

had in the first place. I know how much I love you now, and I think I know how much you care for me."

The girl brushed the tears away, but did not again look at him. "Arthur," she said, "as you say, there is one right thing to do in this and in all cases, and a lot of wrong ones. I won you under false pretenses, and I am going to give you up. I owe it to you. I owe it to myself. I owe it to your family for all the pain I have given them. Then, I think, perhaps they will see there was something under the rouge after all.

"There is but one favor I still have to ask you, and if you love me as you say you do I don't see how you can very well refuse me. You must leave me here now, and never try to see me again. I am to leave the Springs tomorrow, and you can spend the rest of the summer unmolested with your mother and your sister."

"And wherever you go," he said, "I am going with you."

"I would n't if I were you," she said, "because Crowley is going with me."

"Crowley?"

"Yes, Crowley. I am going to end my notorious career by running away with the richest man at the Springs. If you come back here a year from now, or later, you will find me a gay married woman. The rouge will be a little thicker, and my hair perhaps a little lighter, but I shall still be the same old Zoë White you used to know."

"And is this the girl," said Elton, "that I

have heard talk as I have heard you talk of what a girl could do with her life and the life of the man that loved her?" She sat for a long time resting her chin in one hand, and looking across the valley.

"Yes," she said; "it 's the same girl. She talked that way under very peculiar conditions. Did you ever notice those cobs of mine? Well, if you have, you will remember that Tatters is n't nearly as good as Rags; but drive them together, and Tatters can hold up his end every time: drive him single, and he is n't even fit for the roads about here. I don't know whether you see what I mean, but I 've watched those horses so closely I see a likeness to them in everything. I was being driven at an unnatural gait, that 's all. It could n't last, because I could n't stand the strain any more than old Tatters. It just showed me what a chance some girls have. But that is all over now forever."

Elton tried to put his arm about her and say something to her, but she angrily pushed him away, and then all the flush left her face just as suddenly as it had come, and she put her hand on his shoulder just as one man does to another when he wants to show his affection for him.

"Yes," she said; "you may kiss me again, but it is for the last time. I don't belong to you any more. You must go back at once. I 've thought of this so long and so much, and I know it is best for both of us. For heaven's sake, Arthur, leave me now—won't you? Don't forget I am only a woman."

Charles Belmont Davis.

LIFE IN A LIGHTHOUSE.

(MINOT'S LEDGE.)

WITH PICTURES BY W. TABER.



AS the billows roll in from the Atlantic toward the rocky shores of Cohasset, on the south side of Boston Bay, their onward sweep is checked by a round, gray, ancient-looking tower that rises out of the sea. On a calm day the waves swash around its base, meeting on the lee side in a spout that quivers in the air, a column of liquid porphyry, to fall back again and be lost in a hundred eddies among hidden rocks, like the Little Minot and East Shag, that lie between the tower and the shore. In a stiff breeze each billow, as it strikes, sends a shower of glittering spray half-way up the tower's height of a hundred and fourteen feet, and a long breaker sweeps shoreward, its gleaming crest, which seems about to pour like a cataract into the trough of the sea, held in suspense by the mighty onrush of the wave from which it overhangs. But right in its course lies the Little Minot; and lo! the bold front of the breaker, with the power of the Atlantic at its back, is broken to foam as it closes in upon the ledge. Its crest, so long proudly poised, pours into the hollow; there is a moment of hissing and seething; a thou-

sand white tongues are licking the jagged out-cropping of rock; they meet, pass over and under one another in their undulations, swish up and swash back again, separate into countless miniature whirlpools—and then there is nothing left of the great wave but a circle of froth.

savagely upon the tower, dashing tons of spray high into the air above it—the shattered remnants of the heaving mass that a moment before struck the granite courses. For the sea meets its match in the lighthouse on Minot's Ledge. Yet the shattered wave has not spent

