TOWERS ON MINOT'S.

Lighthouses That Have Breasted the Storms of Years.

The Old Structure Was Washed Away and in Building the New One Many Problems Had to Be Met and Overcome.

Capt Michael Neptune Brannock is one of the best known of the older citizens of Cohasset. As a diversion the boatman he has sailed the sea's surface and explored its depths from Halifax to Terra del Fuego and from the Mediterranean to San Francisco's golden gate. He has encountered perils sufficient to make him the hero of a three-volume novel, and thrilling enough to arrest the attention and stir the blood of the most cold hearted.

His cosy little home is on the side of a hill, shaded by a tall tree which grows but a few feet from the front door. Here he has lived for nearly 40 years; from here his aged parents were carried to their long home, and here he brought his young wife, a bright and pretty woman, when he was a robust and black-bearded sailor. Here he has reared the large family in Cohasset, 10 healthy children, of whom nine are living, stalwart men and beautiful women, and here he patiently awaits the summons which shall call him to the beyond.

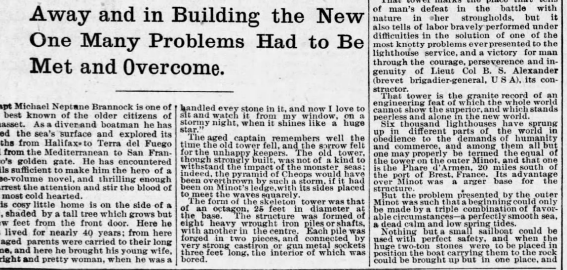
He was born on the sea, hence his middle name, and early came from Newfoundland, his parents' home, to settle in Cohasset. But he had the salt of the sea in his blood, and to its tempestuous bosom he quickly took himself, and from it he has wrung comfort for his family and a home for himself and them.

But perhaps his dearest reminiscences are connected with the building of Minot's light, the dull gray tower of which may be seen from his kitchen door rising from the sea.

He was stationed in a boat alongside the ledge to pick up the men whom the waves might sweep from their scanty footing.

Despite his almost three-score and 10 years, his memory is excellent, and makes him a pleasant companion and an almost inimitable entertainer.

He is the possessor of a silver medal for saving from the wreck of the bark St John, which went ashore on the rocks in Cohasset harbor, a woman who was thought to be dead. But the woman is yet alive and has lived in Cohasset ever since, and has been twice married.



LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PRESENT LIGHTHOUSE ON MINOT'S LEDGE.

When he was asked to give some account of his connection with the erection of the famous tower, he said:

"I was stationed off the rocks to pick up the workmen who might be washed off, but bless you, there was not much for me to do. All the men were swimmers, and there was generally warning of the coming of the big rollers, and the smaller ones we did not mind. The men holding the drill would just cling on when they were rocked, and the strikers would clutch a steel bolt driven in the rock for the purpose near each group of workmen. You see the government officials could not get workmen to take the job, so they had to depend on us boatmen and constabulary.

"The pay was high for those times, $75 a month, and I was put on my feet financially. The work was hard and small credit. The building it was 'nuts' for us.

"The only really dangerous time which rests to my credit is that of Capt Reed, a master stonecutter. He was busily at work on the landing. He wore a pair of sailor man's trousers which came below his ankles, and a silk cord belted them about his waist and a cape sou'wester. Some one gave the cape to Reed, thinking it was 'nuts' for us. He must have been busy, for he paid no attention.

The wave struck him and it seemed but a quarter of a second before he was 40 feet away and being carried against a rock which might have dashed out his brains.

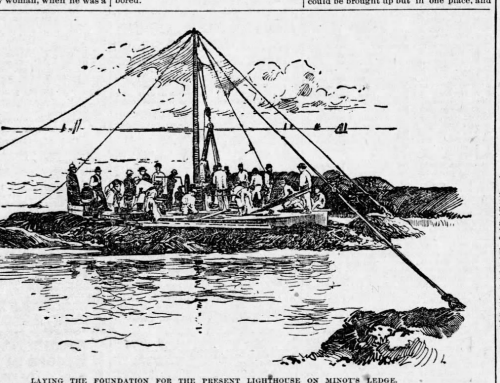
I was coiling up the jib halyards and heard the warning, but saw the man in the water at almost the same time.

