INTRODUCTION

Thomas Kite, my father, who has described in the following pages a visit to Mammoth Cave, was born of Quaker parents in Philadelphia in 1818. Appreciating the opportunities of success in a new and thriving community, he migrated to Cincinnati in 1839 where he established and operated an iron foundry. Fortunately business was not conducted then in the high pressure methods of the present day and he had time for recreation and occasional trips such as the one described herein.

The original manuscript written by him in 1847 disappeared and was lost for ninety-five years. It turned up in New York in 1942 and was purchased by the Library of the Western Kentucky State Teachers College of Bowling Green, Kentucky.

The party which accompanied him was composed of two young women and their two brothers who came out from Philadelphia especially to go with him on his planned trip to the Cave.

When the trip was made, transportation was confined principally to river boats and horse drawn vehicles, consequently the journey from Cincinnati to the Cave required seven days; whereas, in the ninety-five years which have intervened travel facilities have been so greatly improved that the trip from Cincinnati to the Cave now can be accomplished in seven hours. From the standpoint of the inexorable tyrant "Modern Speed", the time consumed making the trip may seem an inexcusable waste but as we read his description of the journey we are impressed with its genuine charm and the impossibility of duplication.

A congenial group, free from all anxiety, composed of persons who could enjoy beautiful scenery and able to interest themselves in gathering wildflowers and fossils when the opportunity offered, portray peace of mind and tranquility of spirit now practically lost to the great majority of the human race. While this fascinating mental condition may have passed beyond our recall, we can rejoice that Mammoth Cave with all its marvelous attractions is

within our reach. It is possible for us to join that innumerable multitude who have been bewitched by the beauty of the formations it reveals. It is possible for us to wander into the "Rotunda" or stand bewildered in the "Star Chamber" or marvel at the exquisite beauty of the "Grotto" for these and all the other attractions the Cave contains will remain undisturbed for the wonder and the enjoyment of this and succeeding generations; for it is one of the imperishable wonders of the earth.

William H. Hite

WESTERN KENTUCKY STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
Bowling Green, Kentucky

PREFACE

This volume is an exact copy of Thomas Kite's journal of his trip by boat and stage coach from Cincinnati, through "The Barrens" of Kentucky and the Mammoth Cave.

The original manuscript was purchased for the Kentucky Library at Western Kentucky State Teachers College, Bowling Green, Kentucky, by the McGregor Plan Endowment and has been placed in the McGregor Room of that Library. Here it will be preserved in this special collection, along with numerous other very rare documents of Kentucky history.

Kentuckians and research workers are most grateful to Mr. William H. Kite, of Cincinnati, for making available by publication this old diary kept by his father.

Mary T. Moore

Mary T. Moore
Librarian, Kentucky Library

Bowling Green, Kentucky

December 17, 1942

Journal of a Trip through Kentucky

and

Visit to Mammoth Cave

May and June, 1847
by
Thomas Kite

Cincinnati, Ohio

Cincinnati, Ohio, 1943

A short account of an excursion through the Barrens of Kentucky including a visit to the Mammoth Cave. 1847 --

On the morning of the 23rd day of 5th Month we left Cincinnati on the S.B.Duck River bound for Nashville. The morning was fine, the high hills below the City arrayed in their deep green verdure, adorned with many tasteful villas and cottages, with the foliage of the noble trees which line the banks, reflected on the peaceful bosom of the Ohio, made up a scene of uncommon beauty.

We arrived at Louisville during the night and left about 12 o'clock next day, and altho dangerous at low stages of water, passed in safety over the sunken rocks, through the Narrow Channel and among the troubled and boiling waters of the Falls, stopped at Portland, for a short time, then continued our Course.

We passed many places of interest, gathered wild flowers and fossils when the boat stopped, and on 4th Day morning, the Pilot, to enable us to see as much as possible of Cave in the Rock, ran as close as was prudent to the bold rock, in which this noted strong-hold of the Freebooters, of the Ohio, 50 years ago, is situated and towards noon entered the Cumberland River. This is a beautiful stream, and our admiration was variously excited, by the precipitous cliffs which at times frown down upon the water, or the noble forest trees among which we passed, many of them covered almost to the summits by creeping vines, or the calm and placid appearance of the water, which in many places resembles a succession of small lakes, caused by its very winding course. Fifth Day morning the boat stopping at Canton, we visited some remarkable Indian Mounds near the town. They occupied a commanding position, in view of the river, were conical, flat on the top, raised 25 or 30 ft. above the surrounding country and covered with beautiful wild flowers.

That night we arrived at Clarksville, and immediately took stage for Russelville, at which place after riding all the night we were set down next morning about 9 o'clk, without breakfast, as soon

as this necessary meal was eaten the girls retired to bed, whilst the young men, procuring horses, rode over to the neighborhood of Adairsville, and returned in the evening. 7th Day morning we hired an hack to convey us to Bowling Green, the day was delightful, and much of the country under good cultivation.

About 100 yards from the road, Muddy River, --- a beautifully clear stream-gushes from the rocks, a bold rivulet of sufficient power for milling purpose. Whilst at Union village, a Shaker settlement, another stream rises from the ground, flows a short distance then sinks. The Shakers have turned its appearance to use by placing here a mill, which does their grinding and supplies their pleasant village with excellent cool water.

Three miles from Bowling Green on the Nashville road we visited Cave Mill. A growth of fine timber here skirts the road, and would prevent the casual observer from noting a large sink of an oval form, at the bottom of which (100 ft. below) flows a river 20 or 30 yds. wide; Descending its precipitous sides, a scene of wild and rugged beauty presents. At one end the river rising at once full grown, flows about 300 Yards, enclosed by the steep and rocky sides of the ravine, then enters a cavern 150 ft. wide at its mouth, and at least 40 or 50 ft. high. A solid arch of rock about 50 ft. in thickness forming the roof. Under this arch an enterprising Kentuckian has located his grist mill, and the noise of the falling waters, and the clattering of the cog wheels by giving life and animation, increases the picturesque effects. Finding a small board, we secured upon it a Bengal light, ignited it, and committing it to the current, it floated away, illuminating the extensive cavern, with the intense brilliancy of its light, until a change in the course of the cave, hid it behind a projecting rock from those at the mouth, who were anxiously watching its progress.

