

the vat-house is a lofty dome, called the Rotunda.

The most interesting parts of the cave have fanciful designations, derived from the names of various objects to which they have a rude resemblance, or from some incident in their history. Thus, having passed the first vats, we meet the Cliffs of Kentucky River, which, the Kentuckian informs us, this lamp-lit landscape really resembles. Next appear the Church and Pulpit, where there was at one time regular preaching, and where a sermon is still delivered at times when visitors are many. It is an irregular vault, sixty feet in height. We then pass through the second Saltpetre Vats, where the cave is wide and lofty, cumbered with hills of stones and saline earth thrown up in the process of lixiviation, and enter the Gothic Gallery. Across this division runs a ledge of the lime stone rock projecting from the wall, and from this Gallery, to which we ascend with some difficulty, we have a peculiar view faintly revealed by the scattered lamps beneath us.

Leaving the main cave here, we turned to the right, into the Gothic Avenue, in which the rocks assume a rude resemblance to Gothic architecture. Here in a niche was found the mummy of a woman. As no known tribe of American Indians preserve their dead in this manner, she is believed to have belonged to an extinct race, perhaps to those who raise the numberless mysterious mounds which are scattered over the western states—a numerous people who have left no other history.

Rousing himself from the reverie into which the mummy story will probably throw him, the tourist soon reaches the Gothic Chapel, which is well entitled to its name from the massive ribbed pillars and arches formed by the junction of the stalactites from the roof, and the stalagmites from the floor. Descending into a deep cavity called the Lover's Leap, and scrambling through Elbow Crevice, we contemplate the beauties of the Star Chamber, of which some one has truly said that the roof seems to be split open, revealing the vault of the night—heaven spangled with stars. This most beautiful phenomenon is caused by the roof, fifty feet above us, being coated with a black crust studded with small crystals, which twinkle in the lamp-light.

The Deserted Chamber is memorable as the scene of a curious experiment in the treatment of consumption. The air of the cave being mild, and unaffected by the changes of the seasons, consumptive patients were to be cured by being buried alive. Houses, which are still standing, were built in the now deserted chamber, and the voluntary immigration to a species of classical Hades, duly took place. Through their love of the light, they consented to "remain in darkness as those who had been long dead." Life is sweet, but the result was as might have been anticipated. They enjoyed indeed a mild and equable though damp climate; but then the gloom, the silence, with the wakeful sensitiveness these must have produced, and the constant society of their fellow consumptives, exerted a baneful effect. It was soon found that their situation was too unnatural for healthy influences, and the well-meant scheme was gradually abandoned, "the last man" having persevered for a year without benefit.

Traversing the Winding Labyrinth, we are abruptly stopped by a wall of rock, in which we perceive an opening like a Gothic window. Within this window is Goran's Dome. Our guide ignites some oiled paper and throws it into the abyss. While thus illuminated, we lean over the window sill, and perceive this grand and beautiful cavity rising one hundred feet above, and sinking as far beneath us. Such places possess an indescribable attraction, and I could not resist the desire to descend to the bottom if at all practicable. Turning back a few steps, I followed Mat through narrow, rugged and tortuous crevices, gradually descending to the top of a water-worn pass, only large enough to admit a man's body. This pass may be compared to a chimney stuck round internally with spikes of rock, mud being substituted for soot. It was some thirty feet in depth, and opens into the bottom of the Dome. Scrambling down bear-fashion, we soon reached the bottom, and Goran's majestic dome, illuminated by the lights of our party at the window in mid-distance, towered above us to the height of two hundred feet—a sharp cone, ribbed like a groined vault, and polished by that persevering architect, water. Picking up a few pebbles as memorials, we returned by the same rat holes, thoroughly besmeared, but delighted.

