

“Quarrying in India”

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“There is in India a caste of people known as wudders, whom I may, in general terms, describe as the navvies of India. They are of two classes – those who work in stone, and those skilled in the manipulation of earth. The stone wudder is a hardy, sinewy fellow, whose stock in trade consists of a house, which, when on he travels, he transports on the back of his donkey or else on the head of his wife (no remarkable instance of tyranny, since it consists of nothing but a mat and a few bamboo stays); then he has a heavy crowbar, a few iron wedges, some earthen pots, a dog, and a small stock of rice. Arrived at his quarry his first care is to lay in a stock of firewood, which he cuts in the jungle, and removes by means of a peculiar bandy or cart with low wheels of solid timber, drawn by a pair of buffaloes – an important part of his equipment which I omitted to include before in the list. The wood is piled in small quantities on the surface of the rock, and ignited usually during the night, their favorite time for work. After the fire has been steadily kept up for some hours, the upper layer of the rock expands sufficiently to produce a separation from the substratum. The separation is accompanied by a dull bursting sound, and the extent of the severance is ascertained by a series of taps with the crowbar, the response to which is conclusive to a practiced ear. The next operation is to break up this loosened bed of rock into fragments of a size convenient for handling, and this is effected by means of a round boulder of greenstone, as large as can be lifted to his head with the assistance of another man. This he dashes down with all his might on the right, and sometimes succeeds in making a fracture with a single throw; but it often requires to be repeated many times, and it is wonderful, considering the clumsiness of the method, with what success he turns out handsome square blocks of stone, of dimensions well suited for building. This, however, is to be attributed rather to the natural tendency of the stone to square fracture than to the skill of the wudder. – *T. H. Going, in Architect.*”

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“**Mining in India**,” on Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mining_in_India