Bowling Green is very pleasantly situated on Barren River, a branch of Green River, it is regularly laid out and the buildings display some taste, its great article of export is tobacco--

Since leaving Clarksville we have been passing through what are called the Barrens, formerly an extensive prairie, now overgrown with a scrubby Oak called Black Jack, the soil appears to be thinner than in some other portions of the state, yet well repays the labor of the husbandman.

Round funnel shaped hollows, called sinks, are very numerous, some of which are tight and in these the rains collect forming pools, many containing water the whole year--these forming the principal dependence, indeed almost the only supply of water for stock. Others open downward, into the cavernous limestone, doubtless, supplying the rivers, which in so many places gush from the rocks or caverns.

This entire section of country appears to be a bed of cavernous limestone, abounding in extensive caves, many of which are beautified with stalactite and stalagmite formations of exquisite delicacy and finish. The earth in most of these caverns is strongly impregnated with Nitrate of Lime, that during the late war with England a large Capital was employed in the manufacture of Salt Petre.

At that time the demand for "Petre earth", being great,adventurers penetrated for miles into caves which have since become almost unknown, and caverns which in any other Country would be deemed objects of great Curiosity lie here unsought, eaven their location fading from distinct remembrance.

The distance from Bowling Green to the cave varies, from 22 to 25 miles according to the direction of the traveller, the hack men of B. G. calling it 25 while at the cave it's rated at 22.

Finding a man willing to take our party over to the cave and there wait on us until we were in readiness to return, we hired himself and vehicle, and soon after breakfast next morning were on the last stage which separated us from this wonder of wonders whose magnificent domes must be seen to be appreciated, whose salubrious atmosphere must be inhaled to judge of its invigorating properties--whose Halls and temples, spanned by one single arch of rock are so vast that the beholder almost fears

to state their size, and whose rivers flow on, habited by their own peculiar tribes of life, flow on in darkness and silence--and whose avenues often broader than any in this great city are incrusted in many places with delicate flowers growing out of the living rock.

For many miles after leaving Bowing Green, the country continued cultivated, so very different from the idea we had formed of the neighborhood of the Great Cave, But as we more nearly approached, its character changed, until it equalled in wildness our most romantic imaginings. Our road wound over high hills, occasionally affording glimpses of beautiful valleys below, until at last we came in full view of the spacious Cave hotel. This is 200 feet long, with wide piazzas extending the whole length on both floors. A considerable part is very appropriately built of logs, and the whole effect is very neat and tasteful. On the right is a long low range of log cottages, which have been erected for families intending to reside here during the summer. These with the green lawn stretching in front, present a very beautiful appearance.

It was about 6 o'clock on 1st Day, the 30th of the 5th mo. 1847, when we alighted at this pleasant looking spot. After a comfortable repast, we sat a while in the parlor, and listened to a traveller's account of the part of the Mammoth Cave, which we were to explore the next day. Soon, we retired to our rooms with many anticipations of wonders the morning was to show us.

Rising early on second day, we employed ourselves, preparing our attire for the cave. As we were anxious to secure the service of "Stephen"[1], who was suffering from the toothache, we waited for him until near 10, rather than procure another guide. Our appearance when about entering the cave was certainly peculiar. Joseph with his head tied in a pocket handkerchief, habited in an Indian hunting shirt, and an old pair of cloth pantaloons, without neck handkerchief or collar

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[1]Stephen, the guide was a remarkable and picturesque person. Every famous visitor to the cave in those days expressed their appreciation of this unique character in their published journals. He was a slave, part mulatto and part Indian, but looking more like a Spaniard, with black hair and long mustache. Athletic in type, with broad shoulders, full chest, narrow hips and legs slightly bowed. A man of great strength and dexterity, and of unusual intelligence and good manners.

Stephen was married to Charlotte, the mulatto chambermaid at the hotel, and they had one son. He planned to take his family to Liberia, Africa under the Colonization Society plan to free all slaves and send them back to Africa. He died before this dream came true, and is buried in the Cave Region.

N. P. Willis, in his volume, "Health trip to the Tropics" published in 1854, tells the story of Stephen in a very delightful way. Mr. Kite in this journal, adds several facts about the noted guide not given by other writers. (M.T.M.)

Thomas similarly equipped, but substituting for the hunting shirt, an old fireman's coat provided with capacious pockets. Rebecca and Abby with sunbonnets and short dresses reaching some distance above the ankles presented a quite youthful appearance.

The path to the entrance of the cave lies by the side of a ravine which commences at the hotel and extends to the Green river about half a mile distant. Wild flowers in abundance grow near, and the remains of a furnace used in boiling down the salt petre water, interested some of our party.

The entrance was peculiarly picturesque and appropriate. Before us was a vast semicircular opening with the rocks on either side overgrown with beautifully green mosses and ferns--Noble trees on the summit, and immediately in front a pure spring falling from the high arch with a soothing sound into a wooden trough below. An old half ruined ladder covered with green added to the beauty of the place. Altogether it was an entrance meet for this vast subterranean wonder. The cool stream of air issuing from it was very refreshing, and already we felt our strength invigorated and our spirits raised by its enlivening effects.

Descending a rude flight of steps, here we are at last fairly within this yawning abyss. Before us all is darkness. On our left is a deep pit in which are the ruins of an ice house, undermined by the waters from the spring close by. Our guide Stephen here deserves a passing notice. He is a sprightly mulatto, apparently about 35 years of age, of medium height, black, piercing, and intelligent eyes, with glossy jet hair. His good humored laugh gave him a ready passport to our confidence. He is a slave, over whom Dr. Croghan, the proprietor of the cave, claims ownership, and is unusually intelligent for one in his situation. Mosher our landlord said he knew how to read and write and received his education in the cave. On noticiing our looks of surprise, he explained by saying that he learned the alphabet by seeing visitors writing their names on the smooth ceiling of the cave, with the smoke of their lamps. His memory is very retentive, and from the information gathered from many scientific

individuals, whom he has guided through his domains, he was able to tell us the geological formations, point out and name the encrinites and fossils, explain the chemical composition of many of the different mineral substances we met with, and give the classical derivations of such terms as Botryoidal, Dendroidal, he applied to the shapes assumed by the stalactites.

