1860, July 13.
Richman. Bennet.

THE

FREEMASONS'

MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

VOL. XVII.] BOSTON, NOVEMBER 1, 1858. [No. 1.

LAYING THE CORNER STONE OF THE MINOT'S LEDGE LIGHT-HOUSE.

THE Corner-Stone of the Minot's Ledge Light-House, off Cohasset, was laid with appropriate Masonic and other ceremonies, on Saturday, October 2d ultimo. The Grand Lodge was present by invitation of the Superintendent of the work, Capt. B. S. Alexander; as were also the City Government, the Board of Trade, officers of Insurance Companies, and other parties interested in commerce and navigation. It was intended that the ceremonies should have taken place on the ledge itself, but this was prevented by the roughness of the sea, which rendered even the landing upon the rock, which is three miles from the shore, wholly impracticable. It was therefore determined, as the only alternative, to proceed at once to the shore, from which the corner-stone had not yet been removed, and there perform the consecrating ceremonies. On arriving at the place, where a large concourse of spectators were assembled, the company was immediately called to order by the Mayor of Boston, and the exercises were commenced with the following

ADDRESS BY CAPT. ALEXANDER:

Mr. Mayor—It gives me great pleasure to welcome you, and all these gentlemen present, to the rock which has been the scene of our labors.

The history of this rock is no common one; it tells of shipwreck and disaster, of hairbreadth 'scapes, of suffering and woe. Standing like a watchful foe at the entrance to the harbor of Boston, to many of her sailors has it given the death blow. The advance of science has taught man to convert such foe into a watch-tower, that may ever stand pointing upward to its own glorious light, sending far into the dim ocean's distance its rays of hope and warning to the mariner.

A light-house of iron was erected here some years ago, whose fearful fate all may remember. Now again we are erecting a light-house here, but this time of granite, granite piled on granite, granite to build upon, the earth's substructure; granite engrafted and dovetailed in the foundation, and granite the whole.

Digitized by Google

To give even more stability to this structure, each stone is riveted with galvanized iron bolts, and cemented into their sockets. So may it stand, that "they that go down to the sea in ships" may see this signal-fire burning brightly to warn them from the countless rocks that echo with the rage that oft swells the bosom of old ocean.

At the commencement of this work we had nothing but money; no workmen, no shore establishment, no workshop, no tools, no machinery, no boats, no organization. In one year these all started into life. Tuesday morning, the first day of July, 1855, just as the sun tipped the wings of the morning seagull as it took its swift flight over the wave, we struck our first blow on the Minot.

The first year, 1855, we worked on it 130 hours; 1856, 157 hours; 1857, 130 hours and 21 minutes; 1858, to Sept. 30, 208 hours—making in all 625 hours 21 minutes.

At first the men were nervous with the natural fear incident to their seemingly dangerous situation, but no accident ever befalling any of their number, and seeing every precaution taken for their safety, this fear was soon dispelled, and they worked as cheerily as on land; and you now see before you, gentlemen, the result of the labors of as fine a body of workmen as it has ever been my fortune to meet with.

Many reflections arise in our minds as we stand on this structure. Boston lights her streets with gas; the United States government, with protective care, lights our ocean highways not only for the benefit of the commerce of the Union, but for the commerce of the world, (applause;) and it is a reflection worthy of this occasion to remember that it is our common government that has dotted our harbors with fortifications, bristling with cannon; that has built our Navy Yards and ships of war; that can furnish you 300,000 stand of arms in Massachusetts alone, giving you strength to bid defiance to the world; and lastly, it is our glorious Union that erects this structure.

To this address His Hon. Mayor Lincoln made an able and interesting response, but for which we have not the necessary space in our pages. This was followed by a fervent and sincere prayer from the Rev. E. T. Taylor, after which an appropriate Ode, written by Wm. W. Wheildon, Esq., of Charlestown, was sung with fine effect, as follows:—

On lonely rock in ocean's wild domain,
Where tempest echoes wake the moaning sea—
Where e'en the frighten'd bird seeks rest in vain,
We raise, great God, this tower of faith in Thee!
A pillar of light forever let it stand
To guide the mariner to his native land!