I dropped the rope and went over. He had sunk and when I gave the first time I missed him. The second time I got him, and as he was partially stunned I had hard work. But some of the oldermen threw me a line. I bent the line around the man's waist and they pulled him aboard. They started with the boat for me, but I called out to them to watch the other man, that I was all right. They pulled him up, and swam to the boat. A small sloop and climbed aboard.

"The new Minot's tower was almost an idol for me. I watched it rise, knew and handled every stone in it, and now I love to sit and watch it from my window, on a stormy night, when it shines like a huge star.

The aged captain remembers well the time the old tower fell, and the sorrow felt for the unhappy keepers. The old tower, though strongly built, was not of a kind to withstand the impact of the monster seas; indeed, the pyramid of Cheops would have been overthrown by such a storm, if it had been on Minot's ledge, with its sides placed to meet the waves squarely.

The form of the skeleton tower was that of an octagon, 25 feet in diameter at the base. The structure was formed of eight heavy wrought iron piles or shafts, with another in the centre. Each pile was forged in two pieces, and connected by very strong castiron or gun metal sockets three feet long, the interior of which was bored.



THE WATCH ROOM.

The pile ends were turned and secured to the sockets by large steel keys passing through the piles and the sockets. Above and below the joints or sockets, and connecting the middle pile with each outer one, there were extended a series of wrought iron braces. The outer shafts were connected by similar braces extending from one to the other, and thus the whole structure was tied together.

At each of the angular points in the octagon and at the centre a hole 12 inches in diameter and 5 feet in depth had been drilled in the rock. The surface of the rock being irregular and the holes in each case 5 feet deep, the length of the piles below the sockets varied from 35¼ to 38¾ feet. The piles in the upper series were of uniform length, 25 feet each; the inclination toward the center each 4 to bring the heads of the upper piles within the periphery of a circle of 14 feet diameter, and there, at an elevation of 40 feet above the middle pile, or 53 feet above the highest point of the rock, the pile heads were secured to a heavy casting or cap, to the arms of which they were securely keyed and bolted.

The middle shaft was 8 inches in diameter at the foot and 6 inches at the top, and the outer ones were 8 inches at the foot and 4½ inches at the top. All of these were forged 10 inches in diameter and at the point where they leave the surface of the rock and tape uniformly to 8 inches in diameter in both directions. The heavy braces, placed 19 feet above the surface of the rock, were 3½ inches in diameter; the second series, 19½ feet above the first, were 3 inches in diameter, and the third 8¼ below the cap, to form the support of the floor of the storeroom, were made of 2½-inch square iron.

As the whole structure formed an immense lewis (an iron dove-tailed tenon, made in sections, which can be fitted into a dove-tailed mortise), either the braces must have been ruptured or the rock itself must have yielded before a pile could have been displaced.

The work, began in 1847, was finished in the autumn of 1848, and in the summer of 1849 a series of wrought-iron vertical tie-rods was introduced between the first and second series of braces. These were 32 in number, of one-half inch round iron, extended between each pair of contiguous piles and between the middle and each outer pile, crossing each other in a diagonal direction like the base and counter base of a bridge.

This structure, notwithstanding its immense strength and the small surfaces left exposed to the waves, was carried away in 1851, barely three years after its completion.

On Monday night, April 14, the wind, which had been easterly for several days, gradually increased. On Tuesday it had become a severe northeaster. It continued to blow with the utmost violence through Tuesday night, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, but on Wednesday, the 16th, it was a hurricane.

The light on the Minot was last seen from Cohasset on Wednesday night at 10 o'clock, and at 6 o'clock Thursday morning, the 17th, the lighthouse bell tolled its sad goodby to the people of Cohasset three miles distant, and at this hour a new granite tower, in time of the summer's high and tide, the sea was at its highest mark.

At daylight nothing was visible from shore, and when the storm cleared away but a few stumps of twisted and broken piles were on the surface of the outer ledge.

Upon the second series of horizontal bases, these 38½ feet above the rock, the keeper had imprudently built a platform for the storage of heavy goods.

In addition the keeper had attached a 20-inch lawser to the lantern deck 60 feet above the rock, and the other end to a granite block weighing seven tons, placed upon the bottom 50 fathoms from the base of the tower. This was to provide means for running a box or lanting chain up and down.