Having finished the description of our guide,we resume that of our journey. Stephen now lighted sundry unique lamps, one of which he gave to each of the party, swung a can of oil on his back, and a basket of provisions on his arm, and we were fairly started on our subterranean explorations. Proceeding along the main avenue we were at first unable to discern much of what was around us, as our eyes had not become accustomed to the feeble light of the lamps. Groping our way we soon came to an aperture where formerly was placed a door. Here we were struck with the strength of the current of cold air, rushing outward from the interior of the cavern. Formerly when the door was in repair, upon its being opened, the draught was sufficient to extinguish the lights when many a laughable incident occurred. This current we were informed by the guide, flows inward during the winter months, and its force in either direction is in proportion to the intensity of the heat or cold without. Passing this doorway, we saw a regular stone wall, on either side about four feet high, behind which were piled loose stones. These we were told were placed here by the salt petre workers, who, 30 years ago, made vast quantities of that article from the earth of the cave, which is strongly impregnated with Nitrate of Lime.

The earth was collected, placed in large vats and leached with water, brought through wooden pipes, from the spring at the entrance. Another set of wooden pipes conveyed the lye back to the boiling furnaces. So remarkable is the dryness of the air, or the preservative property of this earth, that these pipes are still in perfect repair, and even such as remain of the light wrought iron bands which were on the ends of these logs, show little or no appearance of oxidation. An attempt was made a few years ago, to turn the peculiar properties of this air to good account, and many persons, who were of

consumptive habits, lived for a time in the cave. But whether it was, that confirmed phthisis is incurable, or that the absence of the light of day is inimical to restoration of health, most if not all have died. Yet the workmen who were engaged as miners, and came in and out, uniformly grew strong and hearty, and even the oxen, though their toil was severe, are represented to have left their cavernous abode in good order for the shambles.

Beyond the above wall of stone, about 200 yards from and directly under the eastern wing of the Cave Hotel, we entered the Rotunda, a vast room 150 or 200 feet in diameter and 50 feet in height, the ceiling one solid arch of stone. Our first impression on entering this vast chamber, was that of passing from the house into the open air on a very dark night. Our eyes having not yet become accustomed to the color of the cave, we were unable to penetrate the darkness around, until a Bengal light revealed the vast proportions of this magnificent room, showing huge piles of earth in various parts, and vats and logs, all speaking of the labors of the Petre miners. At the Rotunda, the passage which leads to Audubon's Avenue[1] and the little bat room branches off to the right. The main cave, turning to the left, continues its course.

As we passed on our way beyond this spot, we noticed the track of the oxen and the ruts of the cart wheels made more than 30 years ago, still plainly visible in the earth now become so hard as with difficulty to be indented. Fragments of corncobs left by the oxen are still strewn about uninjured by decay. The avenue here is as broad as the street of a city, and the roof rises high above, altogether presenting an appearance very unlike

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[1]Many names given to the avenues in the cave by Mr. Kite have been changed today, as have the routes. Some of these names were most picturesque and characteristic, and it seems a pity that later guides and owners should have dropped them, until now it is impossible to locate some of the spots referred to by Mr. Kite.

(M.T.M.)

anything we had imagined of caves. We soon came to the Kentucky cliffs, a bold projection of rock on our left hand, and so named from a resemblance, real or fancied to cliffs on the Kentucky River.

Willie's spring is a small spring in a niche on the left, where a romantic young man, calling himself wandering Willie, once spent the night alone.

The Church is about 300 yards from the Rotunda. An offset from the cave here extends a short distance to the left, terminating in a rugged pile of stones, and forming in connection with the main avenue, a spacious area. A projecting point of rock some 20 feet above the floor was pointed out as the pulpit, and we were told that in the summer season, religious service was frequently performed here. Surely an unsuitable spot for such a purpose, for the attention of an auditor would most likely be too much directed to watching the echo of the teacher's voice from the rocky canopy above; and his imagination too much excited by the novel situation in which he was placed, to admit of his readily settling down into that reverent silence of spirit so desirable in the performance of Divine Worship.

The guide here directed our young men to climb by a circuitous and rather difficult passage to a projecting rock called the pulpit, and from this position repeated a small extract from Milton.

There is but a short distance from this spot to the Gothic Avenue. Here as at the Rotunda, are the remains of large vats, piles of earth, etc., relics of the saltpetre works. On opposite sides of the cave and half way to the ceiling, are two broad openings. One of our party scrambled up the Gothic gallery on the left, and found that it was soon blocked up with sand. We therefore followed our guide to the right and ascending a wooden staircase, entered the Gothic Avenue. Nothing of particular interest appeared excepting the smooth white ceiling, marred with names written in smoke until we approached the chapel. This is a spacious apartment with long stalagmite pillars at its opposite extremities. These were curiously wrought and contained arched niches, as though intended for a statue. One of our females taking a light in

each hand, stood in one of these reminding us of some of the pictures we have seen of Roman Catholic saints. From the center of the ceiling, diverged fringed stalactites, which extended gracefully to the side of the room. The whole very much corresponded with our ideas of an ancient Gothic Chapel--and when illuminated by a Bengal light drew forth many expressions of admiration.

We next came to Vulcan's forge, and soon after to the Devil's Arm chair. This name has been given to a large stalagmite which forms quite a commodious seat. Though dedicated to his Satanic majesty, we all placed ourselves in it without fear and drank of the sulphur water that springs up near it.

