

KENTUCKY'S CAVERN.

A Twenty Miles' Trip Through Subterranean Passages and Chambers.

Mammoth Cave, with a History of Its Phenomena and Wonderful Properties.

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One of the greatest natural curiosities in the world lies less than two hundred miles from Cincinnati. Residents of this city can reach it in ten hours of pleasant travel, and yet it is safe to say that not one out of every two hundred of the citizens of the Queen City have ever seen it. A hundred people visit Niagara falls to every one who visits the wonderful cavern of Kentucky. There are various reasons for this. First, Niagara is fortunate in being well advertised, while Mammoth Cave, for some reason, seldom sees its name in print. Secondly, Niagara falls is managed for all the money it is capable of bringing to its shrewd agents, whereas Mammoth Cave, until very recently, was under the control of non-progressive ideas. Third, Niagara lies under the noonday sun, and distant view of its splendor can always be had; Mammoth Cave is hidden in the darkness of the earth, with nothing visible to the outside world but its cavernous mouth. Fourthly, Niagara lies almost in the direct line of travel between the great centers of eastern and western population, and it is comparatively easy to access; Mammoth Cave is situated in a wild region of the south, near which no great tide of travel flows, and it is eight miles from the nearest railroad station. And yet, in spite of all this, the subterranean exposition of natural wonders is worth more than the time, trouble and money it requires to see it.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE CAVE.
Before attempting to describe any of the wonderful sights of the cave it might be well to briefly set out a few historical facts about it. Mammoth Cave is situated in, or rather under Edmonson county, Ky., the center of the wildest section of the state. The noted James brothers, it is said, have several times been in hiding within its cavernous depths. There are over seven thousand square miles of limestone formation in this section, and all of it is supposed to be honey-combed by subterranean passages and cavernous halls. The whole county of Edmonson is dotted with sink-holes and nearly four hundred cavernous mounds have been discovered, though most of them give access to but very small caves. Only one entrance has been discovered to Mammoth cave; at least, but one has ever been made public. It is believed the guides could tell of other means of entrance or exit, but it is their business to keep this knowledge, if there be such, to themselves.

The cave lies under a high table land which rises 312 feet above the waters of Green river.
THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE is at the end of a ravine back of the Cave hotel, and 118 feet below a building. The visitor goes down a winding path until he arrives at the place where the ravine seems to have run up against a precipitous bluff and knocked a huge hole in the hillside. The hole is the mouth of the cave. It is twenty-four feet in height and thirty wide. A small stream of clear water flows from between the rocks above the opening and falls upon the rocky bed below with pleasing effect. At nearly every season of the year a constant fog or bank of mist obscures the entrance, caused by the meeting of two atmospheres, one of which is colder than the other, and thus condenses the moisture in the air where the meeting takes place. Upon the day we entered the cave the temperature inside and outside happened to be about the same, and the fog was absent, something that rarely occurs.

THE TEMPERATURE OF THE AIR of the cave never varies. Until recently it was deemed that the constant temperature inside the cave, winter, spring, summer and autumn, was 59° Fahrenheit. But very recent scientific tests have shown that this measurement was marked five degrees too high; the temperature is shown to be but 54°, and from that it never varies. The atmosphere is very pure. Oxygen and nitrogen bear the same relation to each other in the cave atmosphere that they do in the air outside; but there is much less carbonic acid gas in the cave than is found in the air we breathe. In the dryer parts of the cavern the proportion is about 1-500th and near the rivers it is less still. Not a trace of ammonia has ever been found in the cave proper. The humidity of the atmosphere varies as you descend to the river and lake regions. In the upper avenues and chambers, upon the walls and floors of which nitrate of lime is deposited, there is a destitution of moisture almost absolute. Here animal matter mummifies instead of decaying by putrefaction. A dead body left in these passages would turn to a mummy. In these same regions, for the same reasons, dust never rises. Not a trace of ozone can be detected. It is said that the atmosphere of the cave is the most exhilarating on the face of or in the earth. Fragile, delicate women have been known to travel on foot over ten, and even twenty miles of the rocky, rough passages in the cave, experiencing little or no fatigue, whereas they could not walk one-third the distance in the open air. The great purity of the cave's atmosphere is not fully realized until the explorer emerges into the "sweet, pure country air" of the outside world. The passages from one to the other at first is like transition from the air of the streets into a close dormitory, where a score of sleepers have spent the night.