At 4 o'clock Wednesday afternoon, 10 hours before the light is supposed to have fallen, this platform came ashore at Cohasset. The sea must at that time have reached to within seven feet of the base of the storeroom of the lighthouse. Capt Swift believed that but a slight increase after that was needed to reach the waves to reach the main body of the structure.

Such a sea acting upon the surface of a building at the point of 50 or 60 feet long must have been terrifically irresistible, and perhaps that is how the structure was destroyed. But after all, the wonder is that the structure stood so long where the seas break with such terrific force.

THE PRESENT LIGHT.

Story of Its Building and the Problems Overcome.

Minot's ledge light.

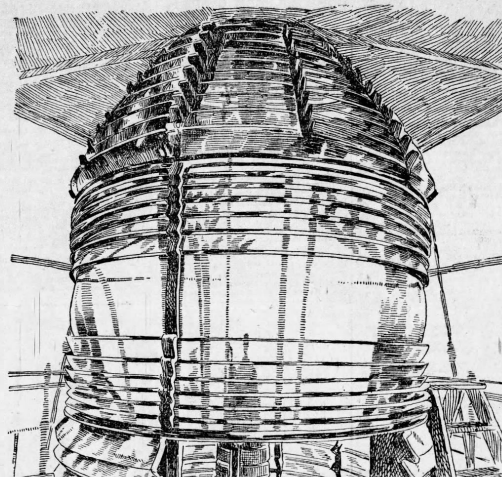
That tower marks the place that tells of man's defeat in the battle with nature in sher strongholds, but it also tells of labor bravely performed under difficulties in the solution of one of the most knotty problems ever presented to the lighthouse service, and a victory for man through the courage, perseverence and ingenuity of Lieut Col B. S. Alexander (brevet brigadier-general, U S A), its constructor.

That tower is the granite record of an engineering feat of which the whole world cannot show the superior, and which stands peerless and alone in the new world.

Six thousand lighthouses have sprung up in different parts of the world in obedience to the demands of humanity and commerce, and among them all but one may properly be termed the equal of the tower on the outer Minot, and that one is the Phare d'Armen, 20 miles south of the port of Brest, France. Its advantage over Minot was a ager base for the structure.

But the problem presented by the outer Minot was such that a beginning could only be made by a triple combination of favorable circumstances—a perfectly smooth sea, a dead calm and low spring tides.

Nothing but a small sailboat could be used with perfect safety, and when the huge two-ton stones were to be placed in position the boat carrying them to the rock could be brought up but in one place, and



THE LENS FROM OUTSIDE THE LANTERN.

His first problem was to cut down the rock into a shape suitable to receive the foundation stone of the tower. This was not land even in the summer seas for weeks together at times, and when landed a part of the ledge was at all times under water and the remainder only bare for one or two hours at low water of spring tides.

The spaces were contracted, and the sea broke with such force that no cofferdam was possible. He asked himself how he was to begin, what should be the process, where were the workmen to live, and what were they to do while waiting an opportunity to land on the ledge?

He could foresee that cutting the rock into shape to receive the foundation stones would prove to be a very tedious, troublesome and expensive operation, and one requiring incessant vigilance. He knew that when he was enabled to land he must do so in a small sea it would pound on the ledge at the stake, though the depth was but in 30 fathoms of water.

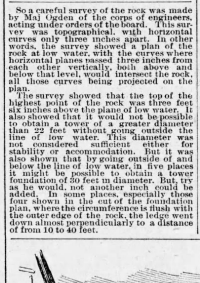
Immediately after the formation of the present lighthouse board in 1852 it was determined to replace the former structure, if possible, by a stone tower.



CAPT MICHAEL NEPTUNE BRANNOCK.

So a careful survey of the rock was made by Maj Ogden of the corps of engineers, acting under orders of the board. This survey was topographical, with horizontal curves only three inches apart; in other words, the survey showed a plan of the rock at low water with the curves where horizontal planes passed three inches from each other vertically, and the curves below that level, would intersect the rock, all those curves being projected on the plan.

