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## Miscellaneous.

From the Alexandria Herald.

The following interesting particulars of a natural cave in Loudoun county, Va. which was explored a few days since by a party of gentlemen of the neighborhood, will, we presume, be acceptable to every class of readers, both near and distant. We found them in the last Woodstock Herald, the editor of which paper remarks that Shenandoah county abounds with these subterranean curiosities, and that he will accompany another party which intends exploring "Ruffner's Cave," with the view of publishing further facts.

### WONDERS OF CAVE-HILL.

The land in which it is our happiness to have our lots cast, seems to abound with all that is useful, curious, and wonderful. The government itself under which we enjoy our liberties, presents to the rest of the world a subject of wonder and admiration—whilst the wealth, the resources, and enterprise of the people—and that which is marvellous and curious in the kingdom of nature, are continually developing themselves.

The farmer or sturdy yeoman, however, lives in the daily observance of objects that have for him few or no attractions; or having grown familiar with, are no longer subjects of wonder, until them, the philosopher or man of science reveals the secret of their utility in determining something useful in history, or as illustrating the marvellous in creation.

It would seem that all that region of country lying west of the Blue Ridge, and as far toward the Pacific ocean as it has been explored and known, abounds in objects; which, whilst they gratify the curiosity and exercise the imagination, confound and baffle the understanding. And a subject, not the least curious and wonderful, are those extensive and numerous caves, which are found generally in the limestone districts of country.

One of these caves has been known to the people of the neighborhood of Luray in this county, during a number of years past; but nothing like full discovery of its beauties was ever made until within a few days past. This cave is about one mile east of the little village of Luray, and situated within a hundred yards of the road leading from Thornton's-Gap to Newmarket. The entrance is almost exactly at the top of a small mountain, which has for long time been known to the neighborhood, by the name of Cave-Hill. Recent attempts had been made to explore this subterranean world, but rather unsuccessfully, and on Saturday last a party of fifteen gentlemen left Luray, with a determination to give it a complete exploration. The mouth of the cave was rather difficult of access, owing to its smallness; at the party, eager for the marvellous, and impatient of obstacles, fell manfully to work, and in a few minutes, by breaking and removing the rocks, a different and more commodious entrance, than the one formerly used, was opened into the cave. Then commenced the bustle of preparation for the descent. The broad cloth and finer articles of dress were quickly laid aside, and in their stead was substituted old clothing, which had been especially provided for the occasion.

Then the descent commenced—each man provided with a sufficient number of candles for half a day, whilst others carried provisions and refreshments; and others again, instruments for the purpose of ascertaining courses, distances, &c. and determining other matters relating to the cave.

Here, if we mistake not, was a pretty correct criterion of that moral courage and strength of nerve, which we so much admire in others; and which we are all willing to believe we possess ourselves. Each man was willing that his comrade should descend first, into this great unknown deep, and all were willing to be last to enter. In a few moments, however, the whole party were safely entered. The descent for ten or fifteen yards, is rather narrow, and is at an angle of forty-five degrees; it then takes a horizontal direction, until we are brought, at the distance of about one hundred yards from the entrance, to the first room, which from its situation we called the Lobby. The passage approaches this room about ten feet above the level of its floor, and at some places it is perpendicular, but the descent into the room, is down the rocks somewhat in the form of steps. This room contains some specimens of beautiful spar. Here we tried to take the bearing of the room, but found from the proximity of minerals of some unknown cause, that the instruments were rendered wholly useless.

Leaving this room, we proceeded in a direction which seemed to be west and

south west, and down the side of the mountain. This passage has something the appearance of a large stairway. After descending, as we supposed, about a quarter of a mile, the passage becomes very strait and smooth, and gradually enlarged until we perceived that we stood in front of a room, whose dimensions, from the light of all our candles, we could not discover. The entrance here, as in the room which we first entered, was ten or fifteen feet above the level of the floor.—After a few moments, however, by clinging to the projections of spar, which here appeared like large icicles, the whole party stood safely upon the floor of this great room. Here all the wonder and magnificence of this subterranean world, burst upon us at once! We found that we stood in a room, the area of whose floor, was equal to a quarter of an acre. Immediately before us, and within a few feet of the centre of the room, arose a vast column or pillar, in a great degree combining the architectural proportions; and ran up about 25 or 30 feet, and supported the dome of this immense hall. This column stands upon a block or pedestal about three feet in height, and the shape where it rests upon it, is about the thickness of a man's body. It then swells gradually until it becomes, at the distance of twenty feet from its base, about the size of a barrel, whence it continues of the same size, until it gradually enlarges into its capital, where it reaches the dome. Strange to tell, this vast column is as regularly and beautifully fluted or grooved, as if it had been done with the chisel of the sculptor.

