

Compère Tourangeau really was, for he recalled this passage from the Charter of Saint-Martin of Tours.: *Abbas beati Martini, SCILICET REX FRANCIAE, est canonicus de consuetudine et habet parvam praebendam quam habet sanctus Venantius et debet sedere in sede thesaurarii.*⁴

It has been said that dating from that visit the archdeacon had frequent conferences with Louis XI, whenever His Majesty came to Paris, and that the king's regard for Dom Claude quite overshadowed the renown of Olivier le Daim and Jacques Coictier; the latter, consequently, as was his custom, berated the king for it.

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This Will Kill That

Our readers must excuse us if we stop a moment to investigate the enigmatic words of the archdeacon: "This will kill that. The book will kill the edifice."

In our opinion, the thought had two meanings. First of all, it was the view of a priest. It was the fear of an ecclesiastic before a new force, the printing press. It was the frightened yet dazzled man of the sanctuary confronting the illuminating Gutenberg press. It was the pulpit and the manuscript, the spoken word and the written word, alarmed because of the printed word; something like a sparrow frozen at the sight of a legion of angels spreading their six million wings. It was the cry of the prophet who already hears the rumbling of emancipated humanity; who sees in the distant future intelligence sapping faith, opinion dethroning belief, the world shaking the foundations of Rome. It was the prognostication of a philosopher who sees human thought, volatized by the press, evaporating from the theocratic vessel. It was the terror of a soldier who examines the steel battering-ram and says, "The tower will crumble." It signified that one great power

⁴ "The Abbot of Saint-Martin, that is to say the King of France, is canon according to custom, and has the small benefice which Saint-Venantius had, and must sit in the seat of the treasurer."

was following upon the heels of another great power. It meant: The printing press will destroy the Church.

But besides this first thought, there was, in our opinion, a second, the more obvious of the two, a more modern corollary to the former idea, less easily understood and more likely to be contested. This view is quite as philosophical, but it no longer belongs to the priest alone but to the scholar and to the artist as well. Here was a premonition that human thought had advanced, and, in changing, was about to change its mode of expression, that the important ideas of each new generation would be recorded in a new way, that the book of stone, so solid and so enduring, was about to be supplanted by the paper book, which would become more enduring still. In this respect, the vague formula of the archdeacon had a second meaning: That one art would dethrone another art. It meant: Printing will destroy architecture.

In fact, from the beginning of things to the fifteenth century of the Christian era inclusive, architecture was the great book of the human race, man's principal means of expressing the various stages of his development, physical and mental.

When the legends of primitive races became so numerous, and their reciting was so confused that the stories were about to be lost, people began to transcribe these memories in the most visible, the most lasting, and at the same time the most natural medium. Every tradition was sealed under a monument.

The first records were simply squares of rock "which had not been touched by iron," says Moses. Architecture began like writing. It was first an alphabet. A stone was planted upright to be a letter and each letter became a hieroglyph. And on every hieroglyph there rested a group of ideas, like the capital of a column. Thus primitive races of the same period "wrote" all over the world. One finds the "upright stone" of the Celts in Siberia and on the pampas of America.

Later they made words by superimposing stone upon stone. They coupled those syllables of granite. The verb tried various combinations. The Celtic dolmen and comlech, the Etruscan tumulus, the Hebrew galgal are words. Some, especially the tumulus, are proper nouns. Sometimes, on a vast beach they joined these stone words and wrote a sen-

tence. The immense pile of Karnak is by itself a complete formula.

Lastly, they made books. The traditions had given birth to symbols, under which they disappeared like the trunk of a tree under its foliage. All these symbols, in which humanity believed, grew, multiplied, and became more and more complicated. The first simple stones no longer sufficed to contain them; they overflowed on all sides; scarcely could one decipher the original traditions, which, like the stones, simple and naked, had been planted in the soil. The rock symbols had a need to expand into a structure.

Architecture, therefore, developed concomitantly with human thought; it became a giant with a thousand heads and arms, capable of holding in one visible, tangible, eternal form all this floating symbolism. While Daedalus, 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 geometric law and by the law of poetry, began to group themselves together, to combine, to amalgamate, to sink, to rise, to stand side by side on the ground, and to pile themselves up to the sky, until, at the dictation of the prevailing ideas of the era, they had written those marvelous books, which were also marvelous structures; to wit, the Pagoda of Eklinga, the pyramids of Egypt, and the Temple of Solomon.

