



ON THE WAY TO THE QUARRIES

THE CAPE ANN QUARRIES

The train for Cape Ann had left the Boston station, and was emerging from smutty railroad sidings and factories into regions where, beyond fields of broken creamy ice, spotted with dark haycocks, you could make out the line of pale blue sea. Anastasia was applying her face to the cold window-pane, whitened with frost and blackened with cinders, and was trying to make her enjoyment of the view predominate over a not unnatural dislike to the prospect of spending a long day alone upon what her best advisers considered a wild-goose chase. Many times had Anastasia hunted that adventurous bird, which had led her over such pleasant hills and dales that she regarded most of these excursions as something better than a waste of time and car tickets. But on this January morning, with no companion by her side, the high spirits began to flag, which had supported her through perils of slippery sidewalks and vigils in ladies' rooms. It was too evident that Bessy was not coming, and Anastasia, while the dark hay-cocks flew by, was repeating to herself the time-worn pieces of consolation which on such occasions always failed to console her. "I ought to be perfectly happy," she was reflecting. "I'm doing just what I wanted to do, and the country is very picturesque, I know, only

somehow I don't feel it, and it's ridiculous for an art student to mind going about alone, and everybody will be civil to me, for I'm in my own country now—" when a touch on her elbow made her turn round sharply, fear and indignation blazing in her eyes. Was this American civility?

"Bessy" cries our student, and folded the new-comer in an embrace quite too fervid for the conventionalities of the car. "Where have you been 7—in the wrong car o Never mind; now I have you, I'll take the best of care of you." And Bessy good-naturedly acquiesced, though she was far more capable of taking care of Anastasia.

The ice-fields and the blue sea and the snowy pastures, with their streaks of dark grass and rock, now began to assume the most charming appearance in Anastasia's eyes, and she was rummaging in her bag for her stout shabby sketch-book, when Bessy asked to be told the object of the expedition. "You only said in the telegram, "Rockport, Thursday, ten forty-five,"" she observed. "Of course I came. I love Cape Ann as well as you do, and perhaps I love you more than Cape Ann. But I can't help wondering why you chose this particular time."



PREPARING TO UNLOAD

“Why, look here!” cried Anastasia, and she showered upon Bessy’s lap all the drawings which illustrate this article, or, to speak more properly, which this article obscures. “Look at all these ” “This one seems to be on the side of a Pyramid in Egypt, judging by the great piled-up rocks,” said Bessy. “We’re in the wrong direction for that, Nancy dear.” “Your guess isn’t such a bad one,” said Anastasia; “it’s the fashion now to say that the Pyramids were hills of rock once, and it’s a hill of rock you are looking at. It bears an Egyptian name too, though it’s not what the Pyramids were made of.” “An Egyptian name ” said Bessy, looking puzzled. “Did you never hear of Assouan, that wild town by the first Nile cataract?” said her friend. “It’s odd to think that its Greek form, Syene, has been turned into a word so common on our Massachusetts ledges as syenite, which you and I are to hear twenty times to-day.” Bessy still looked mystified. “I thought our granite wasn’t the real Upper Egyptian syenite,” said she. “And I thought Quincy was the place for granite, and we are turning our backs upon Quincy.” “You’re quite right,” said her friend; “but our granite—what they call hornblende granite now—was for a long time called syenite, for all that, so the books say, and the name isn’t yet worn out. And we are going to a place where there is a great deal of it. Mr. Crosby says in his State Report that probably Cape Ann exists

because of a long granite wall which begins at Natick and ends at Rockport.” “But what makes you come out to examine this particular granite wall?” said Bessy. “There’s plenty more granite in eastern Massachusetts; for instance, the Blue Hills, where the Quincy quarries are. You see I also have read Mr. Crosby’s Report.” “Why, the artists who made these drawings set my mind upon coming to Rockport,” said Anastasia. “They were there last summer. And when I had seen them I felt as if I must go there myself. If only I could do anything like that ” Bessy privately wondered whether Nancy’s drawings were likely to be half as good as those in her lap. She went on listening, however, with her habitual and sincere air of sympathy. “And then, besides,” her friend was saying, “I’ve always wanted to know something about granite. You know the old saying that granite and ice are the principal natural products, which we Massachusetts people export. Today, I imagine, we shall see ice enough as well as granite.” “Is it true that our granite is so important to us?” said Bessy. “The value of the product of the granite quarries of Massachusetts was nearly a million and a half dollars in 1875,” said her friend.

“There are only three agricultural products which are so valuable to our State. By-the-way, they put ice down in our State census as an agricultural



SANDING A SLAB

product: that was worth rather over half a million in the same year. It's a very entertaining book, that State census. The list of mines, quarries, and so forth, is edifying enough. The granite, of course, is far ahead of anything else there in the value of its product. But we have gold mines too—only they put 'supposed' before them—and asbestos mines. There are ten acres of asbestos mines in Massachusetts."