Our first day's excursion terminated at the Bottomless Pit. This fearful place for a time set bounds to discovery in the cave, completely barring further progress. To look into it, and listen to the booming thunder that rose from an unknown depth when a stone was hurled into it, long deprived the most stout-hearted of their determination to explore. At length a subterranean Columbus crossed it at the second attempt, only escaping destruction by a hairbreadth. His ladder slipped, but a death grip of a projecting rock saved him, and he found himself on the further side. A gangway was soon after thrown across the narrow part of it. It is found to be about one hundred and sixty feet in depth. Several deeper passages have been found opening into it in different directions. Indeed the limestone formation in the vicinity of the Bottomless Pit, (to repeat that awful appellation, so suggestive of a more terrible reality) and Goran's Dome, is quite honey-combed with caves, above, below, and around. One part of it is worn into the form of a very deep circular draw well, apparently as perfect as plummet and compass can make it. Here, however, as we have said, ended our first day's excursion, and, in miner language, we "went to grass" again.

We set out anew next morning to penetrate to the extremity of the cave and explore its various branches. Mat carried a can of oil; Albert, an-

other slave of much intelligence, a basket of provisions; and our suite was completed by his wife Helena, a brown woman, cheerful, neat, and rather good looking. We proceeded by the main cave, over the ground already described, till we reach the Giant's Coffin, a fallen rock lying near the wall. The coffin hid for thirty years, after the discovery of the cave, the entrance to the parts reserved for this day's excursion. Visitors passed and repassed close by, without dreaming that behind it lay a passage leading to avenues more extensive and remarkable than any yet discovered.

Turning sharp behind the Giant's Coffin we descend by a ladder through the steps of lime into the Valley of Humility. Thence through the winding way, or Fat Man's Misery, a long serpentine water-worn passage, just wide enough for ordinary "humans," but in which one of the Falstaff species would be miserable indeed, and would, doubtless, wipe his brow, and heartily congratulate himself when he had wriggled himself through the pass into Great Relief. We next reach in succession River Hall; Bacon Chamber, its roof strangely worn into resemblance of scores of bacon hams hanging from it; the Dead Sea, a horrid gulf with a black pool at the bottom, that one shudders to look at; the River Styx, which is heard rushing along in a chasm below us to join Lake Lethe. We cross the river by a natural bridge, which leads us to the shores of the lake, a pond of limpid water, never once ruffled by a breeze. We are paddled over it in a flat-bottomed boat, and land upon a smooth, sandy beach, at the entrance of the Great Walk. This is a lofty and wide corridor, three hundred yards long, through which the river flows when its waters are high; but we now walk without obstruction over its sandy bed. Apparently, it has been altogether excavated by running water, of which every part of its shelves and cavities bears the impress. It leads to Echo River. Upon its quiet and pellucid waters we embark. The lamps are ranged in the bow of the boat, and Mat seats himself with his paddle in the stern. Silently she glides through an arch so low that we must crouch in passing, but which immediately expands again into a wide irregular pass. So transparent is the water, that although sometimes twenty feet in depth, we can distinctly survey its bed, its every stone and crag, even to the bottom. While sitting in breathless admiration, the guide, by a blow upon the boat from his paddle, awakes the slumbering echo. It rolls around us, reverberates along the vaults, and dies away in the gloom, like a peal of music uttered in thunder, sinking by soft cadence into primeval silence. Then the paddle is timed by a negro melody, with an abrupt pause at the close of each verse. Hark! The echo expires with such a perfect resemblance to a bass note from a strong piano, that we may exclaim, surely there is some other instrument than rock and water here. A voice hails us from the darkness of ahead. "It was only an echo." "No; it was certainly a voice." Reaching the termination of our voyage, where the river disappears through a low conduit, we find that the voice was from a solitary fisherman who had been pursuing his sport since early morning: for the waters of the cave are tenanted by two species of fish as peculiar as their habitation—fish without eyes—divine skill, economical in all its workings, having denied them organs which would here have been useless.