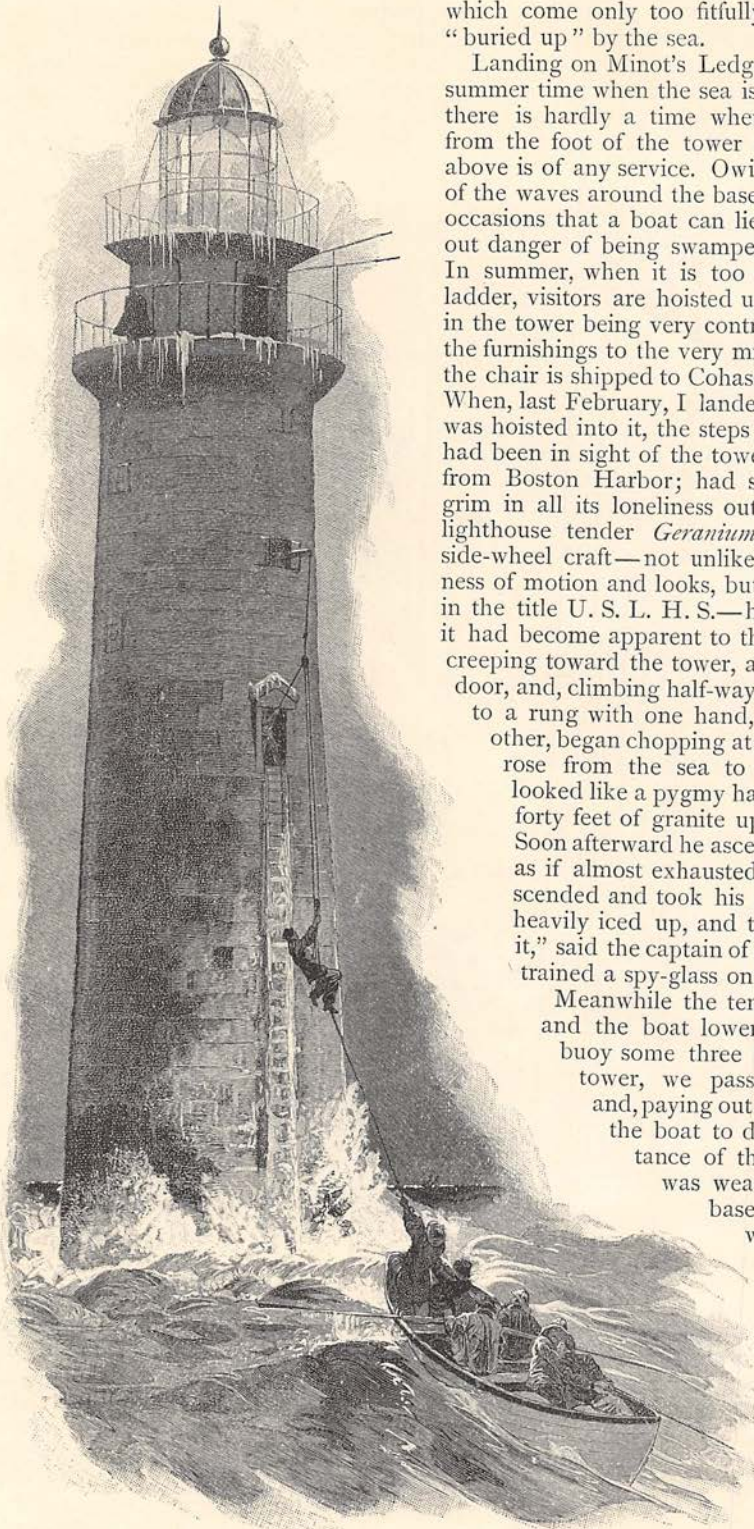


IN A NORTHEASTER.

ENGRAVED BY F. H. WELLINGTON.

But it is in a northeasterly storm that the old gray tower most grandly maintains its battle with the sea; for then the billows have had the broad expanse of storm-swept ocean over which to gather force. Long livid lines of breakers rush out from behind the threatful storm-clouds that lower upon the horizon, like the battalions of an army marshaled by the powers of the air and the sea against the structure that man has reared in defiance of their prerogative. Each wave hurls itself

its fury all in vain. It, too, can boast its moment of triumph, for it has struck terror into some hearts—not into those of the lighthouse-keepers, for throughout the shock and confusion of the storm the vigil in the watch-room is faithfully maintained; but in the keepers' dwellings on shore, between which and Minot's Ledge gleam three miles of white water,—the winding-sheet of ships,—anxious faces at the windows are watching through the night for reassuring glimpses of the light,



which come only too fitfully when the tower is all "buried up" by the sea.

Landing on Minot's Ledge is easy enough in the summer time when the sea is smooth; but in winter there is hardly a time when the ladder that runs from the foot of the tower to the door forty feet above is of any service. Owing to the peculiar wash of the waves around the base, it is only on very rare occasions that a boat can lie near the ladder without danger of being swamped or dashed to pieces. In summer, when it is too rough to land by the ladder, visitors are hoisted up in a chair; but space in the tower being very contracted, the keepers limit the furnishings to the very minimum, and in the fall the chair is shipped to Cohasset, where it hibernates. When, last February, I landed at Minot's, or rather was hoisted into it, the steps could not be used. We had been in sight of the tower since we had put out from Boston Harbor; had seen it rising gray and grim in all its loneliness out of the waves. As the lighthouse tender *Geranium*, a low, broad, black side-wheel craft—not unlike a beetle in deliberateness of motion and looks, but nevertheless rejoicing in the title U. S. L. H. S.—headed for Minot's, and it had become apparent to the keepers that she was creeping toward the tower, a figure appeared at the door, and, climbing half-way down the ladder, hung to a rung with one hand, and, with an ax in the other, began chopping at something white which rose from the sea to where he stood. He looked like a pygmy hanging there against the forty feet of granite up which the ladder ran. Soon afterward he ascended the ladder slowly, as if almost exhausted, and another man descended and took his place. "The ladder is heavily iced up, and they're trying to clear it," said the captain of the *Geranium*, who had trained a spy-glass on the tower.

Meanwhile the tender had been hove to and the boat lowered. Pulling to a spar-buoy some three hundred feet from the tower, we passed a line around it, and, paying out from the buoy, allowed the boat to drift within hailing distance of the keeper. The tower was weather-streaked, and its base up to high-water mark was covered with a greenish black ooze.

Around the base the sea was gurgling. Occasionally a breaker swept threateningly toward the boat, and the mate in the stern would haul her in by the cable toward the buoy, while the crew

A WINTER LANDING.