The germinal idea, the verb, was not only the basis of these edifices, but dictated their form. The Temple of Solomon, for example, was not simply the cover of a sacred book, it was the sacred book itself. On every one of these concentric enclosures, the priests could read the Word translated and manifested visibly; they could thus follow its transformations from sanctuary to sanctuary, until at last they could seize upon it in its final tabernacle, under its most concrete form, which was yet architecture: the Ark. Thus the Word was enclosed in the edifice, but its image was on its outer covering, as the human figure is carved on the coffin of a mummy.

Not only the edifices, but also the location of them revealed the ideas they were to impart. If the thoughts to be expressed were gracious, Greece crowned her mountains with temples harmonious to the eye; if somber, India dis-

emboweled her hills to chisel out those unharmonious, half-subterranean pagodas, which are supported by rows of gigantic granite elephants.

So, during the first six thousand years of the world's history, from the time of the pagoda of Hindustan to that of the cathedral of Cologne, architecture has recorded the great ideas of the human race. Not only every religious symbol, but every human thought has its page in that vast book.

Every civilization begins as a theocracy and ends as a democracy. This law of liberty succeeding unity is recorded in architecture. For, and let us emphasize this point, we must not suppose that architecture is capable only of erecting the temple, only of expressing the sacerdotal myth and symbolism, only of transcribing in hieroglyphics on its stone pages the mysterious tables of the law. If this were so, since there arrives in every human society a moment when the sacred symbol is worn out and is obliterated by free thought, when man divests himself of the priest, when the excrescences of the philosophies and systems eat away the face of religion, architecture would be powerless to reproduce this new phase of the human mind: its pages, written on one side, would be blank on the other side; its work would be cut off; the book would be incomplete. But no, such is not the case.

Let us take, for example, the Middle Ages, which we can understand because this time is nearer to us. During its first period, while theocracy was organizing Europe, while the Vatican was rallying and grouping around itself the elements of a Rome constructed of the Rome which lay in ruin about the capitol, while Christianity was setting out to seek among the ruins of an anterior civilization all the stages of society, and out of its remains rebuilt a new hierarchy of which the priesthood was the keystone, we heard a new architecture stirring faintly in the chaos. Then, gradually, using the breath of Christianity, emerging from the grip of the barbarians, rising out of the rubble of dead architecture, Greek and Roman, there arose that mysterious Romanesque architecture, sister of the theocratic masonry of Egypt and India, that unalterable emblem of pure Catholicism, the immutable hieroglyph of papal unity. All the thought of that time is written in this somber Romanesque style. Every-

where we can sense its authority, its unity, the imperturbable, the absolute, Gregory VII; everywhere the priest, never the man, everywhere the caste, never the people.

Then came the Crusades, a great popular movement, and every great popular movement, whatever its cause and purposes, has as its final precipitate the spirit of liberty. Innovations tried to be born. Here began the stormy period of the Peasant Wars, the Revolt of the Burghers. Authority was toppled; unity was split and the divisions went in two directions. Feudalism demanded a share with theocracy. But when "the people" arrived on the scene, they as always took the lion's share. *Quia nominor leo.*¹ Hence we see how feudalism pierced through theocracy, and the people through feudalism. The face of Europe was changed. Well! The face of architecture changed too. Like civilization, it turned a page, and the new spirit of the times found her ready to write its new dictates. She returned from the Crusades bearing the pointed arch, as the nations came home with liberty. Henceforth, as Rome was gradually dismembered, Romanesque architecture began its death throes. The hieroglyph deserted the cathedral and went to assist heraldry in order to heighten the prestige of feudalism. The cathedral itself, that structure once so dogmatic, now invaded by the people, by the spirit of liberty, escaped from the priest and fell into the hands of the artist. The artist designed it as he saw fit. Farewell to mystery, to myth, to law. Now fantasy and caprice became the rule. Provided the priest be left his basilica and his altar, he had nothing to say. The artist now took over the four walls. The architectural book no longer belonged to the priest, to religion, to Rome; it belonged to imagination, to poetry, to the people. Henceforth came the rapid and innumerable transformations of an architecture that would last only three centuries, but which was striking after the six or seven centuries of the stagnant immobility of the Romanesque style.

