

land, a waste of common, in no respect more, and in some respects less, attractive than commons generally are.

But the *raison d'être* of Fairport lies in the quarries, of which the desolate rock-strewn common was once the outward garb. Stone, of a colour and texture that made it valuable for building purposes, had been here provided by Nature and utilized by man; and where, not long before, the foot-print of foxes and the cry of the water-hen on the banks of Snake Creek had been the only signs of life, the sound of blast and chisel now made the air resonant, and Fairport grew.

For this development of the resources of Nature money had, of course, been needed. Nature, as a rule, dislikes giving anything for nothing, usually bestowing her treasures only as the reward of toil, and demanding as the price of research into her mysteries, ardent and sincere devotion, and sometimes life itself. On this occasion, however, the baser equivalent had seemed sufficient. Money alone had been required, and had been provided by those who, as some said, now laid claim to the possession of Fairport and all that it contained.

The ill-natured persons aforesaid had been heard to remark that the firm of Beckett & Beckett were monopolists. Without pausing to inquire whether the name *monopolist* be really such a term of reproach as was by them intended, and as is sometimes insisted on, it must be admitted that the accusation, if such it is to be called, was in the main correct. Beckett & Beckett had found the money which had made the town, and they certainly to use a modern expression, 'ran the town' now that it was made. They had built the houses inhabited by the