

AnimaLocI

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till we returned, and moreover to keep his lamp in good order, I followed after the first, who had entered a vertical passage just large enough to admit his body.

We continued to step from one stone to another, until at last, after much difficulty from the smallness of the passage, which is about forty feet in height, we entered upon the side of a chamber, at least one thousand eight hundred feet in circumference, and whose arch is about one hundred and fifty feet high in the centre. After having marked arrows, pointing downwards, on the slabstones around the little passage through which we had ascended, we walked forward nearly to the centre of this area.

It was past midnight when I entered this chamber of eternal darkness, “where all things are hush’d, and nature’s self lies dead.” I must acknowledge that I felt a shivering horror at my situation, when I looked back upon the different avenues through which I had passed since I entered the cave at eight in the morning; and at that “time of night, when church-yards groan,” to be buried several miles in the dark recesses of this awful cavern – the grave perhaps of thousands of human beings – gave me no very pleasant sensations. With the guide who was now with me I took the only avenue leading from this chamber, and traversed it for the distance of a mile in a southerly direction, when my lamps forbade my going further, as they were nearly exhausted.

The avenue, or passage, was as large as any we had entered; and how far we might have travelled, had our lights held out, is unknown. It is supposed by all who have any knowledge of this cave, that Green River, a stream navigable several hundred miles, passes over three branches of its branches.

It was nearly one o’clock at night when we descended “the passage of the chimney,” as it is called, to the guide whom I had left seated on the rocks. We returned over piles of saltpetre earth and fire beds, out of one avenue into another, until at last, with great fatigue and a dim light, we entered the walls of the chief city, where, for the last time, we trimmed our lamps, and entered the spacious avenue that carried us to the Second Hoppers.

I found, when in the last mentioned avenue or upper chamber, many curiosities, such as glauber salts, epsom salts, Aints, yellow ochre, spar of different kinds, and some petrifications, which I brought out, together with the mummy that we found at the Second Hoppers. We happily arrived at the mouth of the cave about three in the morning, nearly exhausted and worn down with nineteen hours continued fatigue. I was near fainting on leaving the cave and inhaling the rapid air of the atmosphere, after having so long breathed the pure air, which is occasioned by the nitre of the cave. The pulse beat stronger when in the cave but not so fast as when on the surface.

I have described to you hardly one half of the cave, as the avenues between the mouth of the cave and the second Hoppers have not been named. There is a passage in the main avenue, about sixty rods from the entrance, like that of a trap door. By sliding aside a large flat stone, you can descend sixteen or eighteen feet in a very narrow defile, where the passage comes upon a level, and winds about in such a manner as to pass under the main passage without having any communication with it, and at last opens into the main cave by two large passages, just beyond the second Hoppers. It is called the glauber salt room, from salts of that kind being found there. There is also the sick room, the bat room, and the fint room, all of which are large, and some of them quite long. The last that I shall mention is a very winding avenue, which branches off at the second Hoppers, and runs west and south west for more than two miles. This is called “the haunted chamber,” from the echo of the sound made in it. The arch of this avenue is very beautifully encrusted with lime stone spar; and in many places the columns of spar are truly elegant, extending from the ceiling to the floor. I discovered in this avenue a very high dome, in or near the centre of the arch, apparently fifty feet high, hung in rich drapery, festooned in the most fanciful manner, for six or eight feet from the hangings, and in colours the most rich and brilliant.

The columns of spar and the stalactites in this chamber are extremely romantic in their appearance, with the reflection of one or two lights. There is a cellar formed of this spar, called, “Wilkins’ arm chair,” which is very large and stands in

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the centre of the avenue, and is encircled with many smaller ones. Columns of spar, fluted and studded with knobs of spar and stalactites; drapery of various colours superbly festooned, and hung in the most graceful manner, are shown with the greatest brilliancy from the reflection with lamps.

A part of "the haunted chamber" is directly over the bat room, which passes under "the haunted chamber," without having any connection with it. My guide led me into a very narrow defile on the left side of this chamber, and about one hundred yards from "Wilkins' arm chair," over the side of a smooth limestone rock, ten or twelve feet, which we passed with much precaution; for, had we slipped from our hold, we had gone to "that bourne whence no traveller returns," if I may judge from a cataract of water, whose "dismal sound we heard at a very considerable distance in this pit, and nearly under us. However, we crossed in safety, clinging fast to the wall, and winding down under the haunted chamber," and through a very narrow passage for thirty or forty yards. The air was pure and delightful in this as well as in other parts of the cave. At the further part of this avenue we came upon a reservoir of water, very clear and delightful to the taste, apparently having neither inlet nor outlet.

We returned by the beautiful pool of water, which is called the "Pool of Clitorius," after the "Fons Clitorius" of the classics, which was so pure and delightful to the taste, that after drinking of it a person had no longer a taste for wine. On our way back to the narrow defile, I had some difficulty in keeping my lights, for the bats were so numerous and continually in our faces, that it was next to impossible to get along in safety. I brought this trouble on myself by my own want of forethought; for, as we were moving on, I noticed a large number of these bats hanging by their hind legs to the arch, which was not above twelve inches higher than my head. I took my cane, and gave a sweep the whole length of it, when down they fell; but soon, like so many imps, they tormented us until we reached the narrow defile, when they left us. turned by "Wilkins' arm-chair," and hack to the second Hoppers.

It was at this place I found the mummy which I before alluded to, where it had been placed by Mr. Wilkins, from another cave, for preservation. It is a female, about six feet in height, and so perfectly dry as to weigh but twenty pounds when I found it; the hair on the back part of the head is rather short, and of a sandy hue; the top of the head is bald; the eyes are sunk into the head; the nose, or that part which is cartilaginous, is dried down to the bones of the face; the lips are dried away, and discover a fine set of teeth, perfectly white as ivory; the bands and feet are perfect, even to the nails, and very delicate, like those of a young person; but the teeth are worn as much as a person's at the age of fifty.

She must have been a personage of high distinction, if we may judge from the order in which she was buried. Mr. Wilkins informed me she was found by some labourers, while digging saltpetre earth in a part of the cave about three miles from the entrance, buried eight feet deep between four limestone slabs, and in the posture she is exhibited in the drawing I sent you: seated, the knees brought close to the body, which is erect, the hands clasped and laid upon the stomach, the head upright. She was muffled up, and covered with a number of garments made of a species of wild hemp and the bark of a willow, which formerly grew in Kentucky. The cloth is of a curious texture and fabric, made up in the form of blankets or winding, sheets, with very handsome borders. Bags of different sizes were found by her side, made of the same cloth, in which were deposited her jewels, beads, trinkets, and implements of industry, all which are very great curiosities, being different from anything of the Indian kind ever exhibited in this country. Among the articles was a musical instrument, made in two pieces, of cane put together something like the double flageolet, and curiously interwoven with elegant feathers; she had likewise by her a bowl of uncommon workmanship, and a Vandykemade of feathers, very beautiful. My friend, Mr. Wilkins, gave me the mummy, which I brought away, together with her apparel, jewels, music, etc.

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Notes

This text has been edited and abridged from: *The Pocket Magazine of Classics and Polite Literature*, Volume 1. Published by the University of Michigan, 1818.

The full original version can be found [here](#).

See also

Algeo, Katie. 2004. "[Mammoth Cave and the Making of Place](#)." *Southeastern Geographer* 44. pp.27-47.

Carver Hovey, Horace. 2015. *The Project Gutenberg EBook of Hovey's Handbook of The Mammoth Cave of Kentucky*.

Forrest, Edward F. 2014. *Mammoth Cave Digital Library*.