ENGRAVED BY CHARLES STATE.

backed water clear of the combing crest, which would have swamped her but for this manœuvering. Out of the ocean before us rose course after course of solid masonry to a deep, narrow doorway far above us, where, his hands grasping iron supports, he himself leaning out over the water, stood what seemed from our distance a diminutive human figure in dark blue. The answer to our hail came back faintly above the noisy sea. It was too rough to land at the ladder, and even if it were not, the lower half was so thickly incrustated with ice that no one could retain a foothold on it; but if the block and tackle could be rigged before the sea roughened, I might be hoisted into the tower. The assistant inspector had told me before I left the tender that this might be the only way of landing me, adding, "If you don't like the looks of the rig, come back, and we'll try some other day"; so that I had determined to make the attempt, no matter at what risk. In a deep port-hole two stories above the door a spar had been rigged. To this was attached a block through which ran a rope ending in a loop. A coil of line fastened to the loop was held in the hand of the keeper, who stood in the doorway. The boat was paid out from the buoy, the keeper threw the line, and as it fell across the boat one of the crew seized it and hauled it in. Straddling the loop, and grasping the rope above it with both hands, I gave the signal, and the keepers began hoisting, while one of the boat's crew slowly paid out the line to which the loop was attached. I was literally hanging between sea and sky, being hoisted upward and at the same time across toward the tower. It was a gray day. Where the sea below me shallowed over the jagged rocks around the base of the tower, I saw a tangle of slimy seaweed swirl half-way up to the surface and sink slowly out of sight. The little craft was now rising upon the waves, now lying in the trough of the sea, now backing toward the buoy, now moving away from it, according to the changing condition of the sea—and at Minot's it is ever changing. An accident to the boat or to the man who held the line attached to the loop, and no earthly power could have prevented my being dashed against the tower. But at last I had been raised to a level with the door, and was allowed to swing slowly into the arms of the keeper, who hauled me in, and was apparently as glad as I was to see me safely landed.

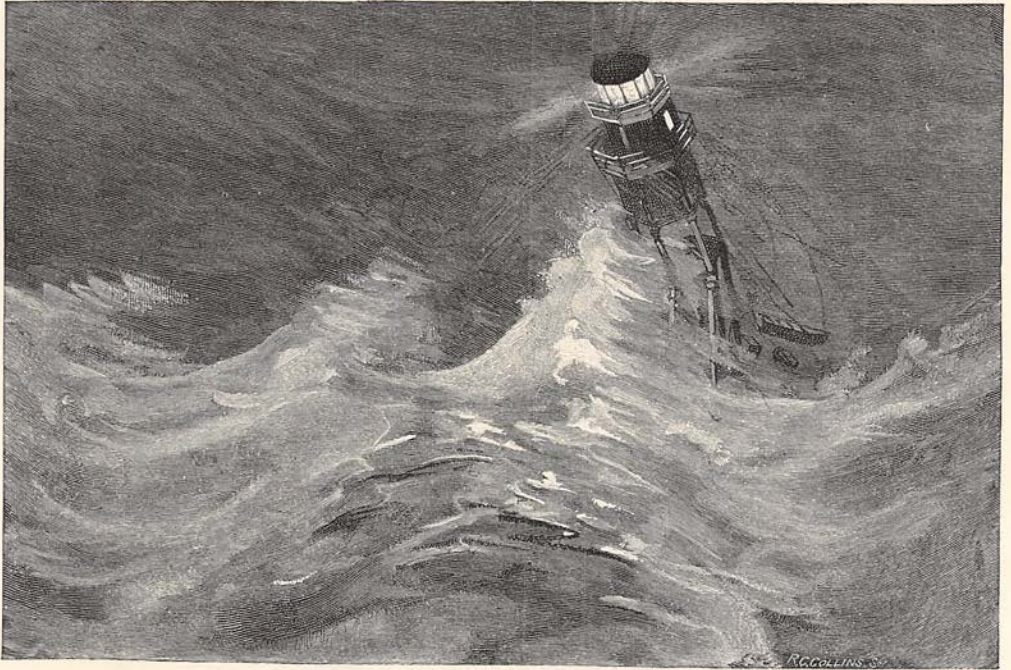
I found myself in a circular, brick-lined room, or rather cell, which received its only light through the deep, narrow door so high above the base of the tower that, as one looked out through it from the center of the room, it framed in nothing but a distant vista of heaving sea and gray, scurrying clouds. In the wall opposite



A SUMMER LANDING.

the door was a small, deep window, like the port-hole in a casemate. Its heavy wooden shutter was securely bolted, yet water was dripping from the granite recess into a bucket on the floor, with such force does the sea strike the tower on Minot's Ledge. An iron stairway curved along the wall through an iron ceiling to the story above. The granite floor was wet from spray that had been blown in through the doorway, and the roar of the sea reverberated within the confines of the room.

By all who are familiar with the dangers to which it is exposed and the difficulties which had to be overcome in its construction, the Minot's Ledge Lighthouse is considered a great work of engineering—greater, many experts think, than the famous Eddystone, because outlying ledges somewhat protect the latter against the assaults of the sea, and the rock on which



THE WRECK OF THE FIRST LIGHTHOUSE.

ENGRAVED BY R. C. COLLINS.

it stands, being all above water, offers a better foundation surface than Minot's. The Outer Minot, the most exposed rock among the ledges on which the Minot's Ledge Lighthouse stands, is entirely submerged at high tide. Not until three quarters ebb do the first jagged points jut out above the water, and preliminary surveys showed that a surface only thirty feet in diameter was exposed at extreme low tide.