"The granite and ice are more characteristic," said Bessy. "Some people think - that we all of us

carry them with us when ever we leave Massachusetts—that we are as cold as one and as hard as the other."

"Dear me! no," said Nancy. "We're cool and firm, not cold and hard. However, you must remember, if you make such comparisons, that granite is not always so hard, either. Don't you know it was melted, to begin with?—all white hot, flowing out of the centre of the earth?"

“Some geologists think it was not,” said Bessy. “However, I know, dear Anastasia, that you occasionally turn white-hot, and I’m ready to believe that the granite does. It also, I hear, explodes sometimes in case of fire.”

“Yes,” said Anastasia, looking into her notebook. “That’s because of the unequal expansion of the parts. You’re telling me all the things I meant to tell you. I’ve been looking them up in the encyclopaedia, or rather in several different encyclopædias. Did you know, Bessy, that Mont Blanc was of granite, and the Aiguilles, which you admire so much?”

“There isn’t anything of that sort at Rockport, is there?” said Bessy. “The country hereabouts doesn’t promise it.” “No. I suppose these are the low, rounded hills, scantily covered with vegetation, which the *Briannica* tells about. How charming the Manchester shore is and how the people who own all these pretty houses must hate to leave their perches on the rocks above the sea! Bessy, you can’t share all my emotions here, because you have never sketched in Manchester and Magnolia and Gloucester. Magnolia Point used to be, once upon a time, the nearest approach to a French sketching town of which this shore could boast. Our easels by the road-side blew over as often as if we had been in Normandy, and to my mind the sea was much bluer and the sun brighter. I never can enter the wood by the little station without remembering the kind friends, the clever set, who used to sit on the platform here in October, with bundles of canvas, waiting regretfully for the Boston train. I used to think we had American Art herself in some of those packages.”

“Cheer up, my dear impressionist, or naturalist, if that’s what you call yourself,” says Bessy; “remember the Gloucester etchers and sketchers, and the drawings in your bag. There’s plenty of good summer work done on our cape still, and before you know it some of you will be able to paint Captain John Smith himself discovering it, and naming it, as we all know he did, after the beautiful Princess Tragabigzanda.”

They had not ended their idle talk when their journey ended in the Rockport station. They took possession of the ladies’ room, which Anastasia, who had seen many, pronounced a very good one. They ate their lunch, drank their coffee, after bringing it to a tolerably lukewarm temperature upon the stove, and, much heartened and refreshed, they started on their walk to Pigeon Cove, leaving behind them Rockport village, picturesque above the water.

It was not too cold a day for them to enjoy the keen air, the hard road, and the constantly changing views of the rock and sea at their right, and of the little weather-stained houses tightly shut against the frost, with here and there boats hauled up into their brown gardens. But I think they had most pleasure in feeling that they were in a country strange to them both, and that not one of the people they met knew who they were. For neither of these young ladies was insensible to the charm possessed by an unknown high-road—a charm which George Sand describes better than any one else. If the two friends had been of gypsy family, they would never have left the family profession; and it is to be supposed that it was this turn of mind which two hundred years ago had led their ancestors over the rough path of the western sea.

