

was scarcely established before human wickedness used it as a means for their destruction. Bands of robbers, or, as they came to be called, "wreckers," would hide themselves somewhere near the haven sought by a richly laden vessel, and after overpowering the fire-keepers, would extinguish the beacon-fire on the night on which the ship was expected. Then they would light another fire near some treacherous reef. The mariner, sailing boldly toward the false light, would dash his vessel to destruction on the reef, whereupon the robber band would plunder the wreck and make off with the booty. This practice obtained in Cornwall in the last century, and one of the great reforms wrought by Methodism was its extirpation.

sels into the harbour of Alexandria. Open windows were near its top, through which the fire within could be seen for thirty miles by vessels at sea. It was



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A famous lighthouse was built on the little island of Pharos, by Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, two hundred and eighty years before Christ, to guide ves-

about 400 feet high, and was destroyed by an earthquake, after having stood for 1,600 years.

As commerce became a source of great revenue to nations, the maintenance of lights and beacons for the protection of vessels became a national care; but this was of so very gradual a growth that it was not until the beginning of the seventeenth century that the building, lighting, and maintaining of lighthouses was looked after with regularity by all governments.

Victor Hugo thus describes a lighthouse two hundred years ago: "In the seventeenth century a lighthouse was a sort of plume of the land on the sea-shore. The