that the three younger sisters—Phœnician, Greek, Gothic—whatever the diversity of expression inherent to their nature, have also the same significance: liberty, the people, humanity.

Call him Brahmin, Magi, or Pope, according as you speak of Hindu, Egyptian, or Roman buildings, it is always the priest, and nothing but the priest. Very different are the architectures of the people; they are more opulent and less saintly. In the Phoenician you see the merchant, in the Greek the republican, in the Gothic the bourgeois.

The general characteristics of all theocratic architectures are immutability, horror of progress, strict adherence to traditional lines, the consecration of primitive types, the adaptation of every aspect of man and nature to the incomprehensible whims of symbolism. Dark and mysterious book, which only the initiated can decipher! Furthermore, every form, every deformity even, in them has a meaning which renders it inviolable. Never ask of Hindu, Egyptian, or Roman architecture to change its designs or perfect its sculpture. To it, improvement in any shape or form is an impiety. Here the rigidity of dogma seems spread over the stone like a second coating of petrifaction.

On the other hand, the main characteristics of the popular architectures are diversity, progress, originality, richness of design, perpetual change. They are already sufficiently detached from religion to take thought for their beauty, to tend it, to alter and improve without ceasing their garniture of statues and arabesques. They go with their times. They have something human in them which they constantly infuse into the divine symbols in which they continue to express themselves. Here you get edifices accessible to every spirit, every intelligence, every imagination; symbolic still, but as easily understood as the signs of Nature. Between this style of architecture and the theocratic there is the same difference as between the sacred and the vulgar tongue,
between hieroglyphics and art, between Solomon and Phidias.

In fact, if we sum up what we have just roughly pointed out—disregarding a thousand details of proof and also exceptions to the rule—it comes briefly to this: that down to the fifteenth century, architecture was the chief recorder of the human race; that during that space no single thought that went beyond the absolutely fundamental, but was embodied in some edifice; that every popular idea, like every religious law, has had its monuments; finally, that the human race has never conceived an important thought that it has not written down in stone. And why? Because every thought, whether religious or philosophic, is anxious to be perpetuated; because the idea which has stirred one generation longs to stir others, and to leave some lasting trace. But how precarious is the immortality of the manuscript! How far more solid, enduring, and resisting a book is the edifice! To destroy the written word there is need only of a torch and a Turk. To destroy the constructed word there is need of a social revolution, a terrestrial upheaval. The barbarians swept over the Coliseum; the deluge, perhaps, over the Pyramids.

In the fifteenth century all is changed.

Human thought discovers a means of perpetuating itself, not only more durable and more resisting than architecture, but also simpler and more easy of achievement. Architecture is dethroned, the stone letters of Orpheus must give way to Gutenberg’s letters of lead.

The Book will kill the Edifice.

The invention of printing is the greatest event of history. It is the parent revolution; it is a fundamental change in mankind’s mode of expression; it is human thought putting off one shape to don another; it is the complete and definite sloughing of the skin of that serpent who, since the days of Adam, has symbolized intelligence.

Under the form of printing, thought is more imperishable than ever; it is volatile, intangible, indestructible; it mingles with the very air. In the reign of architecture it became a mountain, and took forceful possession of an era, of a country. Now it is transformed into a flock of birds, scattering to the four winds and filling the whole air and space.

We repeat: who does not admit that in this form thought is infinitely more indelible? The stone has become inspired with life. Durability has been exchanged for immortality. One can demolish substance, but how extirpate ubiquity? Let a deluge
come—the birds will still be flying above the waters long after the mountain has sunk from view; and let but a single ark float upon the face of the cataclysm, and they will seek safety upon it and there await the subsiding of the waters; and the new world rising out of this chaos will behold when it wakes, hovering over it, winged and unharmed, the thought of the world that has gone down.

And when one notes that this mode of expression is not only the most preservative, but also the simplest, the most convenient, the most practicable for all; when one considers that it is not hampered by a great weight of tools and clumsy appurtenances; when one compares the thought, forced, in order to translate itself into an edifice, to call to its assistance four or five other arts and tons of gold, to collect a mountain of stones, a forest of wood, a nation of workmen—when one compares this with the thought that only asks for a little paper, a little ink, and a pen in order to become a book, is it any wonder that human intelligence deserted architecture for printing?

Then observe too, how, after the discovery of printing, architecture gradually becomes dry, withered, naked; how the water visibly sinks, the sap ceases to rise, the thought of the times and of the peoples deserts it. This creeping paralysis is hardly perceptible in the fifteenth century, the press is too feeble as yet, and what it does abstract from all-powerful architecture is but the superfluity of its strength. But by the sixteenth century the malady is pronounced. Already architecture is no longer the essential expression of social life; it assumes miserable classic airs; from Gallican, European, indigenous, it becomes bastard Greek and Roman, from the genius and the modern it becomes pseudo-antique. This decadence we call the Renaissance—a magnificent decadence nevertheless, for the ancient Gothic genius, that sun now sinking behind the gigantic printing-press of Mayence, sheds for a little while its last rays over this hybrid mass of Romanesque arches and Corinthian colonnades.