The survey showed that the top of the highest point of the rock was three feet six inches above the plane of low water. It also showed that it would not be possible to obtain a tower of a greater diameter than 22 feet without going outside the line of low water. This diameter was not considered sufficient either for stability or accommodation, but it was also shown that by going outside of and below the line of low water, in five places it might be possible to obtain a tower foundation of 50 feet in diameter. But, by as he would, not another inch could be added. In some places, especially the four shown in the cut of the foundation plan, where the circumference is flush with the outer edge of the rock, the ledge went down almost perpendicularly to a distance of from 10 to 40 feet.

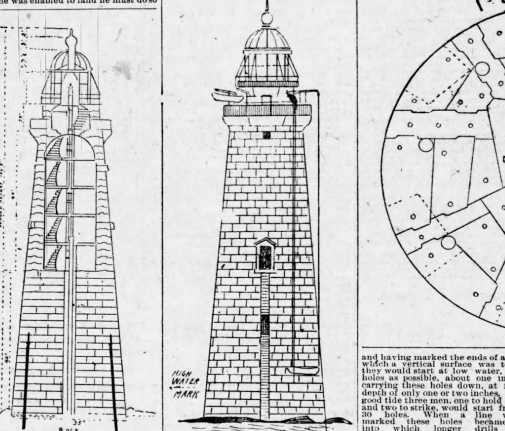


SECTIONAL PLAN OF LIGHT.

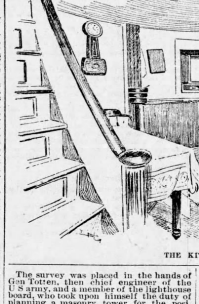
The morning was beautiful, clear and calm, and just as the sun was rising above the horizon Lieut Alexander took a hammer and chisel, called the party together, and, after a few brief remarks, struck the first blow in a long battle between man and the forces of nature.

He began by cutting for a trench level on the highest point of the rock. This trench level was the point from which all levels were taken while cutting down the foundation. As the whole of the top of the rock down to a plane one foot nine inches below this trench level was to be removed, they began on that day, and continued for several days, to mark points of intersection of this plane with the surface of the rock, cutting therefrom a level space around which the workmen could stand, and upon which tools could be placed in comparative safety.

In 1855 there were 130 hours' work done on the rock.



MINOT'S LIGHT.



THE KITCHEN.

The survey was placed in the hands of Gen Totten, then chief engineer of the army, and a member of the lighthouse board, who appointed himself chief of the planning a masonry tower for the position.

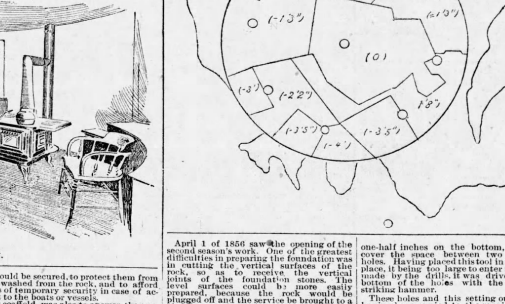
In April, 1855, Lieut Alexander was assigned to the duty of construction. He first visited the vicinity of the ledge on July 1, 1855. The weather was fine, and he hoped to be able to land on the rock the next day, but on the following morning he found an old swell running which prevented any boat from approaching the rock. This old swell continued until Saturday, May 12, when he landed on the ledge for the first time.

men could be secured, to protect them from being washed from the rock, and to afford means of temporary security in case of accident to the boats or vessels.

This scaffold was also to answer the purpose of a derrick for laying the lower courses of masonry in the tower and the lighthouse being built around the piles of this scaffold they would be so many huge bolts to secure it to the foundation of the rock.

On June 20, 1855, the men began to loosen the wedges around the stumps of the old iron piles and remove the mussels from the top of the ledge. The real beginning was made at daylight Sunday morning, July 1, 1855.

Fig I



these levels of bottom beds varying in depth from seven inches to 2 feet 2 inches below low-water level, the last death being the level of the bottom bed of the lowest stone in the structure.

There are 29 stones in the second partial course; of these 12 have their beds below low water.