Pile rock on rock, 'till firm as distant shore,
Or rock of ages, on its mountain home—
'T will meet the ocean in its wildest roar,
And stand triumphant countless years to come.
A pillar of light forever let it be,
To guide the mariner o'er the trackless sea.

When storm-winds howl around thy granite side,
Or sing a requiem o'er the ocean grave;
When waves roll high and swell the rising tide,
Be thou a beacon light to warn and save!
A tower of strength forever let it stand
To guide the mariner to his native land.

Digitized by Google

Pillar of light, like that of ancient time,
  Which marshall'd Israel on his weary way,
Be thou the Star of Hope, in faith sublime,
  To cheer the home-bound with thy welcome ray.
Thy gladsome light, forever be it thine,
Till time shall falter and suns shall cease to shine.

Capt. Alexander then addressed the M. W. John T. Heard, Esq., Grand Master, as follows :—

Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts—You, sir, as the representative of a time honored and most illustrious Order, I welcome to a task, which, although in the ordinary line of your duty, has, from peculiarity of situation and circumstance, rarely been equalled; and were you to search the archives of your fraternity, you might not find an instance where one of your predecessors has been called upon to perform the ceremonies of your Craft in such a position.

The Masonic ceremonies then took place, in accordance with the forms and customs of the Institution. After which the M. W. Grand Master delivered the following able and appropriate address :—

COL. JOHN T. HEARD'S ADDRESS.

Brother Architect—The foundation for the Lighthouse which, by the munificence of our country, will be here erected, has, at your request, been examined and approved by the Grand Lodge. The skill and fidelity displayed by you in its formation give us the assurance that the entire work will meet the fullest expectations of its projectors. This bold and hazardous undertaking you have thus far prosecuted with triumphant success, and I sincerely pray that you may be equally fortunate through every stage of its progress until it shall be completed.

I return to you the Square, Level and Plumb which have been so faithfully employed on the stupendous specimen of operative masonry which we have now inspected. It would be presumptuous in me to charge so skilled a workman as you have proved yourself to be, as to their use in architecture; and I will therefore allude merely to their significance in speculative Masonry.

The *Square* we use, symbolically, to teach the importance of self-control and integrity; the *Level*, equality, and the *Plumb* moral rectitude and the duty we owe to our neighbor. Let, therefore, the overseer of this work be reminded by the *Square*, of his obligations faithfully to discharge the great trust reposed in him; by the *Level*, that though distinctions among men are necessary to preserve subordination, yet he should not forget that the workmen are entitled to his fraternal sympathies; and by the *Plumb*, that it is his duty to require them to act courteously to each other, work diligently, and co-operate harmoniously, so that they "shall be faithful to the Lord and honestly finish their work."

Gentlemen and Brethren—Through the polite invitation of Captain Alexander, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts has had the privilege to assist on this interesting occasion, and by the ancient rites of the Masonic Order to commemorate the successful commencement of this humane enterprise, designed to be a "pillar of fire by night" to warn the tempest tossed mariner of danger, and guide him on in safety to the tranquil and secure harbor.

For centuries has the fraternity, for whom I have the honor to speak, been so far identified with operative Masonry, that their imposing and solemn ceremonies have

Digitized by Google

been solicited to signalize the beginning and completion of public edifices,—governmental, charitable, scientific and religious. Wherever Freemasonry has existed,—and its existence is co-extensive with civilization, permeating every portion of the globe where the Christian religion has been established,—its aid has been required to solemnize great achievements in architecture. It is therefore befitting this time and this place that the Grand Lodge of this State should engage in these services and join in the general commendation of the benevolent work here begun.

That I may show the variety of structures, the foundations of which have been laid with Masonic honors, I would trespass upon your time for one moment to indicate a few of the more prominent instances within the Masonic jurisdictions of the United States and Great Britain. Within the United States:—

In 1793 the foundation-stone of the Capitol at Washington was laid by Brother George Washington, who was then President.

1795, July 4th, of the present State House of Massachusetts by Paul Revere, Grand Master.

1825, June 24th, of the Bunker Hill Monument by John Abbot, Grand Master, assisted by the illustrious Lafayette.

1830, the Masonic Temple, Boston.

1847, May 1st, of the Smithsonian Institute at Washington by the Grand Master of the District of Columbia.

1848, July 4th, of the Washington Monument at the capital of the United States.