GOOD FOR CONSUMPTIVES.
This extreme purity of the atmosphere of the cave founded the impression, some fifteen years ago, that a residence there would cure, or at least check, consumption. The test was a sorrowful one. A half dozen consumptives, about 1843, entered the cave for the distance of a mile or more, where they erected huts of stone and some of wood, in which they took up their residence. During the first few days they were greatly encouraged by the effect. Then be-

gan a reaction. Several of them soon died in the cave, and all the rest expired soon after their return to the external air. Let physicians explain the cause of this effect. Short trips into the cave are advantageous to people afflicted with lung troubles, inflammatory rheumatism and dysentery. The public ought to be warned, however, delicate as may be the subject of the warning, that there are certain constant periods in every lady's life when, under no circumstances, should she enter the cave. Serious results, and even death, have frequently followed this violation of nature's law, when the victim was entirely ignorant that she was defying death.

HOW DISCOVERED.
It is a matter of legend, if not of history, that Mammoth Cave was discovered by a hunter many years ago who chased a bear into the mouth. He followed and explored it for quite a distance. The Indians, however, had occupied the main cave years before. Evidences of their aboriginal habitation were discovered to a distance of a mile and a half back from the entrance—then up to the verge of the Bottomless Pit. This awful sink-hole they could never cross, as it was one hundred and seventy feet deep and extends entirely across the passage. But white man's ingenuity long afterward threw a bridge across the chasm and gave access to miles upon miles of the cavern, which extends still farther into the bowels of the earth, a distance of seven and a half miles.

THE CAVE BREATHE'S.
It is a matter of fact, and not of fancy, that the cave breathes. For half a year it inhales the outer air; then it holds its breath for a few days, after which it exhales for a six months' period. In other words, during summer months, when the external temperature is much warmer than is the temperature of the cave, a constant stream of air pours out of the mouth; and the hotter the weather grows, the stronger grows the blast from the cave. When the external temperature is about the same as the cave's—that is, fifty-four degrees—a calm exists in the cavern's mouth and it holds its breath. Such was the condition when we visited it. But in winter, when the thermometer goes down toward zero, the cold air of the valley rushes into the cave as though pursuing an army of demons into holes. At certain seasons of the year the current of air in the passages near the mouth is so great that lights are blown out. This current of air becomes neutralized, however, as one goes further in, and is finally allowed entirely by the reservoir properties of the enlarging chambers, which are to be found after a distance of half a mile.

SALTPETER.
Saltpeter was manufactured in the main cave in 1812, by Archibald Miller, of Philadelphia, who took it to the east and sold to the American government to be used in the manufacture of gunpowder. The cave is still just as rich a mine of deposit for the mineral as it was then, but nobody could now successfully compete in manufacturing it there with the markets of foreign lands. The East Indies and South America at this later day supply the trade. Potash saltpeter is largely shipped all over the world from Bombay and Calcutta. Whereas soda-saltpeter is found in unlimited supply in the Desert of Atacama, on the west coast of South America. This profitable arid desert lies partly in Bolivia, partly in Chili and partly in Peru, and it is the innocent cause of the fierce war which has just been waged among these three governments. It is hardly likely that anybody will ever go to war over the rights to Mammoth cave saltpeter beds. The petrified hoof tracks of old ruts of cart wheels made in 1812 are still to be seen in the cave nearest the entrance. The saltpeter pits and the bored logs used as aqueducts to convey water into the cave for use in making the saltpeter, are still in existence, and owing to the purity of the atmosphere, the wood it is so solid and perfect today as when placed there, nearly seventy years ago.