The following is an outline of the manner of cutting the nautical surfaces around the outside of the tower and along the inside lines, to which the rock was shaped to receive the stones of the lowest courses. Cutting irons, 3 inch and 2 inch, were provided with inch and a quarter drills from two to four feet long, and having marked the ends of a line upon which a series of holes was to be cut, they would start at low water, as many holes, about one inch apart, as would be carrying these holes down, at first, to a depth of only one or two inches. During a good tide three men, one to hold the drill, and two to strike, would start from 20 to 30 holes. When a line was thus marked these holes became guides into which longer drills of the same size could be inserted without danger of making mistakes, even when there was two or three feet of water on the rock. These holes were then drilled down to the exact depth required. The spaces between these holes were then "set out," and also on these vertical joints was done as follows: A large piece of thin muslin was spread on a platform on the ledge. A layer of mortar was then spread over it of the required thickness.

The stone was then laid on this bed of mortar. The vertical joints of the stone were then plastered with mortar. The cloth was folded up and laid snugly along these vertical joints, having its superfluous parts cut away. After running five or ten minutes the mortar would have set so that it and the attached cloth would adhere to the stone.

The stone was then laid in this envelope, which protected the mortar from the dissolving action of the water while it was being lowered into place.

The mortar oozed through the cloth, so as to form a good bond to the stone below.

This year 208 hours' work was done.

The masonry of the tower was carried up in 1859 to the top of the 32d course, 62 feet above low water; work done 577 hours.

The tower was completed on June 29, 1860, out of five years' actual labor, but time the workmen first landed on the ledge.

No life was lost in building the lighthouse, only two persons seriously injured.

The light was exhibited for the first time at sunset, Nov 15, 1860.

The above is the substance of the short and modest account of Gen Alexander, but another might well have found much more to say.

The tower as its stands today is every bit as strong as it was on that September 29th of June, and is so firm that nothing short of an earthquake could shake it.

The waves sometimes strike with such force that the spray is felt distinctly by a person sitting down, but the same person will not feel the jar similar sensation that caused by a passing locomotive when one goes down to the rock.

The masonry is so locked and dovetailed together that the pressure of one stone only makes it so much the stronger. A glance at the diagram of the six courses of stone will show that no stone could be shaken from the outside without first pushing in the sides further out, and that would only hold the rest all the tighter.

Those little angles and corners in the course are 3 feet 9 inches in length, and each course is two feet thick. Each stone weighs two tons and the average and the sides being locked to its neighbor it is held in place. Each course is bound together fellows by a pair of two-inch galvanized wrought iron bolts, and the lowest course stones were secured to the ledge by similar bolts, which extended from the ledge to the depth of a foot.

In addition eight 10-inch wrought iron pins were inserted in holes in the ledge to the depth of a foot, and they ran up into the solid portion of the stones above the feet.

The finishing of the tower is of the most elaborate nature. Of cast iron are the doors, stairways are of iron, the ceilings are of hollow iron plates, the floors are of iron and masonry, and the floors are of hard pine.

Each door is of the latest roller iron, fastened with huge gun metal bolts.

Each window is secured by 2-inch oaken shutters on the outside, and the windows are of 3-inch thick plate glass, set in sashes of gun metal with brass screws.

Each window is supplied with a little guimo to carry off the water which will come in when heavy seas bury the tower in spray.

The entrance is a gateway through the granite walls, 5 feet thick, and is 40 feet above low water. It is on the lee or land side of the tower, and is rarely closed except in winter, even when a mountainous sea is running. It is guarded by a double door of 2-inch oak, studded with copper rivets, each door backed by a huge oaken beam let into the masonry at the side.

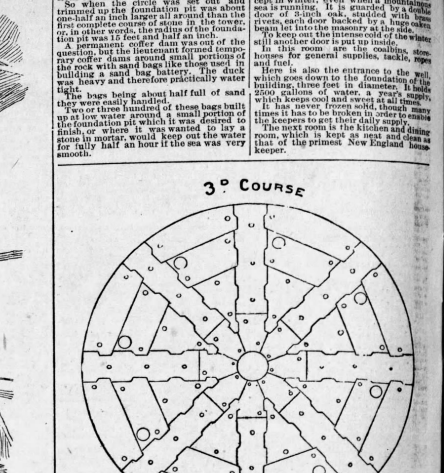
To keep out the intense cold of the winter still another door is put up inside.

In this room are the coalbins, storehouses for general supplies, tackle, etc.

