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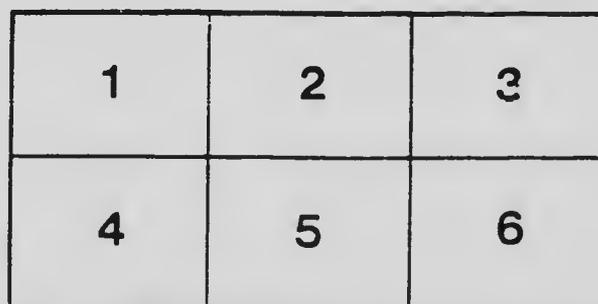
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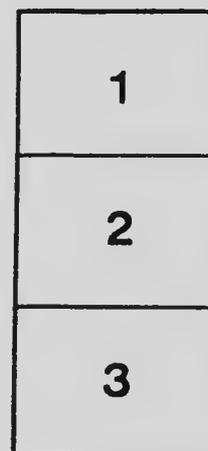
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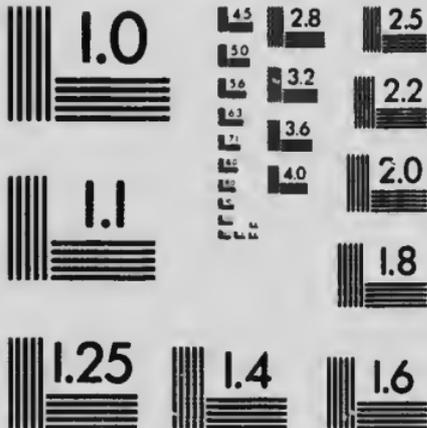
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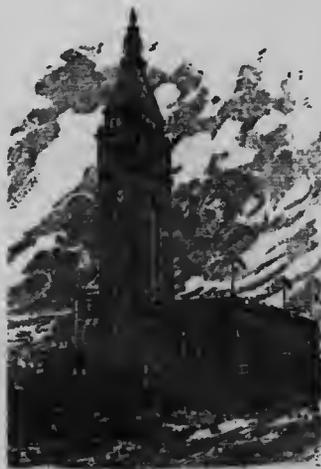
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The Metropolitan Tower

A Symbol of
Refuge, Warning, Love, Inspiration,
Beauty, Strength

A SPEECH AT THE BANQUET HELD AT THE METROPOLITAN
ANNUAL CONVENTION FOR 1915, AT
MONTREAL, CANADA

BY
WILLIAM HENRY ATHERTON, PH.D.
Author of the "History of Montreal"
(1535-1914)



METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
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The Metropolitan Tower

MR. PRESIDENT, DIRECTORS AND GUARDIANS OF THE
METROPOLITAN TOWER.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

With unflagging interest and ever increasing wonder I have listened to the amazing story told in figures, by your official representatives, of the progress of the great work of your organization in which you have been all zealous fellow workers. Especially have I been struck by the great share your Company has taken in leading the way, as the pioneer of business bodies engaging in human welfare work throughout the United States and Canada. May more follow you! But the numerical *figures* quoted by previous speakers have left me so dazed, that as a mere professor of *letters*, in order to carry out the sudden call to address you, given since dinner began, I must flee from *numbers*—which are not my *forte*—and have recourse to *figures of speech* in which to express my appreciation of the work you are accomplishing from your Metropolitan Tower.

THE METROPOLITAN TOWER AND ITS GUARDIANS.

And, first of all, let me announce my subject. It is "The Metropolitan Tower and Its Guardians."

Luckily, my choice of this subject has been spontaneously forced upon me, for all through this evening the device of the Metropolitan Tower, the "symbol of your power," has been confronting me on all sides, woven as it is into every flag and every piece of graceful drapery that has been chosen to-night to deck the walls and pillars of this handsome banquet hall where you, the Guardians of the Metropolitan Tower, are met, President, Directors and workers in convivial brotherhood to celebrate the triumphs of the year.

THE GREAT WHITE TOWER.

There it stands in your midst, your chosen device—The Tower—pure and white and lofty, with its halo around the great lantern, representing the great light of your Metropolitan

Tower in the great city of New York, the light that never fails, flashing forth its rays, hundreds of feet above the tops of surrounding buildings, and seen by many a widowed mother or an orphan child at eventide in the distant hills of New Jersey; and by many a mariner on the broad Atlantic—the while the musical bells ring out their chimes marking the passage of the hours and the message of new hope, to the toilers and the watchers within their sound!

Not only my theme, but my text, has been auspiciously inspired to me while listening to the Metropolitan Song which you have just sung, the words of which I am told have been composed by Dr. Lee K. Frankel, the prophet, preacher and poet of your organization. Let me quote one verse as my text:

"We're the guardians of 'the Tower,'
And the light which it enveils;
It's a symbol of our power—
To its height no other scales.
For its grandeur and beauty
Will teach to each his duty
To be steadfast and loyal
To 'the light that never fails.'"

THE "TOWER" A WELL CHOSEN SYMBOL.