1856, April 12th, of the monument erected to the memory of Henry Clay, at New Orleans; and

1856, July 4th, of the State Hospital of the Insane at Northampton, Mass., by Winslow Lewis, Grand Master.

Within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodges of England and Scotland:—

1502, of Westminster Abbey.

1607, of the palace at Whitehall, the ceremonies having been conducted with great pomp and splendor.

1673, of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, by Sir Christopher Wren, the Grand Master of England.

1675, of the late Bethlehem Hospital for Lunatics, in Moorfields.

1753, Sept. 13th, of the New Exchange of Edinburgh, by the Grand Master of Scotland.

1775, May 1st, of New Masonic Hall, London.

1736, August 1st, of the South Bridge, Edinburgh, by Lord Haddo, Grand Master.

1789, November 16th, of the new College of Edinburgh, by Lord Napier, Grand Master of Scotland.

1801, May 14th, of the Wet Docks at Leith, Scotland, by the Earl of Dalkeith, Grand Master.

1801, June 29th, of the bridge over the Spey, by the Marquis of Huntley, Prov. Grand Master for Bamffshire, Scotland.

1807, September 1st, of North Pier of Frazerburgh, New Harbor.

1809, Dec. 31, of Covent Garden Theatre, by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as Grand Master of England and Scotland.

1820, January 25th, of a Monument to the memory of Robert Burns, the mason poet, at Alloway Kirk, in Ayrshire.

1831, of Charing Cross Hospital, by the Duke of Sussex, Grand Master of England.

Digitized by Google

1834, of an embankment at Weymouth; of the Royal Arcade, at Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, by the Earl of Durham; of the Pillar of Truro; and of a monument to the memory of Sir John Malcolm, at Langholm, Scotland.

1836, of a National School at Nantwich; of the General Lunatic Asylum at Northampton, by the Earl of Spencer; of a new bridge at Redcliffe, etc.

1837, of the monument to the memory of Sir Walter Scott, who was a member of the Lodge of St. David's, Edinburgh; of the Guildhall, at Weymouth; and of the New Exchange at Wakefield, by the Earl of Mexborough.

1838, of a light-house at Gibraltar, by his excellency Major General Sir Alexander Woodford, K. C. B., assisted by Brother the Rev. Dr. Burrow, P. G. M.; and of a series of bridges and viaducts on the Glasgow and Ayr Railway.

1839, of the Athenæum in Sunderland, by the Duke of Sussex; of a monument to the Duke of Gordon; of Rochester Bridge; and a wet dock at Montrose.

1840, of a corn Exchange at Wakefield; and of Queen's Hospital at Birmington.

In the dedication ceremonies we poured Corn, Wine and Oil upon the stone, they being, when taken together, the Masonic symbol of prosperity and abundance, and by it, therefore, we manifested our sincere wishes that the superstructure might be prosperously raised, and abundantly promote the objects for which it is designed. Separately, we employ *corn* to symbolize health, strength and plently; *wine* to denote prosperity and joy; and *oil* as a token of peace and gladness. Thus far it has seemed to me proper to unveil the Arcana of our Order to the company, who have so attentively and respectfully witnessed our performances; and we trust we shall be believed when we say, in the words of a writer of the last century, that "Masonry is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols."

I congratulate you, Mr. Mayor, that the enlightened city over which you so happily preside, will enjoy so largely the economical and humane advantages to be derived from the establishment of a light-house on this, one of the most perilous localities upon these shores. Though the light here to be dispensed shall shine upon the flag of every nation that may visit these waters, yet no maritime port will reap its benefits to the same extent as that of Boston. Its navigation interests, which contribute so extensively to the welfare of our country, and minister so much to the intercourse and civilization of the world, justly merit the protection and fostering care of the federal government by all the means it can legally exercise.

Gentlemen,—It is with great pleasure I announce to you that some remarks will now be made by the worthy son of one who was for a long time, and most honorably, connected with the light-house service of the United States, and who was universally respected and esteemed by his fellow-citizens. I present to you Dr. Winslow Lewis, Past Grand Master of Massachusetts.

ADDRESS OF P. G. M. WINSLOW LEWIS.