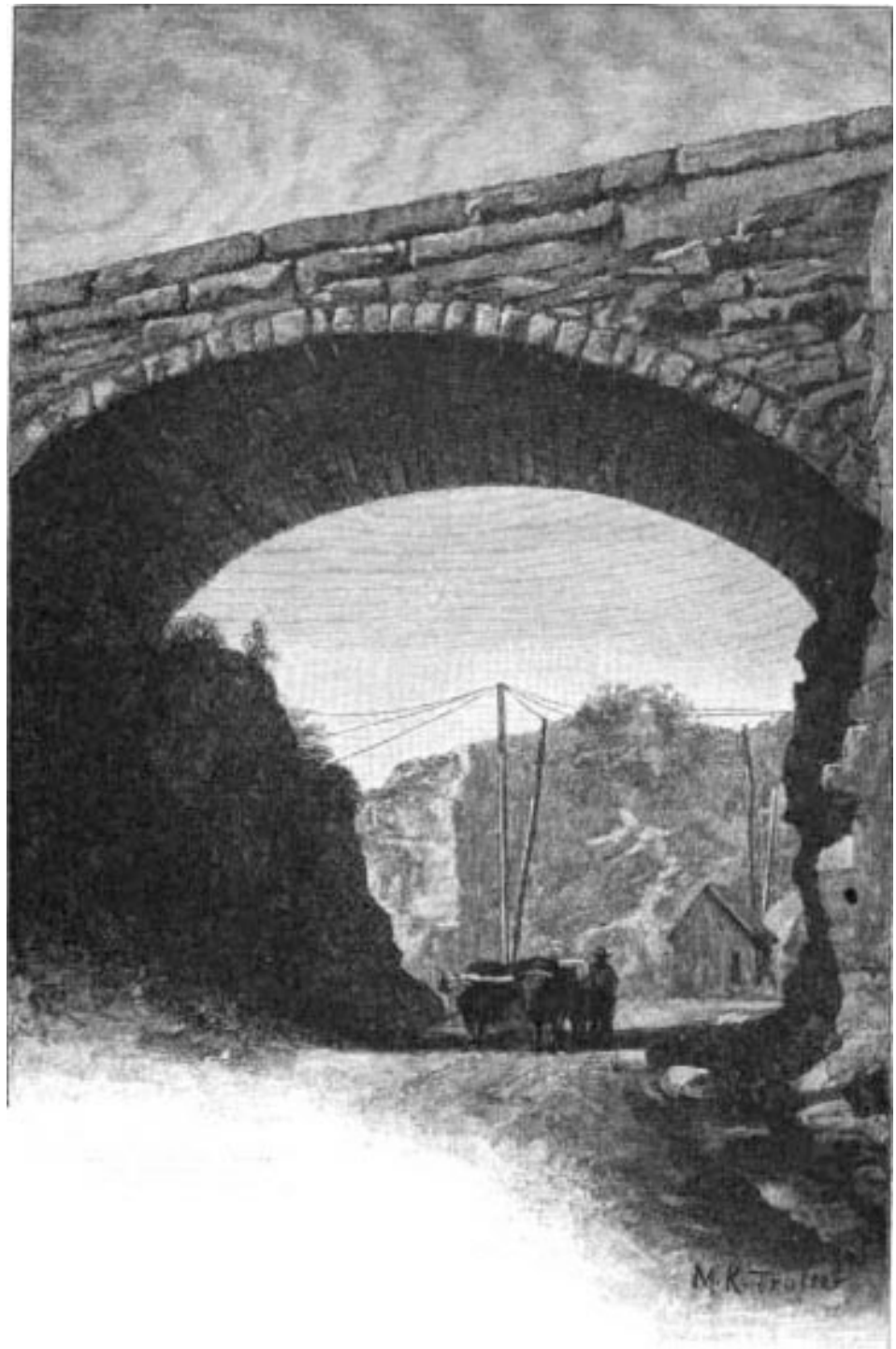
They came before long to the works of the Rockport Company, with its vessels lying at the dock, its long breakwater of granite extending out into the sea, and its precipitous quarry on the landward side of the road, its irregular blocks recalling to Bessy the drawing she had supposed to represent a Pyramid. Five teams of oxen were standing about, and Anastasia informed her friend that she expected to find just such a team standing under a beautiful arch hereabouts—she had a drawing of it in her bag. No such arch, however, was to be seen. The travellers made some inquiries at the office of the company, and were treated with a kindness and attention, which they will not soon forget. They came before long to the works of the Rockport Company, with its vessels lying at the dock, its long breakwater of granite extending out into the sea, and its precipitous quarry on the

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They were taken into the depths of the quarry, where the dark rocks looked high and awful, with here and there cataracts of thick white icicles making them look darker. Here the steam-drill was at work, which makes in a day a hole twenty to thirty feet deep and two inches in diameter, and sometimes enables the quarrymen to loosen at one blast a mass of from five hundred to a thousand tons of granite. This great blast was the preliminary to the hand - drilling, which they could see going on busily in the quarry.

Anastasia stared about her, taking mental notes of the relations of light and shade, and trying to fix in her mind the action of the workmen.

Bessy was not so cool. Something oppressed her here, and she quite lost the happy tranquility, which she had



THE GREAT ARCH



AT WORK IN THE GREAT QUARRY

felt five minutes before, in the straggling country road among the peaceful winter gardens. She felt as if in those few minutes she had come out of the happy New England which she knew and loved—a little country which with all its faults is civilized and human enough— into the midst of some great workshop of nature outside human ways and human knowledge. Here were the dark rocks which they told her had lasted since the beginning of the world, and which had seen more frightful changes than Bessy could imagine. And here, at work among them, was a magical instrument, a giant made prisoner, who was fighting the rocks with another natural force even stronger than theirs. And if the workmen she saw were human beings, which her foolish fancy disposed her to doubt, was it human work which they were doing, the ancient healthful business for which Adam was set in the garden?

“I don’t know what you mean in the least,” said Anastasia, “but I have always heard that what we were put here for was to subdue the earth. There are different ways, no doubt; and it’s possible that you and I shouldn’t like managing a drill. But these people are subduing the earth more than either of us is likely to do. To me there is something inspiring in

the atmosphere of hard work; it helps me about my own business; and many’s the laboring-man I have envied, who I knew was gaining his bread, when I had not the skill to gain mine.”