Meanwhile art marches on with giant strides. Popular genius and originality do what formerly the bishops did. Each passing generation writes its line in the book; it erases the ancient Romanesque hieroglyphics from the frontispiece

¹ "Because I am called lion."

of the cathedral—so thoroughly that one can barely see here and there some old dogma glimmering faintly through the new symbol covering it. The religious bone structure is scarcely visible through this new drapery. One can hardly grasp the extent of the license taken at that time by the architects, even on the churches. Such are the shamelessly intertwined groups of monks and nuns on the capitals, as in the Salle des Cheminées of the Palace of Justice in Paris. Such is the episode from the Book of Noah, sculptured "to the letter" under the great portal of the Cathedral of Bourges. Such is the bacchic monk, with ears as large as an ass's, with a glass in his hand, smiling in the face of the whole community, on the lavabo of the Abbey of Bocheville. At that time, for the thought written in stone, there existed a privilege perfectly comparable to our present liberty of the press. It was the liberty of architecture.

This liberty went very far. Sometimes a door, a facade, an entire church presents a symbolical meaning, absolutely unconnected with the worship, even hostile to the teaching of the Church. In the thirteenth century Guillaume de Paris, and Nicolas Flamel in the fifteenth, wrote seditious pages. Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie was a church full of oppositions.

Because architecture was the only free medium, it therefore found full expression in those books called edifices. Without them, new ideas would have been burned in the public square. But a thought written in stone on the door of a church would have assisted at the torture of a thought written in a book. Thus, having only this one outlet, architecture, thought rushed toward it at every opportunity. Hence the countless number of cathedrals spread all over Europe, a number so prodigious that it is unbelievable, even after you have counted them. All the material and intellectual forces of society converged on the same point—architecture. In this manner, under the pretext of erecting churches to God, art developed to a high degree.

In those days, he who was born a poet became an architect. Genius spread among the masses, and, crushed down on all sides under feudalism, as under a *testudo* of brass bucklers, and finding no outlet but architecture, escaped by way of that art, and its epics took the form of cathedrals.

All the other arts obeyed, and put themselves under the tutelage of architecture. They were the artisans for great work. The architect, the poet, the master, summed up in his own person sculpture, which carved his facade; painting, which colored his stained-glass windows; music, which set his bells in motion and pumped air into his organs. Even poor poetry—properly so called, which still persisted in eking out a scanty existence in manuscripts—was obliged, if she was to be recognized at all, to enroll herself in the service of the edifice, either as a hymn or prosody; it was the same role, after all, played by the tragedies of Aeschylus in the priestly rites of Greece, and by the Book of Genesis in the Temple of Solomon.

Thus, till Gutenberg's time, architecture was the principal, universal form of writing. This gigantic book in stone, begun by the East, continued by ancient Greece and Rome, in the Middle Ages wrote its last page. Moreover, this phenomenon of a people's architecture succeeding an architecture belonging to a caste, which we have just observed in the Middle Ages, occurs in precisely analogous stages in human intelligence during other great epochs of history. Thus, to sum up here a law which would really require volumes: in the Far East, the cradle of primitive history, after Hindu architecture came 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, was succeeded by the Greek, of which the Roman is merely a prolongation burdened with the Carthaginian dome; then, in modern times, after Romanesque architecture, came the Gothic. If we separate each of these three divisions, we shall find that the three elder sisters—Hindu, Egyptian, and Romanesque architecture—have the same symbol; namely, theocracy, the caste system, unity, dogma, myth, God; and that the three younger sisters—Phoenician, Greek, Gothic architecture—whatever diversity of form is inherent in their nature—have the same significance also: liberty, the people, man.

Let him be called Brahmin, magus, or pope, in Hindu, Egyptian, or Romanesque architecture, we always feel the presence of the priest, and nothing but the priest. It is not the same with an architecture of the people. Their architec-

ture is richer and less saintly. In Phoenician architecture, we feel the impact of the merchant; in the Greek, of the republican; in the Gothic, of the bourgeoisie.

The general characteristics of every theocratic architecture are immutability, horror of progress, preservation of traditional lines, consecration of primitive types, the constant adaptation of every aspect of man and nature to the incomprehensible caprices of the symbol. These are dark, foreboding books which only the initiated can decipher. Furthermore, every form, even every deformity in them has a meaning which renders it inviolable. Don't ask Hindu, Egyptian, or Romanesque architects to reform their designs or to perfect their statuary. Every improvement, to them, is an impiety. Here, it seems that the rigidity of dogma is spread over the stone like a second layer of petrification.