About fifteen feet from the main pillar, stand two smaller ones, about ten feet in height; and just at their base, and nearly between them, is a small pool or basin of water. Here the whole party sat down, and untolding their various bundles of provisions and refreshments, and sticking their candles to the different pillars, enjoyed their cold collation with such appetites and spirits as were naturally superinduced by exercise, and the novelty of the scene around us. We perceived now for the first time, by the united glare of all our candles, that the whole of the arch of this immense hall, was hung with the most beautiful stalactites, and variegated with almost every possible variety of color. In some places it was perfectly white, red, grey or yellow—and in others, it was as clear and transparent as ice.

In looking around you towards the lights which were dispersed in different parts of the hall, the various small spars or pillars that were pointing up—others that had been detached from the roof and lay scattered about the floor—and numerous large blocks of crystallized limestone, produced novel and almost indescribable feelings.

It did not require an imagination unusually fervid, to liken this dim picture of the floor, to the ruins of some great city, with a few of its spires and steeples pointing up from the mouldering ruins—or to some mighty temple, with its shattered and broken columns, and fallen walls, with just sufficient of its material, to shew the style of its former magnificence. When we had finished our repast, and collected our forces to push forward in quest of further discoveries, we concluded to call this room Congress Hall; its magnificence being equalled by nothing else within our knowledge.

We now proceed to the left of the entrance by which we came into the hall—entered an opening which presented itself, and by following rather an uneven and difficult passage, we very soon arrived in another room. Here we found a very pleasing subject for our admiration. A large block, or projection of the rock, at one side of this room, was hung around with a vast number of stalactites, of every possible shape and size—from the thickness of ones finger to that of your arm, and from six inches to three or four feet in length. Some one of the party casually striking one of the larger of these stalactites, a loud, full sound was emitted something like the tone of a church bell. Several of the party then drawing pieces of spar across these stalactites, alternately and in concert with each other, it produced a rude and not unpleasant kind of melody, with every gradation of note, from the deepest tone of the organ to the finest note of the flute. This room we somewhat aptly called the Music Room. Finding no convenient outlet from this room, other than the one by which we entered we returned into Congress Hall. After we had entered this hall again, and continued to the right until we came to the great stairway by which we had first entered, we discovered greatly to our surprise, that this entrance projected into the hall twelve or fifteen feet, and was nearly as many feet from the floor. You can form some idea of this singular entrance by supposing a square box with its ends open, to be projected through a window into a room. This projected or funeral part of the entrance, appeared to be formed by the same process, that the stalactites and spar had been;

and its bottom, under which we could all walk and view it, seemed not to be more than nine or ten inches in thickness. Immediately to the right of this passage, commenced what we very properly called a Gallery. This gallery was considered above the level of the room, and contained a great quantity of very brilliant and beautiful spar. The side of the gallery next to the hall was entirely open, from which you could look down into it.

We left the gallery, and still continuing to the right around the hall, we entered a cavity in the floor; and after traversing a tolerably long and difficult passage, we arrived at a very regular room, the side walls and ceiling of which seemed to be clear blue limestone, with a thin crystallization as clear as glass, over their surface. We could reach the ceiling, upon which we wrote many of our names with white chalk, the day of the month, year, &c. This room we called the Glazed Chamber. In the passage leading to this chamber, we discovered, attached to the side of the rock, what appeared to be a complete couch shell. The shape and size—the smoothness and delicateness on the inside, and the roughness on the outside, with the little circle of knobs near the top, all precisely corresponded with the product of the sea; and it appeared that a very gentle tap would have detached it from the rock. Within a few inches of this was a petrification, exactly resembling the human heart. Its colour, shape, and size all precisely corresponded. And near this again, the perfect leg, foot and talons of a bird, projected from the rock. These several objects were so clearly and completely defined, and so closely resembled their original, as to strike the mind, even of the most inattentive observer, with a degree of astonishment.

From the glazed chamber, we all once more returned to congress hall, and continued our discoveries to the right around the room. We perceived now that as the arch of this great room became lower, large stalactites were projected from it and reached the floor; thus forming a beautiful colonnade or row of shining pillars in a line with the direction of the room, and three or four feet from the wall, a beautiful recess. In this recess, one of the simplest, yet one of the most striking beauties of the cave, unfolded itself.