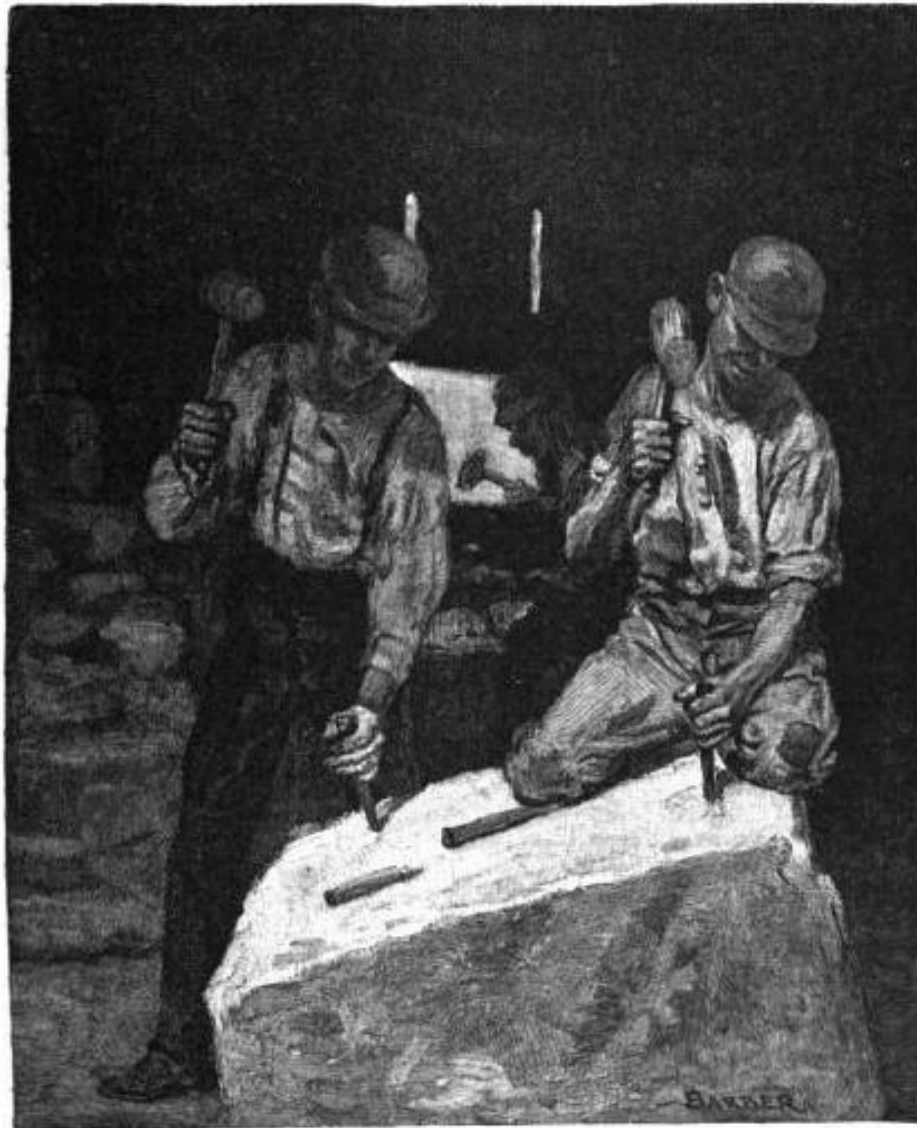
“It’s all very well for you to talk,” was Bessy’s feminine answer. “You don’t have to drill rocks yourself. I don’t either. And it doesn’t seem fair or right that other people should have to bend their backs and smash their hands over this rough business so that we can have the fine granite buildings we’re so proud of.”

“I can’t pretend to answer your hard questions,” said Nancy; “but this I will say, that this business has improved since Christianity came, like most other things. Do you know how the old Egyptians used to transport their great blocks of stone * They used oxen sometimes, just as the Rockport company do, but sometimes they used men. There are a hundred and seventy-two of them in one picture dragging an enormous statue. Imagine bringing a block down in that way from Assouan to Thebes, a hundred and thirty miles! That isn’t a satisfactory way to use a man, it seems to me. I think it’s better to make steam and oxen do the heavy work, as they are doing

here, and as they are beginning to do all the world over. The granite comes down to the shore on a steam railway at Bay View, I'm told."

Their kind guide told them that the blocks of stone which the oxen hauled down from the

Rockport quarry were either sent by rail from the Rockport station or shipped from the company's pier in their five vessels. "Some of them are lying on the dock now," he said, and turned away from the cliffs to point seaward. Whereupon our sight-seers



CHISELLING THE LINE

turned too, and beheld the arch for which they had been looking, supporting the road they had just now followed, and framing a charming picture of tall masts and blue sea, with a fortunately placed team of oxen for its foreground.

Anastasia now sat down on a rock and began to sketch, while Bessy asked questions. Some of the

granite, she was told, was going as far as New Orleans, some of it to the nearer cities. Had she ever noticed the differences, which exist in the paving-stones which are used in different places? The Philadelphians, it seems, insist upon having especially long and fair stones; the New-Yorkers are not so exacting, though they share the same general ideas; and the Bostonians are discontented with any

paving-stone which is not small and square, and cut with great accuracy. Much more Bessy heard, and many facts more important than these, about much larger blocks of stone, but the individuality of paving-stones was a new idea to her, and remained firmly fixed in her memory. She remembered having seen in a Mississippi River town all the paving-stones of the lower levee taken up carefully out of reach of the spring floods, and she therefore took pleasure in thinking that these square-hewn country-men of hers were to be treated with respect and consideration in the Southern towns where they were going. Another of her surprises was to hear that drivers were at work under the vessel yonder on this very January day, getting out pieces of granite which had accidentally fallen into the harbor. "How cold they must be!" she ingenuously exclaimed.