DANTE'S INFERNO.
Neither Dante nor Jules Verne has ever been in Mammoth Cave. It is not strange, therefore, that neither in their pictures of subterranean horrors and mysteries, has pictured anything so awfully sublime, so grandly impressive, as this greatest of nature's expositions. The mind of man cannot grasp the magnificence and glory of nature's work in these caverns until his eyes have seen and his soul felt the subterranean wonders. It is not in the power of man to describe what is to be seen in these underground halls and chambers, and it will not be attempted here. We shall give some facts and data concerning the most wonderful of the thousand sights that are to be seen there.
THE GUIDES.
There are three regular guides attached to the cave and several "subs." The oldest guide is Mat, a colored man, who has lived nearly sixty years. Mat has been guide in the cave for forty-two years. His son Henry is one of the substitutes, and has been making parties in for fifteen years. The other two regular guides are William and Nicholas, both colored. William is a ventriloquist in his way, and puts the gift to pleasing use for the benefit of his guests. The original guide, whose daring explorations revealed many of the wonders of the cave to civilization, was Stephen Bishop. He remains buried under the red clay of the neighboring hills. A mistaken idea prevails that the guide will collect exorbitant fees from the tourists he takes in charge. This idea should be exploded. He is paid a monthly salary by the manager of the cave, and is entitled to no fees unless the visitors freely contribute a quarter apiece, which they nearly always do to show their certain appreciation for his efforts to please everybody. Each dollar to the cave pays two or three dollars to the hotel office for a ticket admitting him respectively to the short or long route in the cave. He joins the regular party of the route indicated, and a guide sets out with such a party at a stated hour in the day. Tourists on the short route start usually at 7 o'clock in the evening, and after exploring about eight miles of underground passages, return to the earth's surface an hour before midnight. The long-route voyagers usually start at 10 o'clock in the evening, and get back about 6 or 7 o'clock in the morning, after tramping through nearly sixteen miles of the intricate passages. They take lunch with them, which the guide carries, and eat it usually in Washington hall, which is seven miles from the mouth. Each visitor carries an oil lamp. The guide carries two, and also has with him a bottle of oil, from which he refills the lamps while the party is lurching lunch. In a haversack at his side he carries a supply of white light powder. This he uses from time to time to illuminate the wonders of the underground world.
OWNERSHIP.
The cave is owned by an estate which possesses 1,500 acres of the wild lands about and around the entrance. It is managed by Francis Klett, an intelligent, highly educated Austrian, who took charge of the estate a year ago, and has already thrown much light into the management. The great drawback at present to the cave as a popular resort is the difficulty in getting to it. Though only eight miles from the Louisville and Nashville railroad, no branch road across the country to the cave has ever been projected. Mr. Klett says the railroad company refuse to build the branch because they want to buy the cave and are sharp enough not to add to its attractive qualities. He declares that the estate will in a few years have a railroad built across the country westward to the Ohio river, which is but twenty miles distant. Meanwhile the experience of the head, the rich lameness in the shoulder but by the use of THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL he was entirely cured. dec-20-10

MAKING A RAISIN'
John Hawk, credit, P. O., says that for many years he has not had a headache but by the use of THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL he was entirely cured. dec-20-10

FACING DEATH.
Terrible Struggle in a Railroad Car With a Desperado.
Detroit Post Dec. 5.
At 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon a thrilling episode occurred on the Michigan Central in-bound express train near Kalamazoo, and but for the courage of a woman might have ended in a terrible tragedy. When the train neared Pokagon a man, who had been apparently engaged in reading a newspaper, was seen to rise suddenly in his seat, and turning to a person seated beside him, he spoke in a loud tone: "You give me your revolver and let me go or I will brain you!" A desperate struggle instantly ensued between the two men, and the startled and now thoroughly frightened passengers precipitately fled from the car, with the exception of a plucky little woman.

The man who uttered the exclamation was H. W. White, alias Burton, a notorious stage-rover, bandit, and desperado, en route to the Detroit house of correction. The individual he addressed was United States Marshal P. P. Wilcox, of Denver, Col., who had him in custody. The exclamation was instantly followed by the prisoner bringing down on the officer's head a heavy iron safe, which he had picked from his wrists with a cunningly prepared knife. The officer was momentarily stunned by the blow, but made a desperate resistance. Blow after blow was rained on the officer's head by the prisoner with the handcuffs and then he made a successful effort to get the revolver. The officer shouted for help, but none came. The prisoner, holding the revolver, held it against the officer's breast, and pulled the trigger, but it failed to perform the work intended for it. A desperate struggle for the possession of the revolver, a six-shooter of 44-caliber, known as a bulldog, now took place on the part of the officer. Now it was in his hands and then in that of the prisoner. The most strenuous fight about the struggle is that, although each tried to fire the revolver, it failed in each case to respond. The muzzle of the weapon while in the hands of the prisoner was thrust against the left temple of the officer with such force that the prints of it were plainly discernible when he arrived in Detroit.

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