MINOT'S LEDGE. This formidable ledge of rocks, which, from time immemorial, has been the terror of all who "go down to the sea in ships," and where many a gallant vessel has laid its shattered frame, is likely to be divested of some of its alarming adjuncts, and so marked that the mariner will be enabled to avoid its dangers. This improvement will be effected by means of the magnificent lighthouse that the liberality of Congress has projected, and will carry out to its completion.

The expenditure for the work has already amounted to a million and a half dollars since its commencement in July, 1855. The engineer expects to conclude his labors in two years. To Gen. Totten, chief of U. S. corps of Engineers, and Capt. Alexander, great credit is due for their attendance and faithful discharge of the responsibility entrusted to them in conducting this enterprise.

The failure of the previous structure to fulfil the expectations of its projectors has induced this new attempt in such a way as to almost guarantee the perpetuity of the work. Before the iron lighthouse, which was swept away in the gale of April, 1851, had been destroyed, fears had been expressed that the tremendous leverage of the sea and its ceaseless agitation would loosen the fastenings to the rock, so that in case of an unusually severe storm its weakened standards would afford but a feeble barrier against the force of the waves. Unhappily those forebodings proved to be too true, and we deplore (as Mr. Everett well said in his speech) the loss of "those brave men who stood by their post" to the last. In the new lighthouse the builders have almost taken a bond from nature against any such occurrence.

The interesting ceremonies of laying the corner stone of the new beacon light, which took

place on Saturday, were attended by a large company. The municipal authorities and invited guests, comprising many citizens of distinction, went by steamer to the rock, for the purpose of assisting in the inauguration of the enterprise as far as possible. But the heavy sea prevented the performance of the proposed services at the Ledge, and the party repaired to Cohasset, where the exercises took place.

The Massachusetts Grand Lodge of Masons did the honors of the occasion in ancient style, by invitation of Captain Alexander. Speeches were made by Hon. Edward Everett, His Honor the Mayor, Dr. Winslow Lewis, Captain Alexander, Hon. John T. Heard, Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts; Hon. L. B. Comins, Hon. Charles R. Trask, and Hon. B. C. Clarke.

Dr. Lewis gave a history of the lighthouse system for the last half century, showing the increase of these beacons for navigators, until our entire coast is studded with a cordon of lights which add a lustre to the humane and philanthropic character of our free government. Mr. Everett's remarks were characterized by their usual felicity.

Much difficulty has been experienced in preparing a foundation for the light house. Workmen have been obliged to select such hours as the tide or weather would permit; but by indefatigable perseverance in cutting the face of the rock, they have formed a plane upon which to lay a foundation. The stone for the structure is hammered and shaped upon the main land at Cohasset, from thence transferred to the rock, each stone being dovetailed into the other, besides being secured by metallic clamps.

Dangerous as it may seem to approach the rock, when the sea is rough, there are times when the placidity of the water renders an approach to the spot comparatively safe. Such occasions have been advantageously used to bring forward the work to its present promising con-

dition.

As compared with other lighthouses, noted for their position, or great cost, this possesses the peculiar difficulty of having its foundation under water, or at least at low water mark. The Eddystone Light, on the coast of Cornwall, the Bell Rock, in Scotland, the Skerryvore Light, in Argyleshire, are each upon rocks above water, or conveniently located for building, by means of wooden barracks. Here upon Minot's Ledge there are no natural advantages. It is a work the magnitude of which must be witnessed to be appreciated.

There can be only one supposition to cast a shade of doubt upon the permanency of the light. It is that the immense weight of the granite employed in the construction of the beacon, added to the action of the sea, may crumble the foundation eventually. The rock has been thoroughly examined by engineers, and the highest point projects into the two first courses of granite, making thus a natural fastening, which would seem to dispel all question as to its permanence.

No monument could be erected more creditable to the skill and sagacity of our engineers than this lighthouse, and there is probably no location in any indentation of our coast where such a work of philanthropy is more needed or where the liberality of the National Government redounds in a larger degree to the public weal.