"It's all the same at the bottom of the sea," said her guide; and Bessy blushed, considering that a man in the complicated India-rubber armor of which she had been told was hardly likely to care whether he were in or out of the water.

"Come," cried Anastasia at last, jumping up from her work, "as people always say when they have been keeping their friends waiting, it's quite a time to go, and we mustn't stay any longer. Yes, I thought, I had charcoal on my face. Bessy, did you say it was on the right cheek? I wish, sir, that I could have done your beautiful arch more justice, but I can't make the sort of drawing I showed you just now." And so with thanks and regrets they left the hospitable Rockport quarry, and walked on to Pigeon Cove.

So many people come here in summer, only to go away again in the autumn, that the village has an unusually reserved and shut-up appearance in winter. It delighted our travellers, perhaps for that very reason. Bessy forgot her low spirits, and they began a desultory series of plans for coming down here for a fortnight's winter sketching, which, though it never had any practical result, made them very happy for half an hour, and gave them a homelike feeling about this strange place. More

hens than human inhabitants were to be seen. But Anastasia assembled enough of these latter to arrange with them for the hiring of a horse and carriage to take the two travellers to Bay View, the end of their journey.

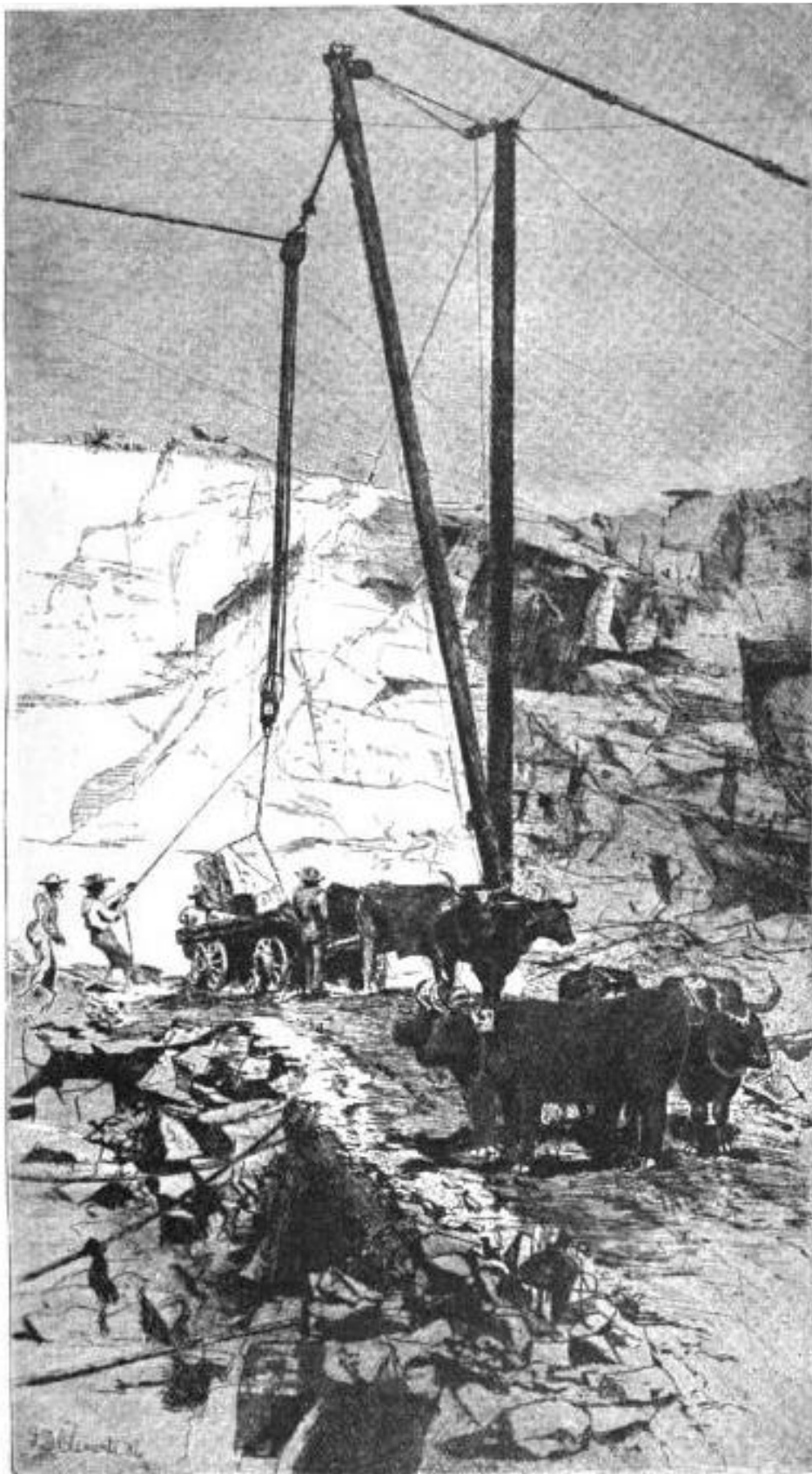
The change of their mode of travel, and the dignity inherent in the back seat of what we New-Englanders call a carry-all, as well as the moral support afforded to them by the friendly though silent presence of their driver, exalted them a good deal in their own estimation. But Nancy pointed out to Bessy that they could now no longer enjoy the gypsy happiness, which had been theirs when they were travelling on foot. "We are become responsible," said she: "we are now under a promise to stay but a little while at Bay View; we are, in fact, indebted to our driver for a sum which, though small, we shall have to remember to pay him."

