

certain height the rising up of the material became very difficult; cranes were fastened to the structure, which like huge crabs grasped with their pincers the needed articles, and, unmindful of their enormous weight, easily lifted them to their required places. A second story was thrown up from the first; all of the framework seemed like an enormous carapace which gave neither the impression of height nor of beauty. However, the great difficulties were now conquered. The first story had presented to the constructor the hardest problems; the second was finished with much less trouble in six months.

Starting from this story rose the slender column, making its way rapidly into space. The work of its construction largely escaped public view. The autumn mists often entirely concealed the aerial work-yard; in the twilight of the winter afternoons might be seen reddening against the sky the fire of the forge; one could scarcely hear the hammers which riveted the iron-work. There was this peculiarity about it, one seldom saw any workmen on the Tower; it rose apparently alone, as if by the incantation of genii. The great works of other ages, the Pyramids for example, are associated in our minds with the idea of a multitude of human beings bending over handspikes and groaning under chains. The modern pyramid arose by the power of calculation, which made it require only a small number of workers. Each part of the great structure, each one of its bones of iron—to the number of twelve thousand—arrived perfect from the manufactory, and had only to be adjusted to its proper place in the gigantic skeleton. The structure presented an example of what mathematicians call “an elegant demonstration.”

At last, one beautiful morning in the spring, the Parisians who had watched the beginning of the great column, saw the shaft bordered by an entablature. A campanile rose from this platform, and on its summit our flag displayed its colours. In the evening there appeared in place of the flag a giant carbuncle, the red eye of a Cyclops who darted his glance over all Paris. “The Tower is finished,” cried the voice of fame.

My readers will not expect a detailed description of this gigantic work. Nearly all have already climbed it, or will climb it. The great hive is now in full activity. Several cities have arisen in its interior, with their varied commerce and their special customs. A Victor Hugo is needed in order to concentrate into the soul of a Quasimodo the interior life of the Tower.

I want to seek upon the summit the impressions which my guide-