Here is also the entrance to the well, which goes down to the foundation of the building, three feet in diameter. It holds 2500 gallons of water, a year's supply, which keeps cool and sweet at all times.

It has never been frozen solid, though many times it has to be broken in order to allow the keepers to get their daily supply.

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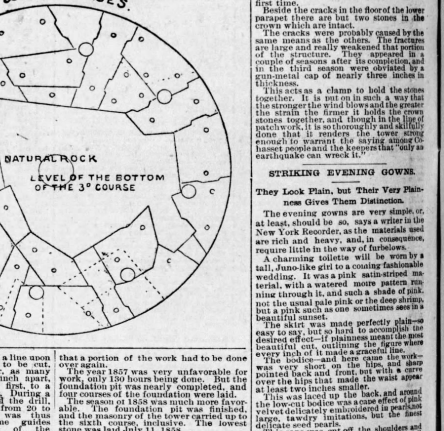


During the month of June, 1856, an iron scaffold was erected on the rock. It consisted of nine iron shafts inserted into the holes of the iron lighthouse, and rising to a hight of 20 feet above low water. The whole was bound together at the top by a strong wrought iron frame. The posts were 10 inches in diameter at the rock and seven inches in diameter at the frame.

This scaffold gave workmen some command of the rock, and it gave great confidence to the new hands. By stretching lines between the posts across the rock in different directions about two or three feet above it, every workman had something within his reach to lay hold of when a wave broke over the rock, thus doing away with the constant apprehension so danger.

1856 157 hours' work was done.

On the 19th of January, 1857, the bark New Empire, loaded with cotton, was thrown against the scaffold during a violent northeast gale and swept it from the rock, breaking off the iron posts very much as those of the iron lighthouse had broken when it was carried away, and shattering the top of the rock in places, as



mark points of intersection of this plane with the surface of the rock, cutting thereby a level space around which the workmen could stand, and upon which tools could be placed in comparative safety.

In 1855 there were 130 hours' work done on the rock.

The year 1857 was very unfavorable for work, only 130 hours being done. But the foundation pit was nearly completed, and four courses of the foundation were laid.

The season of 1858 was much more favorable, and the foundation pit was finished, and the masonry of the tower carried up to the 24th course, inclusive. The levee of stone was laid July 11, 1858.

While laying the stone the group of workmen was photographed, from which there was two or three feet of water on the rock. These holes were then drilled down in the usual way, and the spaces between these holes were then "set out," and also on these vertical joints was done as follows: A large piece of thin muslin was spread on a platform on the ledge. A layer of mortar was then spread over it of the required thickness.

The stone was then laid in this bed of mortar. The vertical joints of the stone were then plastered with mortar. The cloth was folded up and laid snugly along these vertical joints, having its superfluous parts cut away. After running five or ten minutes the mortar would have set so that it and the attached cloth would adhere to the stone.

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The next room is the kitchen and dining room, which is kept as neat and clean as that of the primest New England housekeeper.

Next is the assistant keepers' room, furnished with a bed of single iron frame bedsteads, a wardrobe, a couple of stands, a few drawers for stores, etc.

Next above is the room of the principal keeper, with bed, stands, desks and wardrobes, etc.

Next that is the oil room, where is stored the lamps, the oil and all supplies for the illuminating apparatus.

The next is the watchroom, where the keeper at this time in charge of the light sits and watches. Here is the machinery for ringing the bell, the desk for the logbook, the journal, the visitors' book—the only room in the tower boasting a carpet.

It has but one window, but a door at the side opens out upon the parapet.

Here a view of the surrounding world may be taken. It is guarded by a gunmetal railing, the top of which also is inserted in the granite.

Here for the first time may be seen cracks in the masonry. If the railing was not closely watched it would fall into the sea, which surges nearly 100 feet beneath. The water soaking into tiny fissures around the bottom of the posts has frozen at some time and the result is cracks and seams, which in no way weaken the structure, but cause the timid to hail when leaning against the rail and seeing them for the first time.

Beside the cracks in the floor of the lower lamp there are but two others in the dome which are intact.

The cracks were probably caused by the same means as the others. The fractures are large and really weakened that portion of the structure. They appeared in a couple of seasons after its completion, and the third season were obviated by a gun-metal cap of nearly three inches in thickness.