You and your Directors were well advised in the choice of your symbol. For a tower, with its light and its beauty has always been a source of inspiration alike to the sacred writer, the poet, the priest, the preacher, the painter, the architect, the husbandman and the warrior. So should it inspire you, the Guardians of the Tower, to carry out faithfully the lessons that history teaches of the functions of the tower in all ages, and to apply them in your daily work, in your chosen vocation as watchers and outposts of that Tower, under whose shadow and far-reaching influence so many lives and so much happiness are entrusted to you.

A DIGRESSION: TOWERS—ANCIENT AND MODERN.

May I for a moment claim the privilege of a prosy professor to recall to you a few of the uses of the tower, as told in the history of the past?

In ancient times, towers were erected as memorials of the dead and for religious purposes. The famous Tower of Silence in the neighborhood of Bombay, in which the Parsees disposed of their dead, is a reminder of that period, as well as are those round towers of Ireland of which there were but recently one

hundred extant. These round bee-hive towers of Ireland, built originally for defence, were in early Christian times, it is claimed, used as bell towers and as safes for storing church treasures. Some of these towers were very large, being one hundred feet high, with a base of fifty feet and with five to eight stories. Who does not know of the lofty bell towers of Russia or of the Mohammedan mosques, where "high in air the Turkman calls to prayer" or of the tapering Gothic turrets of Western Christendom, which piercing the empyrean vault of heaven, as though leaping to commune with the God of the Universe, are a delight to the gazer, to whom the lofty spires become emblems of the yearning for higher ideals and unseen verities.

To Canadians of French origin, of whom there are many here to-night, the parish bell tower must especially appeal. For, since the time of Champlain, in every village along the St. Lawrence and in every settlement throughout the west peopled by their race, the Bell Tower is an epitome of the life around. It rings out thrice a day the mystery of Christ's Incarnation. It calls to morning worship and evening prayer. It rings out clamorously at the alarm of fire and joyously at good news for Church or State. It heralds a christening and a wedding and it tolls the funeral knell of the parting or departed soul.

Besides towers having a religious interest, there are others that have been built of all shapes and heights: some for lookout or warning purposes or for military defence, stationary or moveable; some have been built for unrighteous vanity, such as the Tower of Babel, while others have been reared with rightful pride, for the love of beauty and of art. Some have been circular, some have been polygonal, most have been upright, but some have been constructed leaning over, like those of Pisa in Italy and Garisonde at Boulogne. Many centuries before Christ have towers been built, like the Tower of Porcelain at Nankin in China, or the Tower of the Winds at Athens, as they are being built to-day, like your own Metropolitan Tower in New York,—for pure delight in the tower's shapely contour. For a beautiful tower is almost the last expression of success in building; "Complete to the tower" is a significant phrase of the architect.

THE METROPOLITAN A TOWER OF REFUGE.

You have done well in the choice of a Tower as your symbol. It appeals to all, but there are certain aspects of the uses of

your Tower which stand out more prominently than others. Thus your Tower partakes of the character of the ancient towers of refuge and defence.

Towers, as you will remember, from oldest times, have been used as solitary redoubts placed in the field or the plains, the deserts or the vineyards, to be harbours of refuge to which the watchers and the neighboring people might fly from danger from hostile men and beasts. Sacred Scripture and profane literature have many pictures of the watchman on the tower guarding his lonely flocks by night from the wolves or from thieving marauders, or of the people gathering to the tower as a rallying point for defence and attack against menacing foes.

The history of Montreal recalls by the preservation of the old Martello towers still standing, made out of rough hewn stones, on Sherbrooke Street, the memory of those earlier wooden redoubts which were built in the fields east and west and north along the river-side around the palisaded picket-fort—the castle dangerous—of Maisonneuve, near Place Royale.

In the early days of the settlement, after the little handful of French settlers, men and women, dared to sally forth and leave the shelter of the fort for a few hours to plough the land and till the fields, there was daily fear of downpours from the deadly Iroquois braves ever lurking around in hollows or in the brushwood and ready to cut off all stragglers. To such these redoubts of wood or stone were veritable harbours of refuge when the cry of "*Aux armes!*" was suddenly raised by the watcher. How they blessed the safety of the tower! To French Canadians present who recall the story of the early struggles of the colony, the figure of the Metropolitan Tower as a modern harbour of refuge for its numberless clients, is no mere figure of speech. For they can well understand how many toilers of to-day, men, women and children, fly to your Tower from the dangers of industrial life, from the enemies of civilization, disease, crime, from all the vicissitudes and uncertainties of life.

THE METROPOLITAN A BEACON-LIGHT OF WARNING.

Your Tower must also appeal to you as partaking of the character of those beacon towers on land, or lighthouse towers at sea, or a modern search-light tower in times of war, which send out light, enlightenment and knowledge of the dangers besetting life from its many enemies. You, ladies and gentlemen, should feel a just pride when you see the picture of the

light in the lantern of your Metropolitan Tower, for it reminds you that from within there emanates a flood of enlightenment to the people through the medium of a series of educative pamphlets, composed by experts, but so popularly written that all may read how to guard their lives and those of their fellow citizens. These works, following the principles of sanitation, temperance, civilization and right living, you are privileged to distribute weekly to millions of homes. The victims of the White Plague bless you, as do the mothers of little babes, whom you would save from an unnecessary early death! Old men and old women whose lives you have prolonged for the sweet enjoyment of a peaceful old age welcome you, as do the working men and women whose horrid factory conditions you would improve! Not only in the homes of the worker are you received, but the advent of your organization into sociological work is being welcomed by the public health and welfare associations, as well as by Civic and State governments, who see in your pioneering movement for co-operation in social work by great business bodies a great hope for the future happiness of our citizens.