Proceeding, we looked at the Elephant's Head, a stalactite somewhat resembling the object for which it was named. Lovers Leap is a sharp rock over a gloomy hollow, about 30 feet deep. There were many curious stalactite formations around this place. Our guide Stephen, who had been suffering all the morning, with a severe tooth ache, now concluded to leave us. He regretted having to do so, but said he "could not make the cave interesting to us." We were to remain where we were, or slowly retrace our steps, until the new guide arrived. Our young men passed down the steep descent beyond Lover's Leap, and continued their explorations. The girls remained alone for a time, gathering stalactites and admiring the wonderful and peculiar formations which so abound. Soon a feeling of loneliness, & fears for their venturesome companions, induced them to call their brothers. Receiving no answer, they concluded to follow. The slippery hill was descended in safety at the base of which a narrow pathway between two lofty rocks led to Napoleon's Dome. Under this was a large flat stone called "Gatewood's dining table." Just beyond a small stream of clear water fell from the ceiling into the Cooling Tub,a circular basin, six feet in diameter.

We did not tarry long here, and on our return, met Alfred, the new guide, coming to join us. Descending the stair case, we proceeded along the main cave which stretched far away, with its high arched ceiling and bold rugged sides, whose vastness we could now the better appreciate, as our eyes had become

accustomed to the surrounding darkness. Here were the ruins of dwellings formerly occupied by consumptive patients. Two stone houses, a bedstead, a stove, were nearly all that remained to mark the spot. Our guide Alfred had acted as stewart for these invalids, he said they seemed happy and comfortable in their subterranean abodes. Their food was partly prepared at the hotel, but some cooking was done here with Alcohol. It appeared to us a gloomy residence for a sick man, and we wondered that any should choose it. Man clings fondly to life, and is willing to try many expedients to prolong it.

At some distance from this spot, is a very large rock on the right, about 25 ft. in length, called the Giant's Coffin. Standing upon its rocky bier, we could almost imagine it the final resting place of an ancient inhabitant of these wonderful regions.

Traced upon the ceiling in different places we saw various figures. One here resembled a panther.

The Cave now makes a considerable curve, but at the Acute Angle, a sharp rocky corner, it resumes its original direction. Beyond this is a very interesting spot--the Star Chamber, which is one of the most perfect optical delusions we had ever witnessed. We seemed to pass from under the rocky canopy, which had enclosed us, and to stand all at once beneath the midnight firmament. Far above our heads, appeared the dark sky, brightened in many places with glittering stars. Here they are loosely scattered, there, crowded together like the Milky Way. Yonder is a comet with its fiery tail. All conspired to excite deep feelings of wonder and admiration, and yet the cause was simple. A few white incrustations on the general dark surface of the rocks. A moonlight scene soon burst upon us. The white floating clouds contrasted finely with the blackness around.

Our walking now became more difficult. Instead of the smooth solid earth, we found loose stones heaped together, which often caused the foot to slip against a sharp edge, producing some pain.

At the entrance of the Black Chambers, a Bengal

light showed us a singularly wild, rough scene, a very wide passage stretching away in solemn gloom to our left, and piled with masses of rock. The light faded away and we moved forward to the Cataracts.

The Cataracts were a very interesting spot to us. Indeed one ought to have rambled as we did for hours among the rocks, and have passed his usual dining hour without eating, fully to appreciate the feelings of satisfaction, with which we saw our guide proceed to disclose the contents of his basket. Seated on the stones around, with fingers for knives and forks, we eat a hearty meal of biscuit, chicken, ham and strawberry pie, moistened occasionally by a draught of water brought in the old tin tumbler from a wooden trough placed under the slender stream, which dropped down from the sides of the cavern. Our romantic girls concluded it would be a great pity to have knives and forks, fingers were so much more appropriate in a place so eminently the work of nature. All enjoyed the meal, even our invalid was able, to use one of her own expressions, to "eat a lot."

Having disposed of this important business, we have leisure to look at the Cataracts. The stream of water which gives it the name, has already been mentioned, and though small at this time, is said not to be so after heavy rains. There is a deep cavity there, extending almost across the cave with shelving sides of loose rocks, along one edge of which the pathway to the fairy grotto lies.

We turned to the left still keeping in the line of the main cave, and after a rough walk of about 1 mile reached the chief city or temple. This is a magnificent oval room formed by the widening of the avenue, and is said to cover a surface of 2 acres. The ceiling is arched in the form of an elliptical dome. A mass of fallen fragments piled on one side reaches nearly to the top and intercepts the view so as to render it somewhat difficult to find a situation from which one can see the whole to advantage. We set fire to a Bengal light and illuminated by its rays, the scene was truly grand. Comparative darkness again shrouded it from view, and we retraced our steps to the Cataracts, and

turned towards the Fairy Grotto. For a considerable distance the path was smooth and even, presenting a very agreeable contrast to the rough stony one we had just travelled. But the high, arching roof became so low before its termination, that we could pass only in a bent posture. It was tiresome, but when the Grotto was reached, we minded not the trouble. It was indeed to all appearances the work of a fairy hand. Stalactites of great delicacy and beauty were suspended from the ceiling, whilst the walls were not left unadorned. After feasting our eyes for some time, we at last retraced our steps. As we were returning, our guide pointed out a small aperture in the rocks, which led to the solitary spring branch, a part of which had been explored by him for the first time, only two or three weeks before, remarking at the same time, that the path was inaccessible to ladies. The girls at first felt rather averse to being left alone, but on their brothers promising to return in an hour, made no further objection to their going. After resting awhile and their eyes becoming used to the increased darkness, not liking to be entirely in the background, they commenced exploring the Coral Grove branch. The passage was very narrow and tortuous, and had evidently been made by the action of water. The stone was smoothly polished, and the very grains of sand in the crevices looked as if but recently dried. Slowly edging their way forward, and frequently using their elbows as supports, they continued on till they came to the Robber's kettle. This was a large stony basin some six feet deep. Here they concluded it was best to return, which they did and finding the others had not made their appearance, seated themselves on a large stone and whilst waiting actually slept. Refreshed by their nap, they discerned with pleasure the first faint glimmering of the wanderer's lights, for with so much to see, none felt like tarrying long in one spot.