"He'll remember," said Bessy.

"In fact," continued Nancy, "we are now in the position of capitalists. I have seldom had occasion to regret that position, but I do now. And I really wish we were once more poor tramps, despised by all the respectable farmers we meet, but feeling that, after all, such contempt has a good deal of kindness in it."

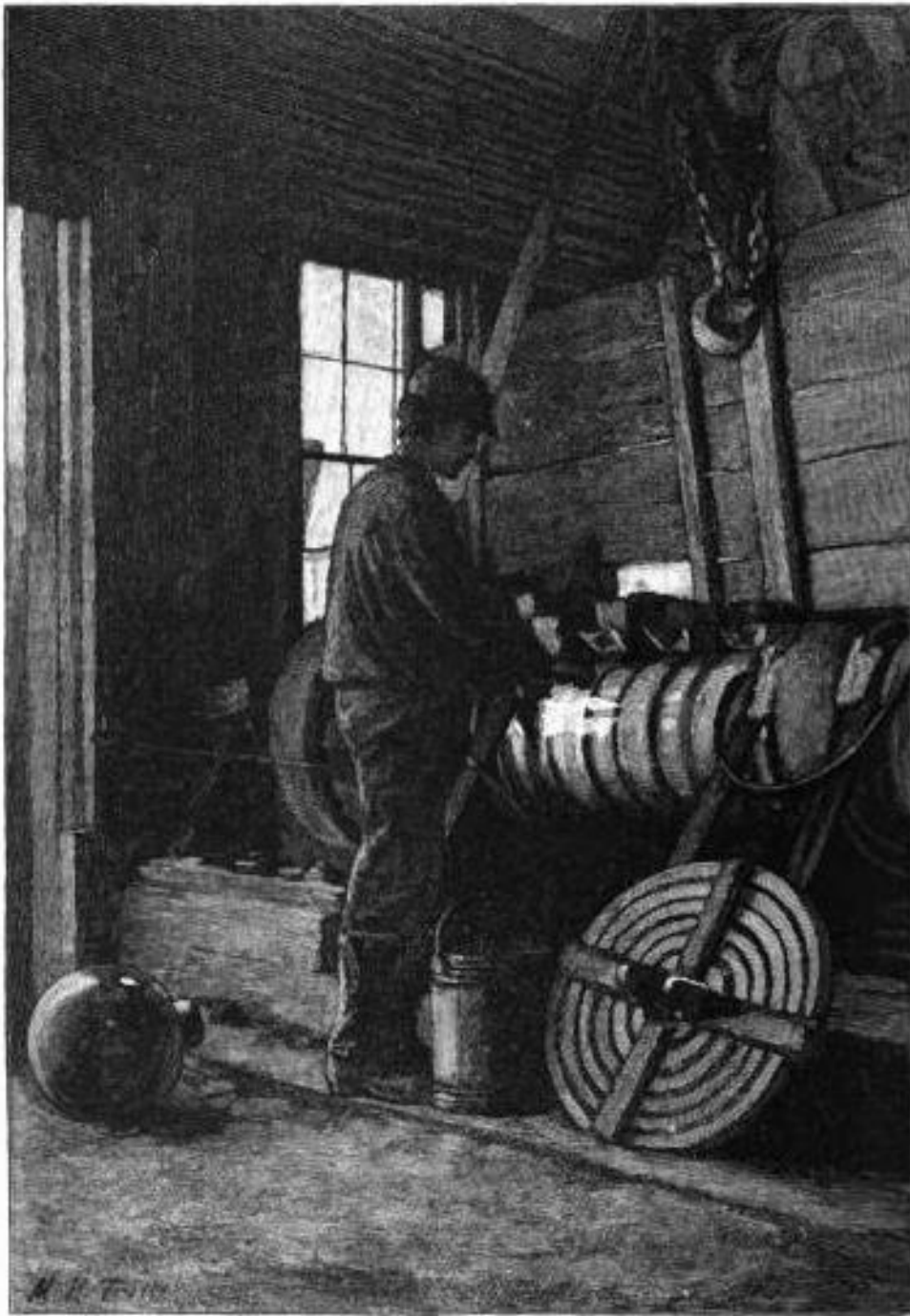
"We should be warmer," said Bessy, "but we should never get to Bay View. Besides, have you not often told me that the point of view for sketching was far better at the slight elevation a carriage gives? I know that neither the ice cascades close above the sea would compose so well if we were on foot, nor the dark willows before us, relieving their stiff grace against that dazzling snow-field. What is the peculiar charm of the willows of Cape Ann & Your friends have painted them often, but they have never made them quite as lovable as I find them."