And what shall I say of the welcome in the homes of your clients given to those angel ministers of grace—the nursing sisters of your own organization or of those affiliated to your body—some of whom are here to-night? In Montreal we have learnt to be grateful to the Victorian Order of Nurses and to the "Little Sisters of Hope" cooperating with you. In modern days these are carrying on the work of Jeanne Mance, the first lay nurse in Canada, who received the sick and wounded into her fortified redoubt in the first Hotel Dieu of Montreal, or of Marguerite Bourgeoys, who in her Martello Tower on Sherbrooke Street, of which I have spoken, during the respites from Indian attacks, taught the little dusky Indians and their parents within, how to live wisely and well both for this world and the next.

Ladies and gentlemen, as lightbearers to darkness, you should magnify your calling. You are not dreaded canvassers, nor are you intruders into the poor man's home, but you are welcome guests. The symbol of the light that never fails in your great Metropolitan Tower should always remind you of its message of enlightenment and knowledge. It is like a lighthouse tower, and just as the mariners "blessed the Abbot of Aberbrothock who placed the bell on the Inchcape Rock" to

warn them of the dangers around them, so will the many sailors of life's troublesome seas bless the inspiration which made your Directors set up the light and which bids you, its servants of the light, to see that it never dies out in its mission of spreading wide the rays of humanitarian benevolence.

THE METROPOLITAN TOWER—AN OBJECT OF LOVE AND DEVOTION.

Thirdly, let me speak of the lessons of love and devotion taught by some famous towers of old.

With what pride did the Jew returning home to Jerusalem view the Tower of Siloe or the Tower of David— the *Turris Davidical* With that same pride and admiration you, too, should hail your own Tower, for it has all those qualities to be found in a perfect tower—grandeur of height, strength of construction and beauty of form.

These qualities have a lesson for you; since, as your song has said, "For its grandeur and beauty will teach to each his duty."

THE METROPOLITAN A TOWER OF HEIGHT AND BEAUTY.

There is no doubt that in the material order your Tower is preeminently high even in a city of lofty pinnacles and sky-piercing structures. "To its height no other scales." In the spiritual order, the high ideals it should point out in New York should be those of the Psalmist who says, "God is my high tower." Your high tower should, therefore, be as a symbol of God to you and others, standing out boldly and erect as a plea for righteousness and purity in business corporations, and as a monumental protest against the exploitation of the poor.

There is a phrase used of the Beloved in the "Song of Songs," "Thy neck is as a Tower of ivory pure." Your white Tower, illuminated with its lantern light within, should be a Tower of Ivory—a "*Turris Eburnea*." Speaking of this phrase, emblematic of purity, which has been adopted by the Mother Church of Christendom in her litany chant of praise to Mary, the pure Mother of Christ, I would have you apply to your own Tower the same idealistic expression. The figure of a Tower of Ivory will help you to remember that each of you individually represents the high ideals taught by your white Tower. Of you it may be said, "I have set you for a tower or a fortress." You must destroy the reputation that all cor-

porations are soulless. Your Tower of Ivory must shine with the white light of honesty and just dealing with your clients. You must help your Company to maintain its boast that it has always kept its faith with its policy-holders; and, more, you must follow the instructions given you to-day by your Directors, that you must keep your *promises* to your clients *down*, but your *performances* must be *up*. For you must remember always that you are the "Guardians of the Tower and the light which it enveils."

THE METROPOLITAN A TOWER OF STRENGTH.

Finally, not only has your Tower *Height* and *Beauty* in the material and spiritual orders, it has the third requisite, *e. g.*, *Strength*—strength in its physical structure, strength in its financial standing, strength in its policy of mutualization—and spiritual strength because of its past history of adherence to strong principles of uprightness. Its claim for *moral strength* in the future depends on each of you. Each of you is to be as it were a stone in the Tower, carefully chosen, unblemished, well chiselled, cemented with devotion to a common cause, each placed in due regard of its size and strength to rear up a proud and noble organization founded on the corner-stones of loyalty and obedience. Such a tower may be likened to a strong city, for "a brother helped by a brother is like a strong city."

You need to be a strong city to guard the interests and lives of the many thousands who have fled to you for insurance and safety in life and in death. This, I take it, is the resolution you have formed when you but recently sang in recognition of the brotherhood which has already made you strong, the words of your Metropolitan Song:

"Let us raise our voices gladly
With a song from every man.
Let no note be sounded sadly
At the gathering of the clan.
For like brother to brother,
We'll stand by one another,
With love in our bosoms
For the 'Metropolitan.'"

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you,

THE METROPOLITAN TOWER AND ITS GUARDIANS!

Floreat Turris Metropolitan!



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