On the other hand, the general characteristics of popular architectures are variety, progress, originality, opulence, perpetual movement. They are already sufficiently detached from religion to dream of beauty, to nurture it, to alter without ceasing their ornament of statues and arabesques. They suit the times. They have something human about them which they constantly mix with a divine symbolism, under which they still occur. Hence, structures are accessible to every soul, to every intelligence, to every imagination; though symbolic, they are easily comprehensible, like nature herself. Between theocratic architecture and this style, there is the same difference as between the sacred and vulgar language, as between hieroglyphics and art, as between Solomon and Phidias.

If we summarize what we have here very sketchily pointed out, disregarding a thousand detailed proofs and objections, we are led to conclude: that up to the fifteenth century, architecture was the chief recorder for the human race. During this interval of time every thought, no matter how complicated, was embodied in some structure; every idea that rose from the people, every religious law, had its counterpart in monuments; finally, every important thought of the human race was recorded in stone. And why? Because every thought, be it religious or philosophic, wants to be perpetuated; because an idea which has motivated one generation wants to motivate another, and to leave its trace. But

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how precarious is the immortality of the manuscript! How far more solid, lasting, and resistant is the edifice, the book in stone! To destroy the written word, you need only a torch and a Turk. To demolish the constructed word, you need a social revolution or an earthquake. Barbarism swept over the Colosseum; a deluge, perhaps, over the pyramids.

In the fifteenth century everything changed.

Human intelligence discovered a way of perpetuating itself, one not only more durable and more resistant than architecture, but also simpler and easier. Architecture was dethroned. The stone letters of Orpheus gave way to the lead letters of Gutenberg.

The book will kill the edifice.

The invention of printing was the greatest event in history. It was the parent revolution; it was the fundamental change in mankind's mode of expression, it was human thought doffing one garment to clothe itself in another; it was the complete and definitive sloughing off of the skin of a serpent, which, since the time of Adam, has symbolized intelligence.

When put into print, thought is more imperishable than ever; it is volatile, intangible, indestructible; it mingles with the air. In the time of architecture, it became a mountain, and made itself master of a century and a region. Now it has been transformed into a flock of birds, scattering to the four winds and filling all air and space.

We repeat: who does not see that in this form thought is more indelible? Instead of being solid it has become long-lived. It has exchanged durability for immortality. We can demolish a substance, but who can extirpate ubiquity? Let a deluge come, birds will still be flying over the mountain long after that mountain has disappeared; and let but a single ark float upon the surface of the cataclysm, and they will seek safety upon it and there await the subsiding of the waters. The new world arising out of this chaos will see, when it awakens, hovering over it, winged and alive, the thought of the world that has been swallowed up.

And when one observes that this mode of expression is not only the most enduring, but also the simplest, the most convenient, the most practicable, when one considers that it

is not encumbered and does not need an excess of tools; when one thinks how thought, in order to translate itself into an edifice, is forced 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 needs a little bit of paper, a little ink, a pen, and a press, in order to become a book, is it any wonder that human intelligence quitted architecture for printing? If you abruptly cut off the pristine bed of a river by means of a canal dug upstream from it, the river will abandon its bed.

Then observe too, how, after the discovery of printing, architecture gradually became dry, withered, naked; how the spring visibly sank, sap ceased to rise, the thought of the times and of the people deserted it. This cooling off is hardly perceptible in the fifteenth century; the press is still too feeble, and what little it does abstract from all-powerful architecture is but the superabundance of its strength. But in the sixteenth century the sickness is quite patent. Already architecture is no longer the essential expression of society; it miserably degenerates into classic art. From being Gallic, European, indigénous, it becomes Greek and Roman; from the genuine and modern, it becomes pseudo-antique. It is this decadence that we call the Renaissance. A magnificent decadence, we might add, for the old Gothic genius, that sun which is now setting behind the gigantic printing press of Mayence, for a little while still sends its last rays over this hybrid mass of Latin arches and Corinthian colonnades.

It is to this setting sun that we look for a new dawn.

However, from the moment that architecture is only an art like any other, it is no longer the master, the sovereign, the tyrant; it becomes incapable of retaining the services of the other arts. They emancipate themselves, cast off the yoke of the architect, and go their separate ways. Each of these other arts gains by this divorce. Isolation magnifies everything. Sculpture becomes statuary, imagery becomes painting, chanting becomes music. One would say that a whole empire crumbles on the death of its Alexander, and that each of its provinces becomes a kingdom.

Now we are in the time of Raphael, Michelangelo, Jean

Goujon, Palestrina—those splendors of the dazzling sixteenth century.