The men in describing their adventures in the mean time, say that at first we entered a winding way which plainly indicated the action of running water in many places. This was so contracted we had to take to all fours, and at one place actually "snake it", a term used to indicate a very sprawling mode

of progress. At times the sharp rocks jutted out from both sides leaving barely room comfortably to obtain footing below, nor was the passage way often over four feet high. A few hundred yards of this kind of travelling, brought us to an opening in the rocks, down which the water was dropping from above. Our guide followed the spray, and we with considerable difficulty, and after running divers risks of cutting hands and tearing clothes succeeded in following him; and truly the view which met us more than repaid all our exertions. Immediately at the foot of this chimney, the trickling water had caused large calcareus formations, which resembled immense bunches of beautiful grapes of a dark color and smoothly polished.

In another part semitransparent stalactite formations of a beautiful amber color, resembling the pendant ears of some large animal, delicately curled and tapering to a point, were very numerous. Here we were in one of nature's work shops, and her handy work progressing all around us. Long will it be ere the impressions there made, pass from our memory. A little beyond the stalactites assumed a coral aspect, and were seen sprouting out like small furze from the rocks around. The path here divided, and in one of the branches which we entered after hard scrambling we found some stalagmites of a beautiful cream color, one of them stood by itself in the floor, like a pillar or mile post, and several resembled huge candles with projecting wicks, and it only required a little imagination to convert this deep recess into a quiet little Catholic oratory. At one place we found a small basin of the clearest water, which our fanciful guide had styled Cupid's wash bowl and really the little god might thank his black friend for dedicating to him such a quiet and loving retreat, but we would advise the youthful torch bearer to cover himself with oil cloth, or the constant fall of water will be very apt to injure his downy plumes.

The limestone which formed the sides and roof of this passage abounded in shells and marine fossils, some of which we obtained.

We retraced our steps and found that the girls had been fully occupied during our absence. As we were about gathering up our lamps to proceed, one of the

company proposed extinguishing all the lights, that we might feel total darkness. It was done and for some time after the last glimmer had expired, we could fancy that our hands were visible when passed before our eyes. We were soon satisfied with this view of the cave, and attempted again to get up a light, but our matches were damp from long continuance in solitary Spring Branch, and would not readily ignite, and already some were speculating on the possibility of groping our way out, when a box was produced by one of the girls. We soon obtained a light and continued our backward way. Turning to the left at the Giant's Coffin, we entered the wooden bowl, a large chamber with a very low roof, with nothing to interest us save its form, and as being the way to the Steeps of Time. This is a rather difficult descent, why so called, we know not,unless like man's journey through time,they are fraught with troubles. Pursuing our even path, we came to Richardson's spring--the water oozing out pure and clear from under a large flat stone. Further on, the Side saddle pit attracted our attention, from its great depth and the gorgeous drapery hanging above it. Our guide threw down a lighted taper, which illuminated the sides and plainly discovered the bottm, at the same time showing to advantage the beautiful folds of the rocky curtain. On the right was the entrance to Gorin's Dome, but leaving that till our return, we passed over to the Bottomless Pit. Standing on a bridge thrown across the chasm, we watched whilst Alfred again threw down a lighted taper. This time the light was extinguished, without showing to us the entire depth of the abyss, but yet it revealed the same style of the drapery, we had before so much admired.

Pensico Avenue is quite a long passage. The floor is composed of nitrous earth, dusty in places, and the finely arched ceiling ornamented with beautiful white crystalline formations in great variety of form. One of our party here gathered the handsomest rosette in her collection. At the Great Crossings four ways meet, the windings of which are said to resemble the figure 8. The Pine Apple bush was the limit of our wanderings in that direction--a noble stalagmite pillar, but certainly requiring some imagination to find the resemblance. A considerable part however has been broken off. On our return,

when we had again with cautious steps crossed the old bridge, which spans the frightful chasm leading into the Bottomless Pit, we stopped at a ladder on our left, down which we followed our guide and entered the labyrinth. The path here is a winding one, leading by water washed crevices, sometimes ascending and again descending, and requiring the assistance of several ladders to enable the visitor readily to reach the point of destination. We came to a small hole, a few feet square in the side of the passage, which seemed to look into impenetrable darkness. Leaving the girls here, the men kept on after the guide, who thought they would be somewhat puzzled to go where he was then going. And indeed on reaching what might be compared to the top of a very irregular chimney loosely built of large rough stones, with curved hollows eaten into them by the trickling water, and seeing the guide descend it, somewhat in the manner of a chimney sweeper, the prospect might have seemed a little discouraging. Without much hesitation however, they followed and soon found themselves at the bottom of Gorin's Dome, through a hole in the side of which far above, the girls were seen projecting their heads. A brilliant light broughtinto view a grand and magnificent spectacle. Pillared walls 300 feet high, thrown into wavy folds like the drapery of a curtain,projecting masses of rock, and dark unpenetrated recesses above and beyond filled the minds of some of our company with such emotions of sublimity as were almost overpowering.

Having now completed our wanderings for the day, we resolutely yet with yearnings for the farther interior, set our faces towards the entrance, where we arrived about 8 o'clock, having been occupied with our subterranean travels about 10 hours, and walked 13½ miles, a pretty good commencement we thought, considering a part of our company a few weeks before could walk but a few squares without suffering. We passed with light hearts and comparative little weariness up the old stone steps, by which alone egress is made to the upper world. Here our guide advised us to sit awhile upon a large stone, until we had again become accustomed to the outer air. Some of the party feeling anxious to experience the full effect of the transition, heeded not his advice but went immediately on. What a change! instead of

the refreshing and bracing coolness of the cave, the air apparently heated beyond the powers of our bodies to endure, and laden with the sweet perfumes of the fragrant grape blossoms, was almost overpowering. So entirely were our corporeal powers prostrated, that the few hundred yards from the mouth of the cave to the Hotel appeared the longest, and certainly was the most difficult portion of our day's exertions.

At the door of the Hotel we gave our lamps to Alfred, and were welcomed by our kind host. Without making much change in our cave costume, we did ample justice to the nice supper which had been bountifully provided. Refreshed by this, we soon sought our chambers, and thus closed the first day's rambles.

Second Days Visit.