The lighthouse on Minot's Ledge stands within the shadow of a tragedy. It is the second structure erected upon the ledge. The first lighthouse and the lives it held were claimed by the sea. Begun in 1847 and completed in November, 1848, it was overwhelmed in April, 1851. Its destruction was the most tragic event in the history of our lighthouse establishment. The structure was an octagonal tower supported upon wrought-iron piles strengthened by braces. The piles penetrated five feet into the rock. On the braces, thirty-four and a half feet above the rock, the keeper had constructed a platform for the storage of bulky articles, and had fastened to the lantern-deck, sixty-three feet above the rock, a five-and-a-half-inch hawser which he had anchored to a seven-ton granite block. Along this hawser articles were hoisted up to the platform, and there landed. These "improvements" were convenient—and fatal; not, however, to the keeper who made them, for he was on shore when the storm which has

become historic for its fury burst over the coast.

On Monday, April 14, 1851, there was a strong easterly gale blowing. At that time there were on the tower two assistant keepers and a friend of the principal keeper. The visitor became frightened at the first indication of a storm, and, in response to a signal from the tower, a boat put off from Cohasset and took him ashore. On Tuesday the wind swung around to the northeast, the most dangerous quarter from which the elements can hurl themselves upon Minot's, as they then rejoice in the accumulated fury of miles of wind-torn sea. By the 16th it had increased to a hurricane, and the tower was so completely buried in the heavy seas that nothing of it could be seen by the group of anxious watchers at Cohasset. About four o'clock in the evening of the 16th the platform was washed ashore. Then the watchers knew that the water had risen to within seven feet of the tower. At nightfall it was seen that the light was burning. It was observed at fitful intervals until ten o'clock that night, when it was finally lost to sight. At one o'clock on the morning of Thursday, April 17, just at the turn of the flood, when the out-streaming tide and the intruding hurricane met at Minot's, a violent tolling of the lighthouse bell was heard. After that no sound rose above the din of the storm. About six o'clock in the morning a man walking along the shore

saw a chair washed up a little distance ahead of him. Examining it, he recognized it as having been in the watch-room of the tower. After this discovery no one had any doubts of the tragedy which had been enacted behind the curtain of the storm. When it lifted, naught was seen over Minot's Ledge but the sea, its white crests streaming triumphantly in the gale.

It is believed by those competent to judge of such matters that the destruction of the tower was due to the surface which the platform constructed by the keeper offered to the waves, and to the strain of the hawser upon the structure. Every time this hawser was struck by a sea it actually tugged at the tower. There seems also little doubt that the sum appropriated by Congress for the building of the lighthouse was insufficient by about two thirds for such a structure as the perilous situation called for.

When the site was visited after the disaster, the bent and broken stumps of the iron piling were found in the rocks. Their appearance indicated that before the tower fell it had been bent to leeward until it actually hung over the wild and crested waters. This brought to mind the sudden violent tolling of the bell at one o'clock in the morning of that fatal 17th of April. No other conclusion seems possible than that when the tower heeled over to leeward each wave, as it swept over the parapet, struck the bell and set it swinging, so that the sea itself tolled the knell of the souls it was about to claim.

There is an incident in the tragedy of Minot's Ledge that should always be remembered. Up to the last moment the men on the tower kept the light, for its gleam was seen through the storm-scud until the hurricane closed in too thick for the light to be visible. Of the men who thus did their duty face to face with death for the honor of the lighthouse service of the United States, one was a German, the other a Portuguese. No monument has been erected to these brave fellows; probably the idea of one has never been broached. Not even their names are remembered; for if you attempt to discover something of these humble heroes in Cohasset, all you will learn is that one was a "Dutchman" and the other a "Portugee."

"They hung to duty to the last," said the present keeper of Minot's Ledge Lighthouse, concluding his story of the tragedy to me one night in the watch-room, while a northeaster roared around the lantern, and the spray came rattling down upon it, the old tower meantime shaking the water off like a dog that has had a wetting. Such nights our thoughts naturally reverted to the men who had perished at their posts on the very spot where the tower in which

we sat was built. The body of one of them was found among the seaweed around East Shag. The other was never recovered.