With the emancipation of the arts, thought, too, is everywhere set free. The freethinkers of the Middle Ages had already made gaping wounds in the side of Catholicism. The sixteenth century ripped asunder religious unity. Before the printing press, the Reformation would have been but a schism; printing made it a revolution. Take away the press and heresy is paralyzed. Be it fatal or providential, Gutenberg is the precursor of Luther.

However, when the sun of the Middle Ages has completely set, when the light of the Gothic genius has gone out forever over the horizon of art, architecture, too, becomes more and more pale, colorless, and lifeless. The printed book, that gnawing worm in the structure, sucks its blood and eventually devours it. It droops, withers, wastes away before your very eye. It becomes shabby, poor, of no account. It no longer expresses anything, not even the art of another time. Architecture left to itself, abandoned by the other arts, because human thought has deserted it, must employ the artisan in default of the artist. Plain glass replaces stained glass; the stone mason, the sculptor. Farewell to the vital juices, to originality, to life, and to intelligence. Like a lamentable beggar of the studios, it drags itself from copy to copy. Michelangelo, doubtless aware of its demise in the sixteenth century, made one last despairing attempt to save it. 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 expression of architectural originality, the signature of a great artist at the bottom of a colossal register in stone thus closed. But when Michelangelo was dead, what then did this wretched architecture do, this architecture which only survived as a specter, as a shadow? It copied Saint Peter's in Rome; it parodied it. This impulse to imitate became a mania—something to weep over.

Henceforth each century has its Roman Saint Peter's. In the seventeenth century, it was the Val-de-Grâce; in the eighteenth, Sainte-Geneviève. Every country has its Saint Peter's. London has hers; St. Petersburg, hers; Paris has two or three. A paltry legacy, the last drivels of a great but

decrepit art, was falling into second childhood before dying.

If, instead of characteristic monuments, such as we have just mentioned, we examine art in general from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, we would at once observe the same phenomenon of decrepitude and decay. From Francis II the dressing of the edifice is effaced more and more and so lets the geometric design show through, like the bony framework of an emaciated invalid. The graceful lines of art give way to the cold, inexorable lines of geometry. A structure is no longer a structure; it is a polyhedron. Architecture, however, painfully tries to hide this nudity. Hence the Greek pediment set over the Roman pediment, and vice versa. It is forever the Pantheon on the Parthenon, Saint Peter's at Rome. Such are the brick houses with stone corners during the time of Henry IV; to wit, the Place Royale and the Place Dauphine. Such are the churches during the reign of Louis XIII, heavy, squat, top-heavy, laden down with a dome like a hump. Thus, too, the Mazarin architecture, the bad Italian *pasticcio* of the Quatre-Nations, the palaces of Louis XIV, long court barracks, stiff, cold, boring. Such are, lastly, the buildings of Louis XV, with chicory leaves and vermicelli ornaments, and all the warts and fungi which disfigure that aged, toothless, and debased coquette. From Francis II to Louis XV the disease progressed in geometric ratio. Art becomes nothing but skin clothing bones. It dies miserably.

Meanwhile, what of printing? All the life ebbing away from architecture, was being absorbed by printing. As architecture waned, printing waxed.

The store of strength spent hitherto by the human mind on buildings is now spent upon books. By the sixteenth century, the press, grown now to the stature of its fallen rival, wrestles with it and wins. In the seventeenth century, printing is already so dominant, so triumphant, so well-ensconced in the house of victory that it can give to the world the feast of a great literary era. In the eighteenth century, after a long sleep at the court of Louis XIV; it takes up again the old sword of Luther, arms Voltaire with it, and runs headlong to attack that ancient Europe whose architectural expression it has already destroyed. By the end of the eigh-

teenth century, it has completely destroyed the remains. In the nineteenth century it begins to reconstruct.

Now, which of these two arts, we ask, better represents human thought during three centuries? Which of the two expresses, not only its literary and scholastic fancies, but its vast, profound, universal movement as well? Which of the two has superimposed itself, without break or gap, upon the human race, that thousand-footed, lumbering monster? Architecture or printing?

Printing! And make no mistake about it! Architecture is dead, irrevocably dead, killed by the printed book, killed because it is less durable, killed because it is more costly. Every cathedral costs millions. Imagine now the cost necessary to rewrite an architectural book; the cost of rebuilding those countless edifices and spreading them once more over the land; the cost of returning to those eras when their number was such that from the testimony of an eye witness, "You would have thought that the world was casting off its old dress to clothe itself in a white robe of churches." *Erat enim ut si mundus, ipse excutiendo semet, rejecta vetustate, candidam ecclesiarum vestem indueret* (Glaber Rodulphus).