"There's the Janesville quarry," said their driver. "That, and the Rockport, and the Pigeon Hill, and the Bay View, are the four principal companies on the Cape."



THE DERRICK

Reproduction of an etching by Miss. G. D. Clements



POLISHING A COLUMN

“But there are others too, surely,” said Anastasia. “We hardly pass a stone wall which is not of granite, and I am continually seeing derricks above the rocks.”

“Those are the smaller companies,” said the driver. “Yes, there are a number of those.”

“I wonder,” said Bessy, “that they don’t build more houses here of granite.”

“I wonder,” said Anastasia, “how long we Massachusetts people are to go on building wooden houses. Till the forests are all cut down, I suppose. I have abused my fondness for stone houses as an unpatriotic one, but it’s not so unpatriotic, after all, to wish that the houses in my country may last as long as her hills.”

“The hills don’t last so very long down here on the Cape,” observed Bessy. “The quarrying goes on too fast for that. But look see that rocky village before us. It must be Bay View.”

The friends had been recommended to one of the workmen of the Cape Ann Company, who was kind enough to explain to them what was going on. The quarries, he told them, were at a little distance from the village, and the stone was sent down to the shore and the cutting and polishing shops in cars drawn by steam upon the company’s railroad, the only railroad where steam is used in the Cape quarries. The visitors might have gone up on the train to see the quarrying. But being pressed for time, they chose rather to watch the different processes used in working the stone, from its entrance into the shops in a rough block, till it attains the astonishingly fine polish, which the workmen are able to give it.

The work was done near the water’s edge in long wooden sheds, some of them open on one side, some of them with doors and windows of cotton cloth. It was cold business, the workmen said, but there were stoves in some of the shops, and the men were not too cold to keep up an industrious chipping and hammering, nor to good-naturedly explain to the visitors some of the mysteries of their trade. They showed them how to chisel the line, how to point the stone down, and what were the differences between the peen-hammers and the bush-hammers. They took the bush-hammers out of their chests that the ladies might see the varieties with five, six, eight and ten edges, which gave the granite the slightly lined or ridged appearance, which they had often



AT ANCHOR

noticed. The point and chisel work interested them, chiefly in regard to its effects upon the workmen.

“You must be always getting the stone into your eyes,” cried Bessy.

“Yes, ma’am,” said the workman, composedly, “but we don’t mind that as much as the splinters of steel. All our points are of English steel, you see, and that’s very bad when it gets into the eyes. But then plenty of men have a great knack at getting it out; they are as good as any eye-doctor.”

“Do you use a camel’s-hair pencil?” asked Anastasia.

“No: we take a broom splint sometimes, or a penknife, or a pin—not the point, but the head. A pin isn’t so good, though.”

As they talked, Nancy was watching the white figures in the dusty sunlight, their heads bent over their hammers, making pictures which François Millet, who knew what a working-man’s life was, would have been glad to paint.

“My trade isn’t an easy one,” said she, “but I think theirs is harder. I wish I were that sort, which terrified our two friends. The finest work is done by hand. The pride of the shop at present appeared to be centred in a great crown, which with a cross was to form part of some monument, and whose ornament would admit of none but hand-work. The granite took a beautiful polish, and in its finished state it became easy to see the differences in color and density which of workman. I mean I wish my work were as good and as direct as theirs. It makes my heartbeat and my breath come quick to be in a place like this. I know that if I were to paint something here I should have a better chance for success in the midst of the steadiness and resolution and cheerful industry about me.”

“You wouldn’t,” said the skeptical Bessy. “You’d have a headache.”

“Indeed I should not, for I have tried it,” said her friend. “The most inspiring neighbors I ever had while I was at work were my classmates in Paris, the next most inspiring were some iron-workers in Cambridgeport. I like to feel that I too have part and lot in the stir and rush of our hard-working republic.

We are no nation of shop-keepers, we Americans, but, I think, a nation of workmen, making all sorts of new things for an old tired world.”

After a vain attempt to see the steam-cutter, they entered the polishing-shops. Granite is polished first with sand, then with emery, then with putty powder and felt. Some blocks are polished by a great machine called a Jenny Lind; others by sinister-looking arrangements called pendulums, which are supported from above and run backward and forward over the granite—a sightare significant to experts. All the Rockport granite which our friends had seen was gray or grayish-green. It differs in color from that of the Quincy quarries, which is gray too, but, the travellers thought, of a lighter gray, and it differs from it in quality as well. There are different qualities of Cape granite too. The Maine granite, it appeared, is red.