The allusion to the memory of my father in the address of the Grand Master, will, I trust, serve as an apology for a very few remarks, not wholly inappropriate on this interesting occasion. His connection with the Order of Freemasonry for nearly sixty years, and his official relation to the G. Lodge of this State, are known to the whole Fraternity. But *here*, on this spot, where we are called on as speculative Masons to inaugurate the commencement of a magnificent Pharos, some few statements of his long continued activity and devotion to the light-house department of the United States cannot be deemed wholly irrelevant.

Digitized by Google

For nearly half a century, he was connected in a greater or less degree with this establishment, extending along our whole Atlantic coast and on the shores of our mighty lakes. In the course of this long period he was the contractor and builder of more than 200 light-houses, and ever retained the confidence of the United States government. He suggested, many years since, as the only feasible plan, that an edifice of stone should be erected, similar to this, which we now trust with confidence will be successfully completed, and he offered to contract for the same for the sum of $250,000.

He established the use of the lenses and parabolic reflectors which were in operation for so many years, until the brilliant discoveries of Fresnel again changed the mode of light, and the diaptric system was adopted in 1852.

The name of Leonore Fresnel, says a late work, is classed with the greatest of those inventive minds which extend the boundaries of human knowledge, and it will, at the same time, receive a place among those benefactors of the species who have converted their genius to the common good of mankind, and wherever maritime intercourse prevails, the solid advantages which his labors have procured will be felt and acknowledged.

I therefore claim some humble tribute to the memory of a Boston merchant, for the service he has rendered the government and our mercantile interest, which will cause his name to be held in respect and veneration by all who have business on the great deep, and trust his name will long be remembered and associated with whatever is true and excellent in man, long after the almost countless beacons, which he has erected to warn the approaching mariner of his danger, shall have crumbled into dust.

The commencement of great works like this should have the befitting accompaniment of public ceremonial. It is proper that the city fathers of Boston should give their presence and utter their congratulations, that a grand monument of science and general utility is to be placed near the commercial metropolis of New England, long we trust to direct a prosperous marine to a flourishing and happy city. Perfected science shall from this spot enable the anxious mariner to behold this warning beacon at a distance of thirty miles, lit up by an apparatus, than which, says the Encyclopedia Britannica, there is no work of art more beautiful. or more creditable to the boldness, intelligence and zeal of the artist—while all that decorated the noble structure of the Eddystone at its completion, was a feeble light from tallow candles.

I congratulate my friend the supervisor and director, on the success thus far attendant on his zeal, activity and scientific judgment, so long and so well displayed in his laborious task. Being for two years a resident on the shore nearest this scene of his labor, and after having the privilege of standing on this rock and sharing with him and his fellow-laborers, at least their unwished for ablutions, I can render my testimony to the dangers encountered and perseverance manifested in the incipiency of this peculiar task.

The Eddystone Rock, on the coast of Cornwall, is 20 feet high from low water mark. Bell Rock, in Scotland, has a large stony base. The light-house on the Skerryvore Rocks, in Argyleshire, has a base of 42 feet. But here, space is exceedingly limited, the edges of the ledge very irregular, and could only be cut at very low tides and with a smooth sea.

Robert Stevenson had the great advantage in the erection of Bell Rock Light, of placing near it a wooden barrack, and Alan Stevenson the same, while constructing the Skerryvore Light. Here no such aid could be obtained.

Digitized by Google

The very slow progress of this work shows its difficulties. Eddystone was finished in two years; Bell Rock in two years and three months, and the Skerryvore in about the same period. The Minot's Ledge light-house was commenced in 1855, and may be completed in two years from this time. No delays have interrupted its progress but those which have arisen from its formidable position, and all that indomitable will could effect has been done.

For all that he has so ably done, Capt. Alexander will deserve and receive the approbation of all. May its completion be as successful as its commencement. Though the storms may come, the tempests blow, may it prove that its foundation is not only on a rock, but on the firm basis which science and art have unitedly combined to produce.

Long may it stand, a proud monument of the preservance, liberality, philanthropy and artistic skill of the United States, and the sagacity of an enlightened and judicious government.