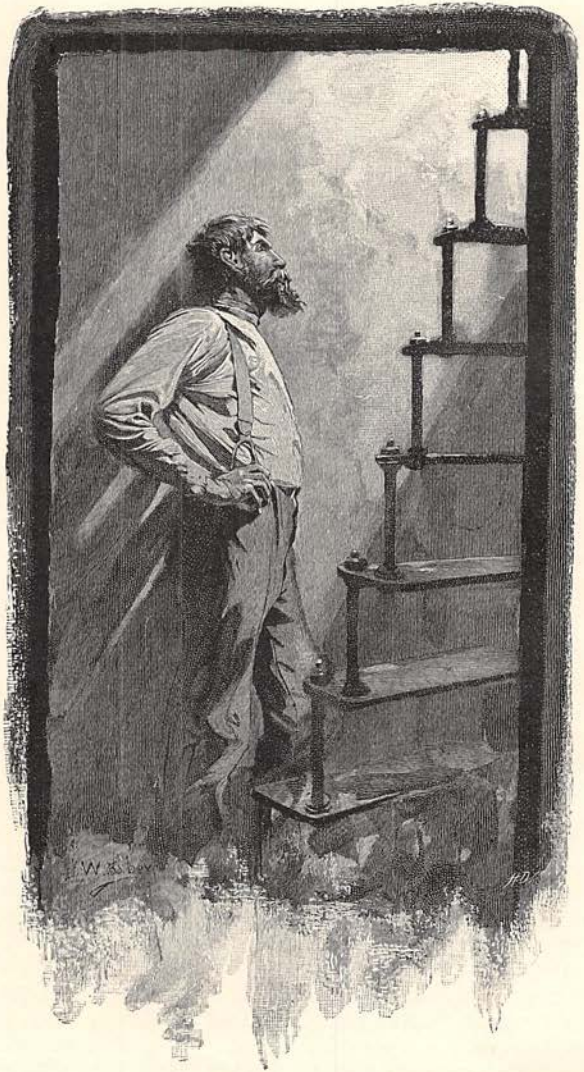
Of these two whose spirit is it that is believed to revisit Minot's Ledge? For there have been keepers of the present tower who have affirmed that one of those who perished with the old lighthouse haunts the spot. Strange noises have been heard in the oil-room—sudden rattling of cans and clinking of glass, as if some one were at work there. Stories are also current of the mysterious filling of the lamp and cleaning of the lens and lantern. In the old tower, when a watch was at an end, the keeper in the watch-room summoned the keeper below by rapping on the stovepipe which ran up from the lower room, and the other keeper would rap in reply to notify the watch that he had heard the signal and would be up immediately. In the present tower the watch is called and the answer given by electric bells. One night, as the midnight watch was drawing to a close, the keeper in the watch-room, who had been brooding over the destruction of the old tower, quite unconsciously leaned forward and rapped with his pipe. A few minutes later he was startled to hear an answering rap from below. Every moment he expected the other keeper to appear and relieve him. After waiting in vain, he pressed the button of the electric bell, and after the usual interval the bell in the watch-room rang the reply from below, and the steps of the relieving watch were heard on the iron stairs. He had not heard the rapping, and therefore had made no reply, his first intimation of the change of watch having been the ringing of the bell!

The Minots are off the southeastern chop of Boston Bay. Vessels standing in for Boston Harbor, and losing their bearings in a northeaster, would be apt to be driven on the ledges, unless warned off by a friendly beacon. Indeed, here was, before the establishment of the light, a veritable ocean graveyard. Even since then there have been heartrending disasters, such as the breaking to pieces of the ship *St. John* on the Hogshead, when all but one of the hundred and sixty people aboard her were lost, the survivor being a woman who, lashed to a spar, was washed ashore in a half-frozen condition. Many corpses, among them women with children clasped to their breasts, drifted in on the "porridge-ice" with which the harbor was filled.

After the destruction of the first lighthouse, Congress made an appropriation for the building of another. The tower which now stands upon Minot's Ledge was designed by General J. G. Totten, and erected by Captain Barton S. Alexander, both of the Engineer Corps of the United States army. Captain Alexander's

work on the tower is considered second in importance only to that of the designer; for, owing to the exposed site, many difficulties had to be overcome in the course of construction. Work could be carried on only from April to September, the sea being too rough at other times to admit of the workmen gaining a footing on the ledge, or even of approaching it with safety. The first blow was struck Sunday morning, July 1, 1855. The building of Minot's Ledge Lighthouse was a work for humanity, and therefore Sunday, the first day the weather had been propitious for beginning operations, was utilized. The weather allowed of only one hundred and thirty working hours at the ledge that entire season. Preparing a partly submerged rock to receive the foundations of a granite tower is quite a different matter from digging a hole in the ground on shore. Guards in boats constantly plied around the ledge to pick up workmen who might be washed off into the sea, and their services were frequently required. Not until July 9, 1857, could the first stone be laid. During that season there were again only one hundred and thirty working hours at the ledge. Anticipating such a contingency, Captain Alexander had picked out a force of good all-round workmen, so that when work had to be suspended on the ledge the morale of his force would be maintained by keeping the men occupied on shore in shaping the granite blocks for the tower, and fitting the courses on a model, so that no time would be lost in correcting errors after the blocks had been shipped to the ledge. As a matter of fact, work on the model disclosed several miscalculations which would have caused annoying delay had they not been discovered in time to be rectified on shore. The tower was completed September 16, 1860, in 1102 hours and 21 minutes, at a cost of \$300,000. In shape it is the frustum of a cone, one hundred and fourteen feet and one inch in height, including the lantern. The first full course of masonry is thirty feet in diameter. Except for a narrow well running down through the center to the rock, the tower is a piece of solid granite masonry to the store-room, forty feet above. The well, besides storing water for the keepers' use, serves as an indicator of danger; for should there be a crack in

the masonry, it would leak. The store-room is one of five stories above the solid base. Each consists of one circular room lined with brick, and has a deep port-hole. All the stairways in the tower are iron, and so are the ceilings, except that of the fifth story, which is granite, is arched, and forms the top of the tower proper. These rooms are fourteen feet in diameter. The watch-room, lantern, and



ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON,
WATCHING THE LIGHT.

dome are built above the tower proper, the cornice of which forms a parapet around the watch-room, while part of the bronze metal ceiling of the latter serves the same purpose for the lantern-deck. The lantern is framed in iron, and iron supports slant from the edge of the lantern-parapet to the top of the framework.

The masonry work of the base is strengthened by eight iron shafts set in the rock at the same points as the piling of the first tower; there are dowels between each course in the base, and the courses above the base are dove-tailed. Indeed, the whole tower is so closely bolted and knit together that it seems destined to last as long as the rock on which it stands.