And it is this sunset that we take for the dawn of a new day.

However, from the moment that architecture is nothing more than an art like any other—is no longer the sum total of art, the sovereign, the tyrant—it is powerless to monopolize the services of the others, who accordingly emancipate themselves, throw off the yoke of the architect and go their separate ways. Each art gains by this divorce. Thus isolated, each waxes great. Stone-masonry becomes sculpture; pious
illumination, painting; the restricted chant blooms out into concerted music. It is like an empire falling asunder on the death of its Alexander, and each province becoming an independent kingdom.

For here begins the period of Raphael, Michael Angelo, Jean Goujon, Palestrina—those luminaries of the dazzling firmament of the sixteenth century. And with the arts, thought, too, breaks its bonds on all sides. The free-thinkers of the Middle Ages had already inflicted deep wounds on Catholicism. The sixteenth century rends religious unity in pieces. Before printing, the Reformation would merely have been a schism: printing made it a revolution. Take away the press, and heresy is paralyzed. Look on it as fatal or providential, Gutenberg is the forerunner of Luther.

But when the sun of the Middle Ages has wholly set, when the radiance of Gothic genius has faded forever from the horizon of art, architecture, too, grows slowly pale, wan and lifeless. The printed book, that gnawing worm, sucks the life-blood from her and devours her. She droops, she withers, she wastes away before the eye. She becomes mean and poor, of no account, conveying nothing to the mind—not even the memory of the art of other days. Reduced to her own exertions, deserted by the other arts because human thought has left her in the lurch, she has to employ the artisan in default of the artist. Plain glass replaces the glowing church window, the stone-mason the sculptor; farewell to vital force, to originality, life or intelligence; as a lamentable beggar of the studios she drags herself from copy to copy. Michael Angelo, doubtless sensible of her approaching end, made one last despairing effort in her aid. That Titan of the world of art piled the Pantheon on the Parthenon and so made Saint-Peter’s of Rome—a gigantic work that deserved to remain unique, the last originality of architecture, the signature of a mighty artist at the bottom of the colossal register of stone thus closed. But Michael Angelo once dead, what does this wretched architecture do, which only survives as a specter, as a shade? She takes Saint-Peter’s and copies, parodies it. It becomes a mania with her, a thing to weep at: in the seventeenth century the Val-de-Grâce, in the eighteenth, Sainte-Geneviève. Every country has its Saint-Peter’s. London has hers, St. Petersburg hers, Paris even two or three—a legacy of triviality, the last drivelings of a grand but decrepit art, fallen into second childhood before its final dissolution.

If, instead of the characteristic monuments like those of which we have spoken,
we examine the general aspect of the art from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, we shall find everywhere the same evidences of decrepitude and decay. From the time of Francis II the form of the edifice lets the geometrical outline show through more and more, like the bony framework through the skin of an emaciated body. The generous curves of art give place to the cold and inexorable lines of geometry. An edifice is no longer an edifice, it is a polyhedron. Architecture, however, is at infinite pains to cover her nakedness, and hence the Greek pediment set in the Roman pediment and vice versa. It is always the Pantheon on the Parthenon, Saint-Peter’s at Rome. Such are the brick houses with stone corners of the time of Henri IV, the Place Royale, the Place Dauphine. Such are the churches of Louis XIII, heavy, squat, compressed, with a dome like a hump. Thus, too, is the Mazarin architecture, the poor Italian pasticcio of the Quatre-Nations, the palaces of Louis XIV, mere court barracks, endless, frigid, wearisome; and finally, the style of Louis XV with its chicory-leaf and vermicelli ornaments, and all the warts and growths disfiguring that aged, toothless, demoralized coquette. From Francis II to Louis XV the malady progressed in geometrical ratio. The art is reduced to skin and bone, her life ebbs miserably away.

Meanwhile, what of the art of printing? All the vital force taken from architecture streams to her. As architecture sinks, so printing rises and expands. The store of strength spent hitherto by human thought on edifices is now bestowed on books; till, by the sixteenth century, the press, grown now to the level of her shrunken rival, wrestles with her and prevails. In the seventeenth century she is already so absolute, so victorious, so firmly established on her throne, that she can afford to offer to the world the spectacle of a great literary era. In the eighteenth century, after long idleness at the Court of Louis XIV, she takes up again the ancient sword of Luther, thrusts it into Voltaire’s hand, and runs full tilt at that antiquated Europe whom she has already robbed of all architectural expression. Thus, as the eighteenth century ends she has accomplished her work of destruction; with the nineteenth century she begins to construct.