The afternoon was flying away, and the two strangers had scarcely the time for a walk upon the pier, where one or two colliers were lying. They passed these vessels, and stood upon the farthest and extreme point, with the quiet winter sea about them, separating them from the rest of the world. “I think,” said Bessy, “that I like this best of all. Why doesn’t everybody go to the sea-side in these months? Our New England Nature is not so unkind a step-mother to us descendants of the wandering English as we are apt to think.”

“Come,” said Anastasia; “let us see the scow in the little harbor; we must resign ourselves to looking at the steam-engine on board it, which we don’t understand, rather than at the sea, which we think we do. We must go and inquire whether all granite is packed in wood and clamps, or only the pieces we see.”

This, it appeared, was the proper way of packing granite; and it was then hoisted on board ship by means of a steam-engine on the scow at which Nancy had been looking. Much of the stock, it seemed, was meant for the Baltimore Post-office; some of it, as at Rockport, was going to New Orleans. But not as much is shipped in winter as at other seasons.

While their horse was being harnessed the travellers warmed their cold hands in the office of

the company, and asked all sorts of questions, which were kindly answered. The workmen were many of them foreign, it seemed; the quarrymen, Italian, French-Canadian, and Irish; the cutters, English, Scotch, Irish, and Americans. They were a good and peaceable set, Anastasia was told, and there was not a policeman in Bay View village. So, when the carriage was ready, and the two wrapped themselves up once more for their long drive, they had not only thanks but respect for the workmen who had been so good to them. Back they drove through the late afternoon, in which the country grew more and more beautiful; past the boats in the gardens, past the children skating in an old quarry-pit, past ice

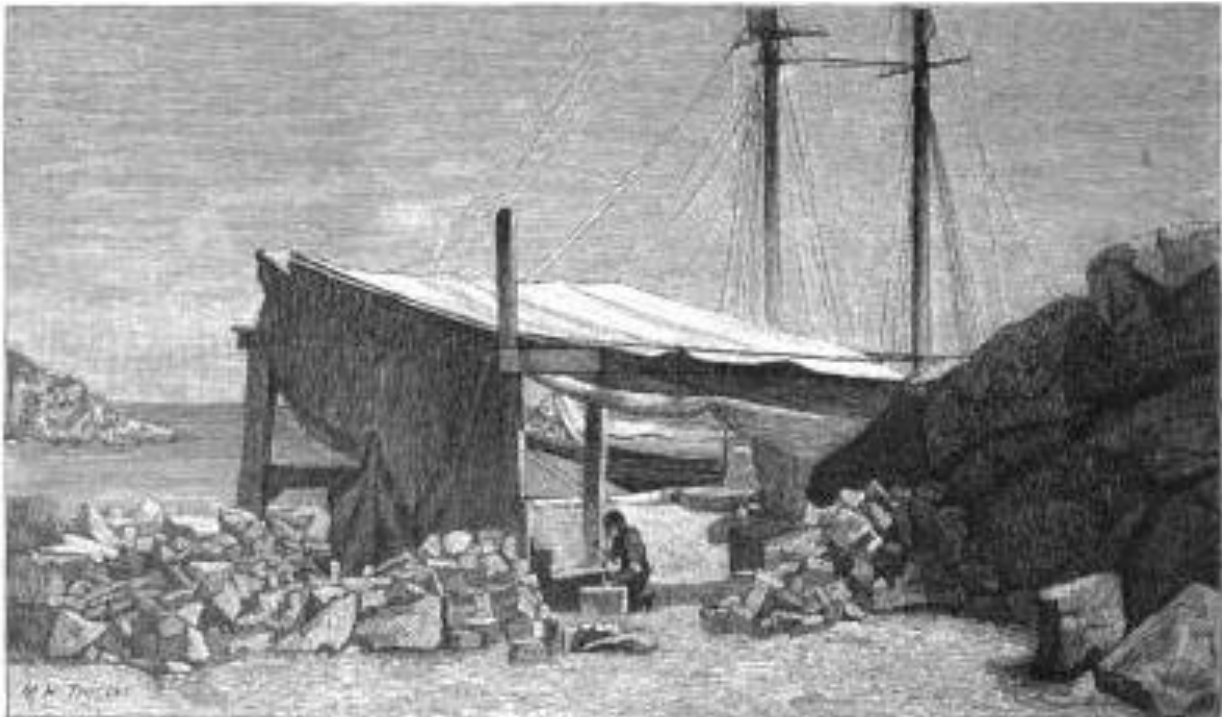
cascades and willows turned golden in the late daylight, and the faithful red velvet fruit which stays all winter long upon the bare sumac-trees. Here is the Rockport station again. Once more they are in the train, and in a fiery sunset the day goes out.

“I’m glad we went,” said Bessy.

“Then you don’t think I was foolish to come?” said Anastasia.

“I never was happier,” said Bessy.

“Nor I,” said Nancy; “but, dear me, how bad my sketches are!”



CHIPPING TENT