Over the store-room is the kitchen, where the keepers also eat their meals. Above this is the bedroom of the assistant keepers, that of the keeper being on the third floor. Though furnished with only the most necessary articles, there is little moving room left. Toilet is made at the kitchen sink, an arrangement which experience has proved to be the simplest and the best adapted to the circumstances. The fourth floor is the oil-room, where the nights' supply of oil for the lamp is kept, the annual consumption being about 875 gallons. The watch-room—the drawing-room of Minot's Ledge Lighthouse—is above this. Here the keepers sit when they are not busy during the day, and from here they watch the light at night, the watches lasting from 4 P. M. to 8 P. M., 8 P. M. to 12 M., 12 M. to 4 A. M., 4 A. M. to 6 A. M.

The routine of duty on Minot's Ledge is the same as in any other lighthouse, but it is gone through under somewhat different circumstances. At the end of the dog-watch at 6 A. M., the assistant keeper, who also officiates as cook, prepares breakfast. This is usually ready by half-past six. The electric bell rouses the other keeper from his sleep in time for him to make his toilet. This is a very simple matter on Minot's Ledge—at least in winter. It does not take a man long to put on his clothes there, because, on account of the dampness and cold of the sleeping-rooms, he usually goes to bed with most of his clothes on. I remember one night, when the tower was "sweating" inside, as it often does in winter, we divested ourselves only of jackets and shoes, piled sheets, blankets, and quilts over us, and even then had difficulty in keeping thoroughly warm. I have referred to the bucket which stood under the store-room window to receive water which might drip from the sill. A bucket stands under every window in the tower. The windows on the northeast side are always kept closed in winter, and the heavy wooden shutters bolted, yet the seas strike the tower with such searching power that it was found necessary to run a little gutter along each sill, and to lead a rubber tube from it into the pail; and during severe storms the pails on the weather side often require emptying once an hour. No one thinks of going to bed on Minot's Ledge in winter without a cap or other warm head-covering.

By the time one is dressed—if putting on one's shoes and jacket can be called dressing—

and has washed in the icy water from the well in the granite base, the breakfast is steaming on the table; and a very good breakfast it usually is, for Minot's Ledge is bountifully stocked with provisions. Good food and a pipe of good tobacco are the only luxuries that tend to ameliorate life in this tower.

Breakfast over, and the dishes washed (neatness is of course scrupulously observed), the lamp is trimmed and polished, the lens wiped, and the lantern cleaned. As regards the lamp-chimney, if you ask a lighthouse-keeper the best way to wash lamp-chimneys, he will tell you the best way is not to wash them at all. Rubbing with a dry cloth is the correct method. There is considerable brass-work about the lamp to keep as bright as a mirror, and the care of the lens is a delicate matter. To those whose idea of a lens is derived from a camera or a telescope, the lens which surrounds a lighthouse lamp will be a novelty. It is a veritable structure in itself, consisting of rings of glass, many of them prismatic, built around the lantern. In a second-order light like Minot's, the lens stands four feet high. Not a breath must dim the clearness of



CLEANING THE LANTERN, OUTSIDE.

this beautiful glass-work, which on a bright day reflects all the hues of the rainbow, and at night causes the lamp to cast its grateful rays fifteen and a half miles out to sea.

Cleaning the lantern is at times an arduous

task, and not infrequently a perilous one. The spray is apt to freeze upon it, and no matter how savagely the gale may be blowing, the keepers are obliged to brave it outside upon the lantern-deck, nearly ninety feet above the sea, while washing the ice off the glass with glycerin. As the upper part of the lantern cannot be reached from the deck, it is necessary for the keepers to stand upon the narrow rail of the parapet and, leaning forward, grasp an iron support with one hand, while washing the glass with a cloth in the other. The cold and danger to which the keeper is exposed while performing this task during a winter gale can readily be imagined. A misstep would precipitate him into the riotous sea far below.

When lamp, lens, and lantern have been cleaned, and the yellow shades inside the lantern lowered, the lens is carefully covered with a white cloth, and the keepers do chores, such as making their beds,