Setting forward again with increasing curiosity, we proceed for a mile and a half through a wide avenue called Silliman's, which has in general the appearance of a dry river channel. Here lie what are termed, after the nomenclature of classical mythology, the Infernal Regions, traversed by a shelving slippery path, where a single false step would plunge us into a dark chasm which is close alongside. Escaped from this place of evil name, the wild and rugged Pass of El Gau soon receives us. It may be two miles long and thirty to sixty feet in height, but so narrow that our lamps can scarcely light the eye to the roof—a most strange dry river channel, wholly water-worn, with galleries of projecting ledges on either side, and at various heights. The limestone at the partings of the strata is worn into all kinds of fantastic shapes and cavities, wide low caverns and sharp shelves, their serrated outlines and deep shadows giving the pass an air of gloomy grandeur, which we frequently linger to contemplate.

The pass of El Gau, and seemingly also our pilgrimage, terminates at Hebe's Spring of sulphurous water. But no—look up. A long ladder leads to an ugly black hole which opens its jaws in the roof. Through it lies the way to Cleveland's Cabinet, another spacious avenue two miles long. Its walls and roof are almost wholly incrustated with white gypsum, in every variety of form. The master-pieces of the cabinet are Mary's Bower and Charlotte's Grotto, where the gypsum on the roof has effloresced into the most beautiful variety of vines, leaves, and flowers, of formal likeness the most striking, but all of spotless white. The roof of Charlotte's Grotto might be compared to a parterre of flowers—bleached, petrified, and inverted—the beauteous work of a subtle artist. The whole avenue is quite dry, but cumbered with fallen rocks, which make walking slow and difficult. But while "forward" is the word, the weakest feels no weakness here.

The Rocky Mountains are a hill of huge fallen rocks, which we climb on hands and feet, and from the summit look down into Dismal Hollow, a vast chaos, where our lamps' feeble rays are lost in gloom. Let us descend and scatter with our lights around its verge. We have surely penetrated to the regal hall of "chaos and ancient night." Well might its vague sublimity lead the imagination of tourists astray, who have variously estimated its area at from two to eight acres. There are heights and hollows, with "rocks upon rocks in dire confusion hurled." The dismal ruin is spanned by a vault of Titanic masonry, terribly grand; its rudely regular dome,

curving upward till lost in darkness, which, above and around us, throws its mantle of mystery over the sombre grandeur of the scene.

There are several avenues leading from Dismal Hollow. Following one of them a little way we come in sight of Sarina's Arbor in a nook beneath us, and a very wet and inconspicuous bower she seems to have chosen, tenable only by a mermaid. The descent being precipitous and difficult, our Lexington friend sat himself down at the top and resolved to rest content with what he had seen, while his more spirited lady determined to persevere. Our way lay along a slanting slippery rock, with a black chasm at its verge. But our cheerful and attentive guide, throwing himself back against the wall beyond, and bridging the cleft with his limbs, offered his not handsome but useful pedestals as stepping stones across the treacherous surface. By them we passed in safety and reached the arbor, which well rewarded our curiosity. It is draped with wavy sheets of brown stalactites, appearing at a hasty glance like very thick leather tapering downward to sharp edges, and when struck, sounding like metallic plates in every note of the gamut. The water, ancient decorator, still trickles from the drapery, and, received into a basin, forms Medora's Spring. Let us have a draught of its limpid water, for we have now attained nine miles from daylight.

Our stomachs now began to remonstrate against the want of attention; so recrossing Dismal Hollow, and taking our parting look of it from the Rocky Mountains, we select a convenient flag for our dining table, and Albert displays the contents of his basket, fowls, ham, and bread—good fare for a party of human moles.

We examined some minor avenues of the cave as we returned, but left miles unvisited. The guides very properly preserve the mineral curiosities of the bowers and arbors from the hands of selfish tourists; but abundance of beautiful specimens may be picked up in other nooks and crevices in Cleveland's Cabinet, where we spent some time in collecting them. Not the least beautiful forms which the gypsum assumes are those of long crystalline needles, and straight silk-like fibres. Large white spiders, plump and jovial, the alderman of the race, inhabit the dry fissures, and are the only indigenous occupants we saw beside the fish and bats. There are, however, we were told, some rats occasionally met with.

