

THE TOWER OF TOIL.

(LA TOUR DE TRAVAIL.)

THE old sun rolls; the old earth spins;  
Incessant labour bends the stars.  
Hath not enough of woes and sins  
Passed? Who shall efface their senseless scars?  
One makes, one mars. The aeons foil  
All purpose; rise, O Tower of Toil.

Rise in thy radiance to proclaim  
The agony of the earth alive!  
Stand by the sea, a marble flame,  
A lighthouse wedded to an hive!  
Still upward strive! O tower, arise  
An endless spiral to the skies!

Stand on the weather-beaten coast  
A flaming angel in the noon;  
A silver, fascinated ghost  
In midnight's revel with the moon;  
In silent swoon be still! the spoil  
Of years is thine, O Tower of Toil.

Let day, a glowing vigour, male;  
And night, a virgin bowed and curled,  
Stand at the foot; their ardours pale  
Systole and diastole of the world!  
With life impearled (their eyes absorb)  
They visibly sustain the orb.

Then let the tower in seven tiers  
Rise in its splendour marmorean,

Unite the chill divided years  
In plain perception of the aeon.  
Cry clear the paean! Its tunes recoil  
About thy flanks, O Tower of Toil.

Below be miners fashioned fair,  
And all that labour in the sea  
Sepulchred from the ambient air,  
A fatal weird of dole to dree.  
No time to be, no light to live.  
Earth's need to these hath hope to give.

Above be various shapes of labour,  
The bodily strength, the manual skill;  
They shape the anvil and the sabre,  
The ploughshare and the bolt; they fill  
The myriad will of brains that boil:  
Their fame be thine, O Tower of Toil!

Here set the travailers of land;  
Here the young shepherd, fluteless now;  
The mariner with tarry hand;  
The clerk, with pale and foolish brow,  
His brain bought cheap for brainless grind:  
The bloodless martyr of the mind!

Grow up the grades, O godlike hand,  
Rodin, most rightly named "August"!  
Thy splendid sons and daughters stand  
Obedient to the master "must."  
The decadent dust thy spells assoil;  
Death lives in this, thy Tower of Toil.

Grow up the grades! record the tasks  
These arduous phantoms have achieved!  
The growth of mind to mortals asks  
A power not swift to be believed.  
What bosoms heaved ere Nature's age  
From monkey-man deduced the sage!

So be thy spiral tower the type  
Of higher convolutions drawn  
From hunger's woe and murder's gripe  
And lust's revulsion to the dawn  
Of days that spawn on holier soil  
Thy loftier sons, O Tower of Toil.

There is a flower of native light  
That springs eternal on the earth.  
Carve us, O master-hand, aright  
That ecstasy of pain and mirth,  
A baby's birth! That prize of fear  
Engrave upon the loftiest tier!

Nor in the solitary woe  
(The silent, the unwitting strain)  
Forget the miracles that grow  
In the austere ordered brain!  
Darwin and Taine, Descartes and Boyle,  
Inscribe thou on the Tower of Toil!

Those who have striven to limn the mind,  
Paint, model, tune, or hymn the light,  
Their vision of the world refined  
By mastery of superior sight:  
Honour their might! the gain have these  
Of all men's woes and ecstasies!

High soul; no benediction seek  
From any spirit but our own!  
Crown not the mighty with the weak!  
The Tower be a Tower, and not a Throne!  
In man-carved stone the endless coil  
Arise untopped, the Tower of Toil!

Deem not that prayer or sacrifice  
Will ever cause the work to end!  
Serene, sufficient, let it rise  
Alone; it doth not ask a friend,

Nor shall it bend a fatuous knee  
To a fantastic deity.

What crest or chrism were so good  
To work as Art, the crown upon  
Work's brow? thy will with love endued  
Lift up this loftier Parthenon!  
Thine art the consecrative oil  
To hallow us the Tower of Toil!