Now which of these two arts, we ask, represents in truth the course of human thought during three centuries; which of the two transmits, expresses, not only its fleeting literary and scholastic fashions, but its vast, profound, all-embracing tendencies? Which of the two has fitted itself like a skin, without a crease or gap, over
that thousand-footed, never-resting monster, the human race? Architecture or Printing?

Printing. Let no one mistake: architecture is dead—dead beyond recall, killed by the printed book, killed because it is less durable, killed because it is more costly. Every Cathedral represents a million. Imagine now the sums necessary for the rewriting of that architectural tome; for those countless edifices to spread once more over the land; to return to the days when their abundance was such that from the testimony of an eye-witness “you would have thought that the world had cast off its old raiment and clad itself anew in a white raiment of churches.” Erat enim ut si mundus, ipse excutiendo semet, rejecta vetustate, candidam ecclesiarum vestem indueret.* (Glaber Rudolphus.)

A book takes so little time in the making, costs so little, and can reach so far. What wonder that human thought should choose that path? Though this is not to say that architecture will not, from time to time, put forth some splendid monument, some isolated master-piece. There is no reason why, under the reign of printing, we should not, some time or other, have an obelisk constructed, say, by an entire army out of melted cannon, as, under the reign of architecture, we had the Iliads, the Romants, the Mahabharatas, and the Nibelungen, built by whole nations with the welded fragments of a thousand epics. The great good fortune of possessing an architect of genius may befall the twentieth century, as Dante came to the thirteenth. But architecture will never again be the social, the collective, the dominant art. The great epic, the great monument, the great master-piece of mankind will never again be built; it will be printed.

And even if, by some fortuitous accident, architecture should revive, she will never again be mistress. She will have to submit to those laws which she once imposed upon literature. The respective positions of the two arts will be reversed. Certainly, under the reign of architecture, the poems—rare, it is true—resemble the monuments of the time. The Indian Vyasa is strange, variegated, unfathomable, like the native pagoda. In Egypt the poetry shares the grand and tranquil lines of the edifices; in ancient Greece it has their beauty, serenity, and calm; in Christian Europe, the majesty of the Church, the simplicity of the people, the rich and luxuriant vegetation of a period of rebirth. The Bible corresponds to the Pyramids, the Iliad to the Parthenon, Homer to

Notre-Dame de Paris: This Will Kill That • Victor Hugo (Translated By William Neilson)
Phidias. Dante in the thirteenth century is the last Romanesque church; Shakespeare in the sixteenth, the last Gothic minster.

Thus, to put it shortly, mankind has two books, two registers, two testaments: Architecture and Printing; the Bible of stone and the Bible of paper. Doubtless, in contemplating these two Bibles, spread open wide through the centuries, one is fain to regret the visible majesty of the granite writing, those gigantic alphabets in the shape of colonnades, porches, and obelisks; these mountains, as it were, the work of man’s hand spread over the whole world and filling the past, from the pyramid to the steeple, from Cheops to Strassburg. The past should be read in these marble pages; the books written by architecture can be read and reread, with never-diminishing interest; but one cannot deny the grandeur of the edifice which printing has raised in its turn. 44

That edifice is colossal. I do not know what statistician it was who calculated that by piling one upon another all the volumes issued from the press since Gutenberg, you would bridge the space between the earth and the moon—but it is not to that kind of greatness we allude. Nevertheless, if we try to form a collective picture of the combined results of printing down to our own times, does it not appear as a huge structure, having the whole world for foundation, and the whole human race for its ceaselessly active workmen, and whose pinnacles tower up into the impenetrable mist of the future? It is the swarming ant-hill of intellectual forces; the hive to which all the golden-winged messengers of the imagination return, laden with honey. This prodigious edifice has a thousand storeys, and remains forever incomplete. The press, that giant engine, incessantly absorbing all the intellectual forces of society, disgorges, as incessantly, new materials for its work. The entire human race is on the scaffolding; every mind is a mason. Even the humblest can fill up a gap, or lay another brick. Each day another layer is put on. Independently of the individual contribution, there are certain collective donations. The eighteenth century presents the Encyclopedia, the Revolution the Moniteur. Undoubtedly this, too, is a structure, growing and piling itself up in endless spiral lines; here, too, there is confusion of tongues, incessant activity, indefatigable labor, a furious contest between the whole of mankind, an ark of refuge for the intelligence against another deluge, against another influx of barbarism.

It is the second Tower of Babel.