In traversing the cave it is believed that we cross our own track more than once, but at various heights and depths, as we go from end to end, turning and twisting about, rising and descending through the most unexpected openings, and with the strangest tortuosities. Probably among the thousands of unexamined nooks and holes other discoveries will be made, as some have been made lately. The proprietor forbids a survey and plan of the cave to be made—which would be very interesting—but it is the opinion of the guides that the whole lies beneath a surface embraced in a circle three miles in diameter.

Several points of minor interest solicit our notice as we re-pass them, of which we may now find time to note the following, leaving many halls, avenues, and so forth, unmentioned: Diamond Grotto, where alabaster varies her freaks by gemming the roofs with diamonds. Mamre Ceiling and Snow-ball Room, which she has ceiled with hailstones and snow-balls of exquisite purity. Martha's Vineyard, named from the stalactites in the form of huge clusters of grapes with which it is hung. The Hanging Rocks, which have caved in from above, and remain suspended by their angles, a stony avalanche in threatening confusion. The Great Western Steamship, a rock-shelf jutting from Silliman's Avenue. Purgatory, a difficult byway to which the guides resort when Echo River rises too high to be freely navigated. Side-saddle Pit, sixty feet in depth, as plumb as any miner could excavate it, and water-worn to the smoothness of polished alabaster. The Arched Way, a long, low, and narrow passage, regularly arched as if by compass. Floating Clouds, seemingly another startling view of the sky. Napoleon's Dome, which runs up into a cone to the height of forty feet, crusted over with white crystalline gypsum. The Register Room, the roof of which is the visitor's book, and has its mammoth pages full of their names, written in candle smoke. A natural arm-chair of stalagmite. Post-oak Pillar, a column of the natural order, we will call it, supporting the roof. The First Echo, a spot where a stamp of the foot on the floor sounds beneath us like the stroke on a huge bass drum, showing that we are upon the roof of a lower vault, and probably raising unpleasant doubts as to the safety of our floor. This phenomenon is frequently observed.

Proceeding ahead of our party, and keeping beyond eye and ear shot of them, as we wander on in silence, the darkness receding from and following the small circle of our lamp, we realize the sensation of loneliness and awe that can only be felt in such a place. But this is an amusement that must be cautiously indulged; a wrong turn may separate us from the guide, or our reveries may be rudely disturbed by a step into one of the numerous clefts and chasms that lie in the way. Following our party at a short distance is the best way to view the cave, as we have thus the benefit of all the lights before us, and form a better idea of its heights, widths, and rugged grandeur, than those in front can have.

But it is time to welcome back the daylight. We therefore overtake our companions, who have waited for us at a turn where the seeming exit is by a wide and inviting avenue, but the real one by an insignificant cleft which might have been blundered past unnoticed. We have been altogether no less than eleven hours underground, and our excursion draws to a close. Day again appears before us at the extremity of the dark vista, more beautiful and grateful than ever. The fanning breeze again salutes us, the fresh verdure, the waving boughs, the music of the woods, their flowers and fragrance.—[Ex.

## The Frigate Constitution, alias "Old Ironsides."

The Boston Courier republishes an article that appeared in the Boston Daily Commercial Gazette of June 21st, 1833, under the signature of T., which gives a brief synopsis of the history of the Constitution—"the pride of the navy." We copy the material portions of this article, and have no doubt that the reader will find their perusal both profitable and interesting.

She was built at Hart's ship yard, at the north end, situated between the Winnisimmit ferry ways and the marine railway, and was launched under the superintendence of Colonel Claghorne, the builder, on Saturday, the 21st of October, 1797; consequently she is now (1833) nearly 36 years old. She sailed on her first cruise, on Sunday the 22nd of July, 1798, from which she returned in November. On the 20th of December of the same year she again sailed from Boston harbor on her second cruise, from which she returned a few months after, without having the good luck to fall in with any of the enemy's national ships.