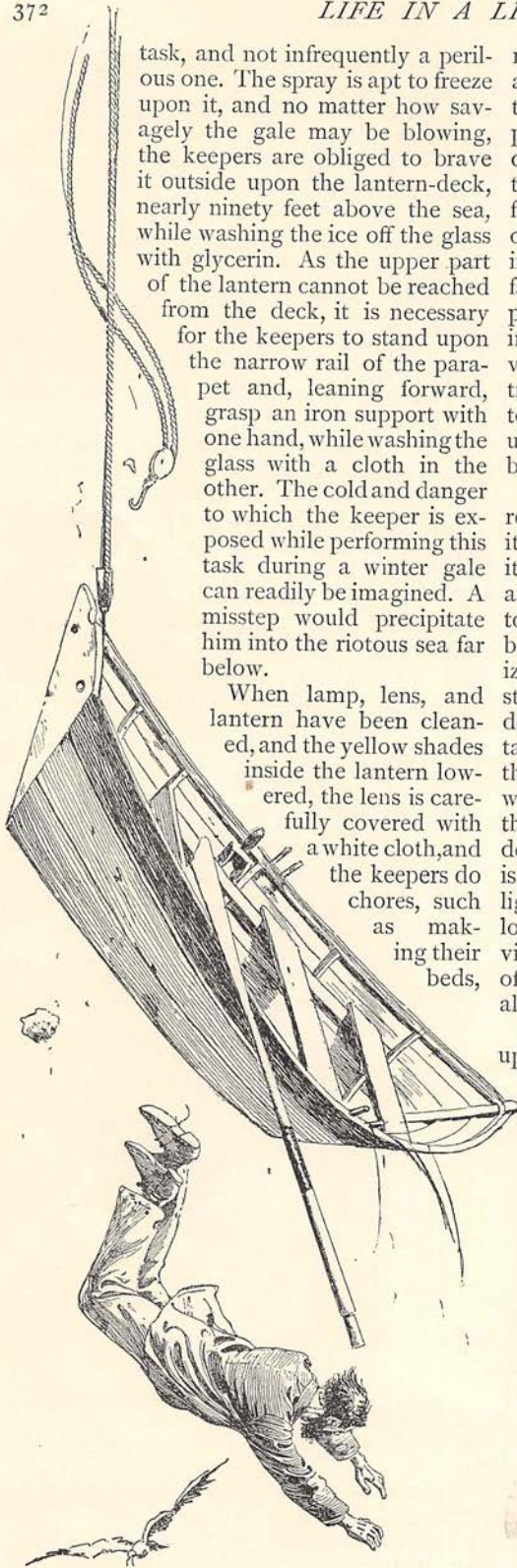
renovating the white paint on the brick lining, and putting on necessary little touches here and there to maintain the scrupulous neatness of the premises which is embraced within the meaning of the phrase "keeping a good light." That is the test by which a lighthouse-keeper stands or falls. It means that he must not only get out of the lenticular apparatus and its accessories in his care a ray that will pierce the darkness as far as the full capacity of the apparatus will permit, but also that he must keep the premises in perfect order. The *esprit de corps* that prevails in the lighthouse service is well illustrated by the fact that the keepers of the first tower on Minot's Ledge "kept a good light" up to the moment the tower was overwhelmed by the sea.

The leisure hours are spent in the watch-room. In size it is little more than a cell, but it has the advantage over the rooms below that it receives daylight through the lee port-hole and through a manhole in the ceiling leading to the lantern-deck. It is ten feet in diameter, but not even all of this small space can be utilized. There are a manhole in the floor for the stairway from below, the stairs to the lantern-deck, the columnar support of the lamp, which takes up the center of the room, and at one side the incased machinery for striking the fog-bell, which stands on the parapet outside. Add to these a stove, two chairs, and a high, shallow desk, and it may easily be realized that there is little moving room left. On the desk is the lighthouse journal, which takes the place of the log-book on a vessel. Herein are noted the visits of the inspector, the coming and going of the keepers, and similar details. You may also read such entries as:

"Broke ice from lantern. Tower heavily iced up. . . . A lonesome, snowy day."

The present keeper does not enter items like the last. "Every day here is lonesome," he said, "so that I might just as well enter, 'A lonesome, sunny day.'"

An entry that tells of breaking ice from the lantern and of the icing up of the tower is usually made after a heavy northeaster—one of those storms during which the lighthouse is so completely buried by the heavy seas that from the shore the tower by day and the light by night are invisible, except perhaps at fitful intervals; and the keepers' families take turns standing watch at the windows of the dwellings, fearful of a repetition of the calamity of April, 1851. During such storms the heavy seas strike the tower about twenty feet above the base with such force as to send tons of spray some twenty-five feet above the dome,—or over a hundred feet into the air,—and the great mass, not losing its onward rush, comes crashing down



THE ACCIDENT TO THE KEEPER.

upon the lantern, and streams over it on to the parapet and into the ocean beyond. Hanging from davits on this side, with some ninety feet of rope coiled near each davit, is a small life-boat. Though it is swung eighty feet above the sea, it would be dashed to pieces against the parapet if it were on the weather side. Even as it is, the water pours into the boat with such force that it would probably be broken from the davits were it not kept unplugged.

I shall never forget my sensation when the first heavy sea struck the tower during my stay there last February. I was sitting with the assistant keeper in the watch-room. Both of us were reading. At the head of three of the staircases in the tower are heavy iron doors. Suddenly there was a clangorous shock, as if these ponderous doors had crashed to in unison, and a moment later all the demons of the storm seemed to be let loose around the top of the tower, such was the confused roar of wind and water above and about us, the only rhythmic sound being the dismal striking of the fog-bell. "She 's taking on a sea," was all the keeper said. After one of these storms the tower is covered with ice, and tons of it hang from the side of the parapet. As the weather moderates, heavy pieces break off with a loud report, and plunge into the ocean.

Even in perfectly calm weather sounds of the sea eighty feet below rise to the watch-room. The store-room door is kept open as much as possible for ventilation, and the swash of the waves around the foot of the tower travels up through the five stories to the watch-room like a long-drawn gurgle. This, varied with the turmoil of the storm, is all the keepers of Minot's Ledge hear in winter besides their own voices. About their only diversions are reading, and playing games, like cards and draughts, and of these they naturally weary. Even in playing games they cannot make themselves comfortable; for as there is no space for a table in the watch-room, they are obliged to stand up to the bell-casing. "The trouble with our life here," said the keeper, "is that we have too much time to think." Not many years ago one keeper thought so much that he left the watch-room, went below, and cut his throat. Instances when keepers new to life on Minot's have been so frightened by the shock of only moderately heavy seas against the tower that they have left it the first chance possible, have not been uncommon. "No money 'll hire me to stay on Minot's," exclaimed one of these deserters, as he followed his gripsack down the line into the boat.