At the conclusion of Dr. Lewis' excellent and instructive remarks, the Mayor introduced to the audience the Hon. Edward Everett, who delivered one of those chaste and beautiful impromptu addresses for which he is so eminently distinguished. We have no room for the address entire, and therefore restrict ourselves to the concluding paragraphs:—

"But you are not alone promoting the interests of our own vast country, in erecting this noble structure. As has been well stated by the gentleman who has preceded me, it is for the common benefit of the nations. The light which you kindle, you kindle not to guide your own vessels alone. Those vessels of the friendly provinces on the North, from which we are happy to see a most respectable gentleman present on this occasion (Hon. Joseph Howe, of Halifax,) and the vessels of the neighboring republic on the South, whose late President (General Comonfort) also honors us with his presence, will equally share the benefit. Nay, sir, it will extend to the remotest regions of the civilized world, from which a ship shall go forth to navigate our waters.

"But I must not detain you, Mr. Mayor and gentlemen at this late hour. Let me close by responding to the patriotic sentiment of Captain Alexander. As the costly and important structure whose erection he has so auspiciously commenced, has been founded and carried on beneath the auspices of the government of the Union, let it prove a symbol of that Union's duration and solidity. Owing so much of our prosperity to it, let us warmly cherish and support it. Let us remember that in the event of its rupture,—which heaven in its mercy avert,—the protecting power which now spreads its ægis over us, East and West, North and South, will be forever gone;—and as you have told us, sir, that the solid foundations of the structure you are rearing are linked and bolted together with dove-tailed blocks of granite and bars of galvanized iron, so as never to be moved, so may the sister States of this Union be forever bound together, by the stronger ties of common language, kindred blood, and mutual affection."

Brief remarks were then made by Hon. Linus B. Comins, Hon. Charles R. Train, and Hon. B. C. Clark; after which the ceremonies were closed with a benediction by Rev. Dr. E. M. P. Wells.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LIGHT HOUSE.

The light-house is to be round in form and sixty feet high. The uneven surface of the ledge upon which it is to stand has been chiseled to receive the first layers

Digitized by Google

of granite. It requires three portions of layers, queerly shaped, to conform to the peculiarities of the rock, and bring it to a level surface. Several courses of stone have already been laid above the ledge. The layers are of Quincy and Cohasset granite, each stone being dovetailed to its fellow in a manner calculated to resist the fiercest assault of the elements. Each layer of granite will be perforated with eighty holes, through which bolts of iron will be driven, to assist in holding the layers together. The bolts are of the best material, and are sawed crosswise, and a beveled plug placed in the lower end, so that when driven home, the plug will flare the sections of the bolt to fit the lower and enlarged part of the hole in the granite. When once driven they cannot be drawn out again. Besides these small bolts, there will run through the whole structure, from the ledge to the first room or landing, nearly forty feet from the foundation, six or eight shafts eight inches in diameter, having a footing in the ledge, with a thread cut at the top and huge nuts to turn down and bind the whole mass of granite below. In the centre of this granite tower, reaching the floor of the first room, is a well, three feet in diameter, to hold fresh water for the occupants. The entrance will be forty feet from the foundation; and all below the entrance, with the exception of the well or tank, will be of solid granite, as it were, bolted, doubly bolted, dovetailed and cemented together. The keepers will have two or three circular rooms, lighted by small windows, high above the waves.

Surmounting this structure of granite will be a Fresnel light, set in iron and brass, ten feet high and about five feet in diameter. The lamp will have three wicks, one within the other, the outside one being about three inches in diameter. The oil will be pumped up by clock work. Outside of the lens will be constructed a great lantern of glass, to secure the whole from the elements. It is estimated that the whole work will cost about one million of dollars.

CONTENTS OF THE BOX.

The metalic box which is to be set in the corner stone will contain a silver plate, four and one-eighth by eight and seven-eighths inches, on which E. W. Bouve has beautifully engraved the following :—

The Corner Stone
of
Minot's Ledge Light House,
Laid Oct. 2, 1858,
By the Grand Lodge of Masons
of Massachusetts,
M. W. John T. Heard, Grand Master,
In presence of
The City Council of Boston.
President of the United States,
James Buchanan.
Secretary of the Treasury,
Howell Cobb.
Collector of the Port of Boston and Charlestown,
Arthur W. Austin.
Superintendent,
Capt. B. S. Alexander, U. S. A.
Governor of Massachusetts,
Nathaniel P. Banks.
Mayor of Boston,
Frederic W. Lincoln, Jr.

Digitized by Google