Shortly after this, our commerce in the Mediterranean having suffered severely from the depredations and insults of the Barbary cruisers, our government at once determined on chastising them.

In May, 1803, Com. Edward Preble was appointed to the command of this favorite ship, and in June he sailed with the squadron destined to act against Tripoli. To all conversant with this scene of war, it is well known the Constitution acted a conspicuous part, in fact bore the blunt of the battle. After the destruction of the Philadelphia, of 44 guns, she was for a long time the only frigate on the station, and being ably seconded by the gallant Decatur and the smaller vessels, did more in a single year to humble the pride of the Barbary states than all Christendom ever did before or since.

In short, such a variety of service, hair-breadth escapes, hard knocks, and perilous adventure, has never been achieved by any single vessel. Peace having been concluded with Tripoli, she soon after returned home, where she remained unemployed, or nearly so, until the commencement of the late war with Great Britain. This was on the 18th of June, 1812.

On the 12th of July she left the Chesapeake for New York, preparatory to a long cruise, and on the 17th discovered and was chased by a British squadron, consisting of the Africa 64, Shannon and Guerriere 38, Belvidera 36, and Eolus 32, under the command of Com. Broke of the Shannon.

During the most critical period of the chase, when the nearest frigate, the Belvidera, had already commenced firing, and the Guerriere was training her guns for the same purpose, the possibility of kedging the ship, although in nearly 30 fathoms of water, was suggested by Lieutenant, now Commodore Morris, and was eagerly adopted, with the most brilliant success.

The enemy, who had before been gaining, were now almost imperceptibly falling astern, without their being able to conceive of the mysterious manner in which it was effected. A lucky mile or thereabouts had been gained in this way, before the discovery was made, and then it was altogether too late to avail themselves of it, with any probability of success; a propitious breeze springing up at this moment, of which the Constitution felt the first effects, soon increased the distance, and rendered any further exertions in warping and towing unnecessary.

After remaining a few days in port, she sailed again, and on the 19th of August—precisely one month after her escape—was lucky enough to fall in with one of the same frigates cruising alone and with her name emblazoned in large characters in her fore-top-sail. Nothing daunted at this, however, the Constitution took the liberty of edging down, for the purpose of ascertaining the object of such a close pursuit a few weeks before. As soon as the two ships were within whispering distance, an explanation commenced, which, after a close conference of 30 minutes, ended to the complete satisfaction of Captain Hull. She proved to be H. B. M. frigate Guerriere, Captain Dares, of 49 guns and 302 men, and had been totally dismantled, and, in other respects, was rendered such a complete wreck that getting her into port was altogether out of the question. She was accordingly burnt, and the Constitution returned again to Boston, where she arrived on the 30th of August. Never shall we forget the enthusiasm with which she was received.

The news arrived in town during divine service on Sunday morning, and the crowds that flocked to State street to hear the particulars of such a glorious victory, and the shouts that rent the air fully evinced the deep interest that was felt by every class of the community.

The ship had anchored in President Roads, about five miles from town, and in the afternoon the harbor was alive with pleasure boats, anxious to take a closer view of Old Ironsides, and to exchange congratulations with her gallant crew. We, among hundreds of others, sailed round her several times, endeavoring in vain to trace the effects of an engagement with a British frigate of nearly equal force, that had occurred only 11 days before, and in which her antagonist was entirely demolished in the short space of half an hour.

We could hardly believe our own eyes—no serious damage whatever was visible; now and then a place or two were pointed out where a splinter had been driven off; but, on the whole, she appeared in almost as perfect order as when she left the harbor only three weeks before; indeed, it seemed to us that, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, she had passed the fiery ordeal entirely unscathed. This was indeed a new state of things, and served not a little to increase the hope and confidence of the friends of our gallant navy throughout the Union.

[Concluded on page 318.]