On the lantern-deck above the watch-room is a spy-glass, and frequently the keepers train this glass upon their dwellings ashore. The principal keeper has children who are attend-

ing school, and at the hour for their leaving or returning home he will invariably be found glass in hand in the lantern or on the parapet. In some respects this proximity to shore adds to the loneliness of life on Minot's. The keepers see what they crave constantly before them without being able to attain it. If, for instance, the keeper's children go to or return from school at some unusual hour, and he misses seeing them, he worries until he catches



THE FOG-BELL.

a glimpse of them again. The keepers are also alarmed if they see a small boat putting out from shore in winter time, apprehensive that it means bad news from home.

Pacing the parapet is the only outdoor exercise Minot's Ledge affords. It may readily be imagined that neither a tennis-court nor a base-ball diamond can be laid out on it. It is a few feet in width, and encircles a room only ten feet in diameter. One cannot walk clear around because the fog-bell obstructs the passage on one side, and in winter the gale is usually so savage that one dare not venture on the weather side.

During my stay at Minot's I often went out on the parapet at night, and peered over the rail into the blackness below me, out of which issued the voice of the sea. There was something indescribably grand in this surging of the unseen ocean. One night, after a gray, threatening day, as I was standing upon the parapet, I heard a sudden rush of wind, and through the halo that surrounded the lantern there scurried what seemed to be myriads of white, ghost-like birds without a twitter or even

the rustle of a feather, driven before the storm, and vanishing into the darkness as suddenly as they had emerged from it. Cold, feathery flakes blown into my face told me that this weird effect was produced by a snow-squall whirling around the tower. Another night, as I came out upon the parapet, I was startled to find the sky ribbed with black lines that formed the framework of a huge dome centering directly above the tower. A fog had closed in, and against it were projected the vastly elongated shadows of the iron supports that run from the lantern-deck to the dome above it, while the light, as it was thrown upon the fog by the lens, filled in the spaces with a dun glare that was unearthly in its effect.

The boat that swings from the parapet eighty feet above the sea is lowered only in emergencies. It is remembered of a former keeper that when a small craft was capsized near the tower, he leaped into the lighthouse boat, cast off the lines, and let it descend at full speed. Fortunately, neither cable fouled, otherwise the boat would have remained hanging, stern or bow up, as the case might have been, and the keeper would have been dashed to pieces on the rocks; for, as it was low tide, the ledge was not wholly submerged. At one time a dory was swung from the parapet. While a keeper was letting himself down in it the wood-work in the bow gave way, and the dory hung by its stern, the keeper falling from a great height headlong into the water. Luckily it was flood-tide, but he struck with such force that he penetrated the water far enough to feel the seaweed on the rocks, and he suffers from the effects of the shock to this day. It was discovered that some one had tampered with the dory — with the purpose, it is supposed, of creating a vacancy in the lighthouse service, repulsive as the thought may be.

There are four keepers at Minot's Ledge, or, to be more exact, one keeper and three assistants. They alternate two and two on the tower every fortnight, excepting when stormy weather forbids a landing at the ledge. Keepers have been storm-bound there seven weeks, and when the storm abated sufficiently for them to be lowered by the rope, have discovered, when the boat came out for them, that the door was so heavily iced up they would be unable to

open it for several days. It may seem that, with every other fortnight ashore, the keepers of Minot's Ledge have an undue proportion of vacation. But as a matter of fact the two weeks on the tower drag like two years, while the two weeks ashore glide by like two hours. The time ashore is not a holiday, for there is much work to be done about the dwellings and grounds. Yet the position of keeper or assistant on Minot's Ledge is eagerly sought for — by those who have never tried it. Were I asked after my experience on Minot's Ledge to define a sea-rock lighthouse, I should reply, "A prison surrounded by water."

The keepers' dwellings are prettily situated on the Cohasset shore. In an emergency the men on the tower set a signal, in response to which the keepers on shore put off in a small boat. Several days elapsed after I had finished my work on Minot's Ledge before the keeper thought the sea had gone down sufficiently to warrant him in setting the signal. By the time the boat was half-way out the waves had roughened up so that he was obliged to lower the signal, and the little craft turned back. I was detained for three days longer before the boat, after the fourth attempt to reach the tower, succeeded in taking me off by means of the block and tackle. No wonder that days before their tour of duty on the tower ends, the keepers anxiously watch every change of the weather. I experienced the sensation of joy that must thrill through them when they reach shore, when at last I sprang from the gunwale of the little boat to *terra firma*.

Passing up the road that led to the village, I turned as it wound away from the shore for a last look out to sea. On a rocky slope near the dwellings stood one of the keepers, spy-glass in hand. About him, and looking anxiously seaward, was a group of women and children. Beyond the low land of the little harbor the sea was boiling over innumerable rocks and ledges. Against the background of ominous storm-clouds stood the gray tower, the waves, as they dashed against it, tossing the spray high up toward the parapet, from which only a few hours before I had watched the keepers' boat put out from shore. Such was my last glimpse of Minot's Ledge Lighthouse.

Gustav Kobbé.