On our visit to the cave next day as we intended going to the most recesses, we made an early start and by 8 o'clock in company with Stephen, were on our way. Hurrying on through the main Avenue round the Giant's Coffin, down the Steeps of Time, and over the Bottomless Pit, we soon arrived at the Humble Chute, where turning to the left from the onward path thru Pensico Avenue, we take the River road. For a short distance it is very low, so that it is not easy to get along without crawling, but we are soon on the winding way, a zigzag curvilinear channel, where the water has washed a passage varying in width from 18 in. to several feet. Above the waist it expands somewhat. A fat person would certainly pass through this place with considerable difficulty, for we had to twist from one side to the other, to get between the projecting rocks with comfort. The Great Relief succeeds appropriately named, because it affords more room for locomotion. We stopped not to examine closely the River Hall, with a ceiling way up as it were in the skies, and the Dead Sea a deep pool by our side, for our movements were here somewhat regulated by those of another party, who entered about the same time, and who like ourselves were about to cross the rivers. It was needful we should be at the banks together, for the united effort of the guides to be used in preparing and launching the boats.

There was no boat on the River Styx, so with much caution we followed "Stephen", who led us over a narrow ledge of rocks, at a great height above the bed of the river. Right glad we were to get out of the "Infernal Region" and we might be too, for Stephen said, if we slipped we would go into Purgatory. Both parties crossed the lake at the same time, but in separate boats. Arrived at the other side our guide without ceremony picked up the girls in his arms and carried them over a little stream. The men being treated in nearly the same way, we were at length landed on a piece of gravelly earth, with water on every side of us. Here we lighted a Bengal light which revealed to us a magnificent dome, beautifully arched, and about 100 ft. in height. Some of the other party were rather afraid of venturing so deep under ground, did not know who or what they might meet with, and one of them openly expressed her fears lest the prince of darkness should get her. One of their men was not a little startled by the pale blue light of our Bengal. He quickly turned inquiring how it came and who made it. Finding one of the boats was at the other side of the river the guides left us to bring it, our young men employing themselves in the meantime fishing. Their net was very unique, it consisted of a pole, at one end bent in an oval form and the space filled with wicker work. They succeeded in getting three crawfish, white and without eyes. We could hear the singing of the guides some time before we saw them; when we did see them the lights in the front of their boat produced a very pretty effect--they seemed suspended in mid air. Embarking before the other party, we proceeded slowly along Echo River, not at all minding having to double up as we passed under the low arch of rocks.

Stephen and Alfred were both with us and to show the appropriateness of its name, they sang in concert, making the most beautiful echo we had ever heard. After gently moving for about one-half mile we reached our landing place--some of us regretting our sail was so soon over. Here Stephen left us, while he endeavored to secure some of those white eyeless fish, which are found there and are such a remarkable proof of the adaptation of each separate creation of the great Author of all the particular part of the drama of life it is destined to fill.

His fishing excursion was successful, but while he was gone the girls fearing the effects of exposure to the damp, after repeated calls to the guide and their brothers concluded to journey on alone, and were rapidly clambering over the rough and rocky way when one of the young men joined them and showed his skill as a guide by conducting them over the roughest and most impracticable portion of the cavern which here continued on in majestic and almost terrific beauty. Before us in the distance was heard the sound of a waterfall, around us were masses of rock at times so shelving that we had to take right hold to prevent a slip, which would have been indeed dangerous, again the sharp points jutted up in our path, threatening to bruise us terribly if a misstep should be taken. Over us the cavern loomed out in its blackness from 50 to 70 ft. above our heads, forming a great chamber, some 150 or 200 ft. in width. This is Cascade Hall. We were now descending rapidly rowards the cataracts, when the joyful tones of Stephen's voice were heard behind us. As we were congratulating ourselves on having passed over all danger one of the girls slipped and falling with violence hurt her side, arm and limbs against the rocks. Our stout guide soon raised her up and assisted her to a place of safety. The rest followed--we had quite missed our path which lay on the extreme left hand side of the cavern. We drank of the water of the Cataract and came to a spot where the ground is very shelving. On one side is a large sidling hole, on the other a small stream issuing from a wall of rock renders the whole ground wet and very muddy. Stephen placed himself below the path and assisted all over. Indeed he showed himself a trusty guide, at all times placing himself between us and danger and by his skill eliciting our heart felt commendation. We now entered Silliman's avenue, of which the pass of El-Ghor forms a continuation and which continues on for about three miles, the same vast gallery, varying from 30 to 50 ft. in width and averaging 30 ft. in height, yet sometimes rising to 50 or 70 ft. or even a greater height. We turned aside from the main passage into the valley way side cut, in which we find the commencement on this side of the river of those beautiful formations, which are the wonder of all who see them. Stephen here led us to the side of the arch where we found beautiful needle shaped crystals of

fibrous gypsum 5 or 6 in. long. We gathered some of these and passing on were rejoined by the other party and in company entered El Ghor, admired the stem of the Great Western and seated ourselves in Ole Bull's concert hall. Coming to a rock standing alone in the middle of the pass, the guide turning to the girls said "Miss Abby what is That?" "A rabbit" was the prompt reply, and the smile that lighted his face showed how pleased he felt that others could catch his resemblances. We soon arrived at a spring where our companions commenced their preparations for dinner. We passed on a few steps to Hebe's spring, where we selected a large stone for a table and smaller ones for seats. The tempting contents of the basket were soon displayed, Ham, chicken, eggs, dried venison, biscuit and pie received prompt attention. Our meal was none the less savoury for the primitive simplicity with which it was served. Many pleasant remarks were elicited and we felt much refreshed when we rose to pursue our rambles. We next ascended a rude slippery ladder, with the rounds about 2 ft. apart. Our guide enjoined careful movements and well he might for a slip here would be attended with dangerous consequences; the beautiful sights which met our view, ere we gained a firm footing almost made us forget personal safety. We were now in Mary's vineyard--beautiful bunches of grapes were all around us. Bright lights revealed to us thousands of the rich clusters hanging from the rocks 30 or 40 ft. above us.