This acts as a clamp to hold the stones together. It is put on in such a way that the stronger the wind blows and the greater the storm the firmer it holds the dome stones together, and though in the line of patchwork it is not honestly made, it is done that it renders the tower strong enough to warrant the saying among Cohasset people and the keepers that "only an earthquake can wreck it."

STRIKING EVENING GOWNS.

They Look Plain, but Their Very Plainness Gives Them Distinction.

The evening gowns are very simple, or, at least, should be so, says a writer in the New York Recorder, as the materials used this season are so rich, and, in consequence, require little in the way of furbelows.

A charming toilette will be worn by a tall, fancy-like girl at a coming fashionable wedding. It was a pink satin-striped material, with a watered moire pattern running through it, and such a shade of pink not the usual pale pink or the deep shrimp, but a pink such as sometimes one sees in a beautiful sunset.

The skirt was made perfectly plain—so easy to say, but so hard to accomplish the desired effect—plainness against the most beautiful cut, outlining the figure where every curve is displayed to advantage.

The bodice—and here the dress-maker was put to her wits' end—was cut short on the hips, and deep pointed back and front, but with a curve that only showed one inch apart, and was at least two inches smaller.

This was laced up in the back, and around the low-cut bodice was a case effect of pink velvet ribbon, embroidered with pearls, and over the puffed sleeve, and around the top of the shoulders was a similar setting of pearls and velvet ribbon straps, the bare neck and shoulders to show either side of the straps.

"Because," added the maker, "I know she has pretty shoulders and neck, and I mean to show them."

With this gown the young beauty is to wear pale pink silk stockings, pink satin slippers, and dainty butterfly bow of pink velvet ribbon, with pearl buckles, and long pale kid gloves, and would, however, be made very effective.

A pink, green, turquoise blue or canary yellow are always fashionable colors, and are content with a simple girlish effect. The most fashionable which proceed the mortar from the skirt, yellow one, made princesse trimmed with fur, and a low-cut corsage and hem of the gown is especially charming.

Good style in evening clothes is always necessary, and nothing lowers the reception more easily accepted than a slovenly dress or street toilette. If a girl has a pretty throat and dresses her hair becomingly she can almost dispense herself in the way of dress, and will be a success as a beauty. So much in evening gowns depends on the taste of the individual girl.

Unless you can afford to put yourself in the hands of a skilled modiste you will find it would always say, make the dress of a soft, clinging material, and your gown is a good dressmaker.

A person in white that has a cream tone in it is inexpensive, and I recently saw a dress of cream cashmere, look quite a picture in this very simple gown which was plaited from the belt to the bottom of the skirt. The baby waist was gathered with a white satin belt, and was finished with a flat lengthwise bow in the back.

The sleeves were full to the puff of lace around the wrist, and the low-cut corsage was edged with a deep frill of the same expensive but dainty lace.

In her cuffs and collar she had pinned a rose, and with a white fan was a little picture. The fit to grace any ball room, and the fact that it is in colors or materials would be pretty.

Have a feather fan if possible. It gives such an air of elegance, and a fancy one can be had at very reasonable prices. Ostrich feathers are the most fashionable, but the fine ones are dainty but expensive, with a few tips falling over ostrich feathers, and these can be dyed to fit the white ivory handle, and will last some time. Fans are very fashionable this season, and after season, with a carriage wrap and evening gown. If that is too much for you, a pair of satin slippers match your gown, and a pair of long kid gloves will be better than open-worked stockings.

Transient Pacific Islands.

The Western Pacific is a great place for islands that appear and disappear, sometimes suddenly and as suddenly disappear, says the New York Sun. Sometimes they remain the same up and stay, but more often they are not, and to the navigator they are a source of danger.

To the skipper unless a familiar landmark, they are a source of danger, and unless he has his bearings, and, perhaps the next day he runs plump into a vessel's nose upon a broad piece of territory that has sprung up out of the ocean since he last came that way.

The region south of Japan is so given to this sort of eccentricity that since 1720 the Volcanic action is responsible for such phenomena. Reports of them will be noted on the pilot chart in every case, though there are not always reliable, because sailors of sleeping whales and schools of fishes have been mistaken for islands and frequently imagined.