A book is so quickly made, costs so little, and can go so far! Is it any wonder that all human thought should use this conveyance? This is not to say that some architect will not make again, here or there, a beautiful monument, some isolated masterpiece. We shall have again, from time to time, during the reign of printing, an obelisk constructed, say, by an entire army out of melted cannons, as, during the reign of architecture, we had the Iliads, the Romancers, the Mahabharatas, and the Nibelungen, built by whole nations with the welded fragments of a thousand rhapsodies. The great good fortune of having an architect of genius may befall the twentieth century, like a Dante in the thirteenth. But architecture will never be the social, collective, dominant art it was. The great poem, the great structure, the great masterwork of humanity will never again be built; it will be printed.

And, besides, if, by chance, architecture should be revived, it will never again be mistress. It will submit to the laws of literature which once received its laws from architecture.

The respective position of the two arts will be reversed. It is certain that during the architectural epoch, the poems, rare, it is true, resemble monuments. The Indian Vyasa is leafy, strange, impenetrable like the pagoda. Egyptian poetry, like its edifices, has great, tranquil lines; in ancient Greece poetry had the beauty, serenity, and calm of its temples; in Christian Europe, writings show the majesty of Catholicism, the popular naïveté, the rich and luxuriant vegetation of an era of rebirth. The Bible resembles the pyramids; the Iliad, the Parthenon; Homer, Phidias. Dante in the thirteenth century is the last Romanesque church; Shakespeare, in the sixteenth, the last Gothic cathedral.

Thus, to recapitulate briefly, the human race has two books, two registers, two testaments: architecture and printing; the stone Bible and the paper Bible. Unquestionably, when one examines these two books, so widely read through the centuries, it is permissible to regret the visible majesty of the granite writing, those gigantic alphabets in colonnades, porches, and obelisks, those kinds of human mountains which cover the world and the past, from the pyramids to the church steeple, from Cheops to Strasbourg. One must read the past in these marble pages. One must admire and leaf through over and over again the book written by architecture; but one must not deny the grandeur of the edifice which printing has raised in its turn.

The edifice is colossal. I cannot name the statistician who calculated that, by piling one upon the other all the volumes issuing from the press since Gutenberg, one would fill the space between the earth and the moon; but it is not that kind of greatness of which we wish to speak. Nevertheless, if we try to form a collective picture of the combined results of printing down to modern times, does not this total picture seem to us like an immense structure, having the whole world for its foundation, a building upon which humanity has worked without cease and whose monstrous head is lost in the impenetrable mist of the future? This printed tower is the swarming ant-hill of intelligences. It is the beehive where all the imaginations, those golden bees, arrive with their honey. The building has a thousand stories. Here and there, opening up on its ramps, can be seen the mysterious caverns of science which intersect in its

bowels. Everywhere on its surface art luxuriously exhibits its arabesques, its rose-windows, and its lacework. There every individual work, however capricious or isolated it may seem, has its place and its projection. The result of the ensemble is harmony. From Shakespeare's cathedral to Byron's mosque, a thousand bell-towers throng together pell-mell in this metropolis of universal thought. At its base, there have been recast several ancient titles of humanity which architecture had not registered. To the left of the entrance, there has been attached the old white-marble bas-relief of Homer, to the right the polyglot Bible raises its seven heads. The hydra of the Romancero stands forth further on, as well as several other hybrid forms, the Vedas and the Nibelungen. However, the prodigious building remains forever incomplete. The press, that giant engine, incessantly gorging all the intellectual sap of society, incessantly vomits new material for its work. The entire human race is its scaffolding. Every mind is its mason. Even the humblest may block a hole or lay a stone. Rétif de la Bretonne brings his hod of plaster. Every day a new tier is raised. Besides the original and individual contributions of separate writers, there were collective donations. The eighteenth century contributed the *Encyclopedia*; the Revolution the *Monitor*. Certainly, these too are structures, growing and piling themselves up in endless spirals; here, too, there is a confusion of languages, untiring labor, incessant activity, a furious competition of all humanity, a promised refuge for the intelligence against another deluge, against another submersion by the barbarians.

It is the second Tower of Babel of the human race.