Cleaveland's Cabinet contains rich mines of mineral wealth. We were almost oppressed with the beauty that surrounded us, and could scarcely convince ourselves of the reality of all we saw. Mammary ceiling is covered with incrustations of a rounded form and rich cream color, while Rebecca's Garland was crowned with rosettes of various shapes. In the snow ball room, the whole ceiling and wall were studded with delicate while balls, and when illuminated by a Bengal light, the whole scene was so perfectly chaste and beautiful that we felt words of admiration could but faintly portray our feelings. In St. Cecilia's Grotto, we found flowers, leaves, buds and tendrils of crystallized gypsum of the most exquisite workmanship. At one end of the Grotto were small Gothic arches similarly encrusted. The

rules of the place forbid visitors to carry away specimens, but a special exception was made in our case by Miller who has charge of the cave. Much trouble we had in selecting. One curious clump of crystals after another was taken, until hands and pockets were filled. These were then deposited in a safe place and a fresh collection commenced. The different deposits were again culled over and after bringing with us as many as we could carry, we almost grieved to leave so much beauty behind. We did not attempt to loosen any from the walls only to gather up of the abundance which nature had cast away-the worn out drapery was to us as fresh and beautiful as though just from the hands of the great Artificer. Diamond Grotto was pointed out to us, a pretty shaped niche in the wall-- On placing our lamps behind us and moving one of them backwards and forwards, the light was reflected from thousands of glittering points--as if sparkling gems had been gathered there to add to the enchantments of the scene.

The successive beauties of this portion of the cave acted upon us like a surfeit of good things, oppressing by their richness and splendor, until the mind could scarcely desire or receive any more. The crystal flowers, roses, lilies, and plumes of various kinds far surpassed the glowing imaginings of our childhood when reading the description of Fairy Palaces. Near the end of it, our guide pointed to a little bed of choice flowers,which elicited exclamations, "This is the handsomest we have yet seen"-"Look, cousin look" "Oh how beautiful", etc. --indeed it seemed as if the choicest beauties of the cabinet had been culled by a fairy hand, and transplanted here to tempt the eye, almost wearied before with gazing on lovely forms. This our guide informed us was "Charlotte's Grotto", named in honor of his wife--"You might be sure" he replied to some exclamation "I would not call anything but the prettiest after my old lady." Soon after we entered upon the wild rough path leading to the Rocky Mountains, a lofty pile of giant rocks thrown up in inextricable confusion in another of those vast halls, with so many of which we had in the last two days become acquainted. A Bengal light showed its rugged wildness and pierced with its cheerful rays "Dismal Hollow" beyond, thro' which we were to

pass. With Stephen's assistance, we descended safely and immediately, commenced clambering up into another hall, toward the left of which our path led. Here was a pit down which we were to pass. The side next us was a steep smooth stalagmite. Some looks of doubt might now have been seen, but Stephen nimbly jumping down, placed his shoulders firmly against a large stalactite pillar, and made tolerably convenient steps of his feet, by which means both girls safely descended this dangerous place. We were now in a small circular chamber, not more than 12 feet in diameter, and perhaps 15 or 20 high. Before us was a large projection, jutting out from one side, all around which stalactite drapery, somewhat of the form of the pendent ears in solitary spring branch, was hanging in immense folds, and presenting an appearance of the most solemn and impressive character. The ceiling and sides of this bower showed gorgeous and beautiful folds of the same light amber color, arranged with fastidious regard to taste. The general impression of the whole, was that of the chamber and pall of a fairy's bier. The floor was covered with stalagmite productions, and tears seemed to be weeping down from the many points, forming little pools--the largest of which we desecrated by drinking its crystal waters. No work of art could at all compare in execution or effect with this chamber. With "a longing, lingering look behind we turned from "Serena's Bower" and commenced our return to the entrance--a distance of 9 miles. As we crossed the river we again hailed the echo with pleasure and various ways were tried to show its wonderful power. Striking the boat with the paddle made the place resound again and sounded almost like distant thunder. Gently gliding along, we repeated in concert, the following piece of poetry, altered and learned for the occasion (turn to next page). The deep quietness of the place broken but by our united voices, combined with a feeling that we were indeed saying a farewell to it, had rather a stilling effect, and we know not how long the silence that ensued, would have continued, had not Stephen commenced singing, "Home Sweet Home."

We cautiously left (got out of) our skiff at the point where we embarked in the morning--cautiously, for it was old and soaked with water, and our guide was afraid any sudden motion would sink it. It was growing late and hurrying past Lake Lethe, Styx, etc. we were soon again on stony ground, but this our aquatic excursion will, I think, long be remembered with peculiar pleasure by most of our party. We diverged from our direct course at River Hall to visit the Mammoth Cave Dome. Having arrived at the spot our guide called to one of the girls to descend a slippery ladder--at first she hesitated feeling somewhat afraid, but descended on being assured there was no danger. We all did likewise. By the Bengal light, we could see we were in a dome of grandeur 380 feet in height--the walls draperied with the same rich folds as in Gorin's Dome. Drops of water were falling from the roof and occasionally descended into our eyes, as we were gazing upwards. About 9 o'clock we emerged from the cave, after walking according to the lowest estimate 25 miles. And the freedom and rapidity of motion of our girls near the end of their journey, were quite remarkable - so that their brothers had some difficulty in keeping up with them, though these it is true, were somewhat impeded by a basket of minerals.

3rd Days Visit

Before leaving the cave on the second day, Stephen had strongly excited our imagination by an imperfect description of the Black Chambers--We therefore agreed with him to return the next day and explore these wonderful and extensive avenues.

