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ABBEVILLE, LOUISIANA, SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 1903.

NO. 3

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OUR TRIP TO AND IN THE MAMMOTH CAVE.

(Continued.)

We had risen early that morning and breakfast was over by eight o'clock. We immediately got ready and started upon our second and new journey called the "Route of Pits and Domes." Down the slippery steps, two by two, we trodded. Our guides met us at the Iron Gate and gave out the lamps as before. We were then ready to undertake what was to be the most enchanting part of our whole caval experience.

After a moment's time, we were passing through "Hutchinson's Narrows," where loose rocks piled on either side in compact manner leaving but a narrow space between, bore a silent testimony to the toil of nearly a century ago when miners laid them there that they might more easily carry their burdens to the upper world. And here we saw the pipes, which were bored with toil from long stems of trees and which were used by the miners to convey water from a spring at the mouth of the cave for the purpose of leaching vats.

We moved on and soon the guide announced that the "Rotunda" had been reached. Sixty feet above us was the grand arch, which formed the roof of this immense hall, broken into folds and frets of great beauty along the upper margin. We were informed by the guide that the "Rotunda" was directly under the hotel which we had left a short time before.

We then visited the "Little Bat Room," named for the myriads of bats which were seen all over the walls. But only a few feet off we ascended a small hill and suddenly found ourselves confronted by the "Sentinel," the lone stalactite which stood guard over the entrance to "Olive's Bower." Right here it would be wise to explain what is meant by the terms stalactite and stalagmite. By stalactite is meant the formation which was seen on the ceiling of the cave in different places and which was formed by water penetrating the rocks from above, forming with the ever-growing crystals of gypsum and calcite into drops that never fell, but soon crystallized and grew into a cone shaped object of some size in centuries. The stalagmite were of the same nature, but being on the floor of the cave built themselves up to meet the stalactite form above. The guide, to be very explicit, said that when the stalactite came down from above and met the stalagmite being built from the floor upwards, to join it, would form a stick-'em-a-tight. Olive's Bower, with its wonderful formations terminated the underground journey in that direction and we returned to the Rotunda, not failing to note new aspects as we passed them in the opposite direction.

The main cave was entered and we noticed on our left the exit to the noted Cork-Screw. Just a few yards in advance we came to the "Methodist Church," which was a mere hall in which there was a so-called pulpit on which an old clergyman preached to the miners many years ago. There was a Christmas tree, as green as if it had been put there but yesterday in the middle of the church, with cards from people of

every clime hanging from it.

Just beyond this point we left the main cave for a short time and climbed the flight of stairs into the "Gothic Avenue." At the topmost part of the cliff which we had scaled was "Booth's Amphitheatre." This place was so named because that celebrated actor gave a rendition of one of his famous dramatic characters to test the acoustic properties of this hall. To feel the significance of the occasion a young lady from Georgia recited a very dramatic selection from the large stage of stone.

We continued on our way in the Gothic Avenue and noted many state and school monuments erected there of loose stones by just such parties as our own. But not wishing to erect our monument there we went on and placed our school monument with others just before we left the cave. Soon the monuments were all passed and we reached the first stalactite-stalagmite of this avenue. The "Post Oak Pillar," the "Pillared Castle," the "Gothic Chapel," the "Pillar of Hercules"—the largest group of stalactites in the cave,—"Pompey and Caesar," the "Wasp's Nests," "Wilkin's Arm Chair," the

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Elephant's Head," all came in rapid succession and were suggestive of captive unrivaled in naming the several objects. The "Bridal Altar," formed by three stalactite-stalagmite pillars, one representing the preacher and the other two the chief actors in an important part of life's drama, was also in this great avenue. The guide said that many couples had been married in that bridal altar up to a few years ago, but the company had put a stop to its being done any more. And there was an inquisitive young lady who asked "Why?" He said it was running matrimony in the ground.

After passing "Lovers Leap" and the "Standing Rocks" we hesitated for a moment and one of the guides left us and going behind one of the massive walls he held his light back of a crevice in the wall and to us there seemed to be a white statue in the distance. The guide named it "Martha Washington's Statue." Here we passed the "Acute Angle" of stone, and the "Giant's Coffin," which was forty feet long, twelve feet wide and eighteen feet high. We went through the rooms of rock called the "Consumptive's Home," where many consumptives lived and died years ago. We were then but a short distance from the crowning glory of that route, the "Star Chamber." All our lights were extinguished and if we had never known before what darkness meant, we knew then. By order of the guide silence reigned supreme and we gazed above at the ceiling. But there seemed to be no ceiling. We could see the stars twinkling merrily here and there, then a comet shot across the mimic sky and the glory of the milky way brought from our too willing lips expressions of surprise and pleasure. The illusion was perfect. Snow clouds passed rapidly by. Day break was nigh. The rays of light from the sun seemed to be shooting out here and there. The blending of the barking of the house dog, the crowing of the cock, the lowing of cattle, the chopping of wood, the quarreling of cats, for a time conspired to make us think that we were still above the ground. But our venturologist guide soon joined us and said that the end of the route had been reached. We retraced our steps.

Returning by the way of "Pits and Domes," we stood on the "Bridge of Sighs" and looked up into "Gorin's Dome" hundreds of feet high and down into the "Bottomless Pitt." We went through the "Labyrinth," the most intricate series of small chambers, pits and domes in the cave. A few yards beyond this place the route must perforce end, and our faithful guide followed by a happy crowd of young teachers broke away from this long period of night—yes Egyptian darkness—and into the sunlight we went half joyful and half sorrowful, knowing that perhaps we should never never make our way back into this—the most interesting region beneath the earth's surface—the Mammoth Cave.

After a two day's absence our party arrived at Nashville safe, but a little wearied; with pleasant memories and with part of an education, which, though thieves break in and robbers continue to go unchecked, will be ours though we live forever.

H. P. WALL.

(The end.)

ANNOUNCEMENT.

The Public Graded High School of the parish of Vermilion, located at Abbeville, La., and built by the Town of Abbeville, the Parish of Vermilion and the School Board of Vermilion Parish, will open the latter part of January, 1903, for a school term of six months. All white children of school age, residents of Vermilion parish, are admissible and have the right to attend this school. The building, which is a handsome, durable and modern school building, will only accommodate four hundred pupils, so that when the enrollment reaches four hundred no more children can be received for want of room. It is of importance therefore that all who desire to patronize this school see that their children be enrolled as soon after the opening as possible. The purpose of this school is to give to the pupil a good, practical education such as will fit him and equip him to attend to all the usual business affairs of life. Following this will be seen the course of study adopted for this school.

J. R. KITCHELL,
Par. Supt. of Public Education.

Course of Study of Abbeville High School:

Abbeville, La., Jan. 1, 1903.

The aim of the following is to provide a uniform system of grading for the Abbeville High School, so that it may accomplish the greatest good for the children.

The Course of Study is believed to be fully adapted to the needs of the school, but other subjects may be added or changes be made whenever it is deemed necessary.

In the arrangement of the Course of Study, the aim is that of adaptation and gradual development—the teaching of the proper subject at the proper time.

The text books used are those adopted by the State Board of Education for use in the Elementary and High Schools of the State.

The three departments of the school—Primary, Grammar and High School—consist of ten grades. The time allowed for the completion of a grade is one school year—divided into two terms.

The regular class promotions will be made at end of first half of school year and at the end of school year. In Grammar and High School departments written examinations will be held monthly and at the end of each term, and the results of these examinations will be used by teachers.

[Continued on second page.]

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