The next morning, a strong desire possessing the girls again to visit Gorin's Dome, they concluded to accompany the men--Adding to our company ayoung man from Pennsylvania who had just arrived, and arrayed in our cave dresses, we were on our way soon after breakfast to "Cimmeria", glad to exchange the hot relaxing air without, for the cool bracing atmosphere of this subterranean territory. At the Rotunda we turned to the right and entered Audubon's Avenue, a very wide passage, in places rendered difficult by the rough rocks we had to climb over. Else where a fine bed of nitrous earth eased our feet,

and an arch of solid rock formed an appropriate roof. Here we entered the little bat room, where it is said thousands of bats hybernate, finding their way out into the regions of light and life, when spring returns. Here our guide commenced loading himself with stones and whilst wondering at his strange fancy we received an intimation to follow his example. We were now at the Crevice Pit, an aperture in the left hand somewhat in the form of a rough Gothic arch, reaching from the top of the cavern to the bottom. Within the pit all was blackness. Into it Stephen threw one of his stones, this we could hear bounding from ledge to ledge until finally a splash came sounding dimly on the ear. Again and again we repeated the experiment and the stones leaping from rock to rock conveyed to our minds an idea of immense depth, as the sounds came fainter and fainter, until the dull splash from the water far, far, below us brought back the information that our messengers had done their office and were at rest. We were in fact over the Mammoth Dome and the resting place of our stones was between 300 and 400 feet below us. Some of our party wished to look in the dark abyss and although the rocks at the entrance were very shelving, and a slip might have launched the venturesome one into eternity, yet by our sturdy Stephen's assistance,their curiosity was gratified in safety. Beyond Crevice Pit to the right is a small chamber leading to the Black Chimney, a round opening commencing far below and stretching to a great height about 6 ft.in diameter with horizontal grooves about 4 feet apart. The guide climbed up above us and placing several lights enabled us to view this singular opening to great advantage. It seemed as if an immense cave might have been imbedded in yielding mud and decaying away left its impress in the solid rock. The little chamber we entered was rich in a beautiful dendriodal formation, blackened according to our guide, by a combination of iron. Returning, we entered the Rotunda and journied on to the church, where Stephen left us, climbed up into what he called chancel, a small opening in the rocks 40 ft.above, and placing a light on each side of him gave us,who had passed on to the far side of the church,an idea of its immense size. We now hastened on to Giant's Coffin, down the Steeps of Time and thro' the Deserted Chambers, passing the

beautifully draperied side-saddle pit, then into the winding passage, whose ups and downs soon brought us to Gorin the glory of Domes. Stationing our girls at the oft described window, Stephen led the men up a ladder, across a small plank, then thro' a rather rough passage to a small pit, on the left side of which was an aperture about 4 feet above our present standing. Through this by dint of stepping from one projecting rock to another and holding on tightly with our hands, we all gained in safety a shelving platform within the dome, which Stephen informed us was the only place from which Gorin could be viewed to advantage. Soon a Bengal lighted up this magnificent chamber, disclosing its beautiful and varied drapery, hanging in immense folds from the top of the Dome. "Stephen, can't the girls get here" exclaimed one. A short parley ensued, permission was granted and the young men started to assist their sisters. They had scarcely gained the passage when they met the girls advancing, who as soon as they heard from the window, "can't the girls get here?" without waiting for the answer, started by themselves to join us. Stephen stood in the opening above and received the girls as they were handed up and soon all were comfortably seated on the platform. Another Bengal light again shed a transitory splendor around and then we gained the passage in safety and retraced our steps to the Giant's Coffin. Here we divided, the girls turned towards the mouth of the cave while the others with Stephen passed on to the Black Chambers.

The Black Chambers are perhaps the wildest and grandest part of the whole cave. In some parts the avenue is 100 yards in width and is spanned by a single arch. The floor is covered with piles of loose rocks, not stones, for they are of great extent and so thick that a misstep might precipitate one many feet, between the edges of adjoining pieces. A circular crystalline formation, so abundant beyond the rivers, is found here assuming various forms, but is not of that pure white which renders Cleaveland's Cabinet so beautiful. Our guide bid us notice a triangular rock on which we stood. We went forward, wound thro' different ways and at length found ourselves again on the rock from which we had started, so that we had no difficulty in be-

lieving it would be an easy thing to lose ourselves in this part of the cave or to account for the adventures of a party who were wandering about here for hours almost in despair of ever again seeing the light of day, and who finally succeeded in getting to the main cave just as their light went out. After leaving the Black Chambers we continued with the stranger and guide during their explorations which were confined to the portion of the cave visited on our first days ramble.

Before parting with the others at the Giant's Coffin, the girls received permission from Stephen again to visit the Gothic Avenue. It was with very peculiar feeling they started off; feeling, that, had they been indulged, might have amounted to fear. It was not so however, and they enjoyed their walk, recognizing the various objects that had been pointed out by the guide. They ascended the stairs, passed along the Gothic Avenue, again admired the arches, sat once more in the arm chair, looked at the Elephant's head and Lover's Leap, descended to Bonaparte's dome, glided past Gatewoods dining table, and after resting awhile by the cooling tub, slowly retraced their steps. When near the entrance, the daylight glimmering in the distance, induced the belief that another party was coming. This was the first time they had gone out in the day and the heat of the air and odors of the flowers and plants was so oppressive that the difficulty of ascending to the Hotel seemed greater than of performing their 6 mile walk in the Cave.

After dinner Stephen again got (trimmed) his lamps and we started on foot to visit the White Cave, distant about 1 mile, this is well worth the visit and to all we would say visit this first, its beauties can then be truly admired. --

The next morning we returned to B. G. remained there until 7th Day then took the steam boat Gen.Warren, passed down the beautiful and Romantic Barren and Green Rivers and arrived in Louisville on 2nd Day evening--next morning took the Packet to Cincinnati where we arrived early 4th Day morning, well pleased with our trip.

To all who need recreation we would say, "go and see",

and we would hold the same language to all who love to contemplate, the mighty or the grand, the delicate or the beautiful of natures infinitely varied works.

Shades of darkness close not oer us
    Leave our bark at this one hour
Morn alas can not restore us
    Yonder dire and distant bower.
Here our fancies can discover
    Where despair might weave his spell.
Blackest shadows round us hover
    Draped several. Fare thee well.
Whilst the waves are 'round us breaking
    As our lonely bark glides on
And our eyes in vain are seeking
    Diamond drops to rest upon,
We would love again to wander
    Where stalactites ever dwell
Absence makes the heart grow fonder,
    Domes of grandeur! Fare-ye-well.
Tis the hour when happy faces
    Overflow with loves delights
Who will fill our vacant places?
    Who, homes circle form to-night?
Thro' floating mists that here surround us
    Spirit shapes appear to dwell
Whilst the rocks piled high around us
    Echo back, our fare-thee-well.