This was a spring of pure water, which appeared as clear as ether. This pool or basin, is about three or four feet in diameter, and twelve or fourteen inches deep.—The bottom and sides of this basin where the waters cover them, are entirely covered with stalagmites or drops of shining spar, which has the appearance of burnished silver. About the centre of this spring or pool, stands a beautiful stalactite, eighteen inches in height, and unlike all the rest of these specimens of spar which we found arising from the floor, the small end or point, rested on the bottom of the basin, and gradually enlarged until it arose several inches above the top of the water; thus presenting the singular appearance of a long cone resting upon its point. Exactly over this, a large spar hanging from the roof of the room, approached within eighteen inches of that which was in the water. From the point of this hanging spar, there ran a stream of water, about the thickness of a large thread, and fell exactly on the top of the spar in the centre of the spring, and is in fact, the source from which the spring is supplied. From the point of this hanging spar, there ran a stream of water, about the thickness of a large thread, and fell exactly on the top of the spar in the centre of the spring, and is in fact, the source from which the spring is supplied. Both of these stalactites, have the appearance of clear glass or pieces of ice.

To the right of this spring behind the pillars, and a little above it, through the solid limestone rock or wall of the room, was a small smooth opening just large enough to admit the body. This opening is perfectly level, and after sliding about ten feet, we came into a room, not so large, but in point of beauty, far exceeding any thing we had seen. The whole interior of this room is a complete lustre or surface of this shining spar! In this room, about three feet and a half from the floor, is a complete wainscot or chairboard with all its mouldings and carved work, in complete relief, and extending in one entire and unbroken circle round the room. In the centre of the floor arose three candlesticks of a mammoth size—these candlesticks arose from the floor of the room, with various swells and diminishes, resembling carved work, until they reached the exact level of the chair board or wainscotting of the room when the spar which resembles the candle, seeming to be set in a complete socket, ran up about two feet. As if to make the copy more exact, & the resemblance more palpably striking, the candlesticks seems to be of a dusky or bronze color, and the candle or spar arising from it a clearer white. From certain emblems which it contained, we called this the Masonic Hall.

One fact here presented itself too palpably to be mistaken; this room had evidently been at one time filled with water, to the height of the chair board, which by gradual petrification had been formed, and which at once accounted for its being so perfectly level and regular. The candlesticks too had been in the same way, by the dropping of the water from the arch, which being, as we supposed, of great specific gravity than the water into which it fell, gradually formed the large spars that resembled the candlesticks, even with the level of the pool, after which the spar became immediately small and clear resembling a candle. The petrification on the wall of this room, was in beautiful waves and folds resembling drapery. At one end of the room, a large spar resembling a bed post, stood out in a beautiful relief from the wall, and large folds and waves of drapery, resembling curtains, seemed to hide the rest of the bed. Here then our admiration and astonishment were at their height—our feelings had been wrought up to a degree of almost painful intensity. Here we stood hundreds of feet beneath the surface of the earth, and a full half mile from the first entrance, treading upon a spot and breathing the atmosphere which had not been disturbed since the creation of the world. A place in which the human voice had never before been heard, and on whose beauties the human eye had never rested. There was in truth, an awful sublimity in the state of our feelings, superinduced in part perhaps by the consideration of a kind of contingent danger to which we were exposed; the falling of the arch—or the rolling of a single rock into some of the narrow passages which we had to retrace, would have shut us up in eternal darkness in this mysterious region of wonders!

Why nature should display those various and astonishing beauties only for herself, or place them thus in a region of darkness and danger, is marvellous and incomprehensible. Or why she should thus, in a capricious and whimsical mood, group together objects the least resembling each other in their natures and uses, is equally strange. A bedstead, drapery and candlesticks—a conch shell, bird's foot, and a human heart—strange and mysterious associations! we cannot describe nor comprehend them; and all we could do upon viewing them, was to exclaim, "wonderful, wonderful!"

From the room last described, we returned to the mouth of the cave, and found that we had spent nearly four hours in examining its beauties, without however discovering their full extent. We determined to defer a further research to some other occasion.

This cave is situated on the lands of Mr. Isaac Coffin, and was first discovered and partially explored in the following singular manner: A Mr. Ruffner who was nearly as much celebrated for deeds of sylvan prowess as the renowned Putnam, in passing this cave some twenty years ago, conceived the bold and hazardous design of entering it alone and without a light.—He accordingly placed his rifle across the mouth, to denote to his friends if they should happen to see it, that he was in the cave. He descended, and as might have been expected, was soon bewildered and lost in his labyrinth of passages.

It happened that some of his friends in passing the cave, discovered his gun, and rightly concluding that he had gone into the cave, they procured lights and entered in search of him, and found and brought him out again, after his having been in three days. This brave fellow, was among the pioneers who were foremost in exploring and settling our western frontier; and was at last killed by the Indians, after having performed deeds of valor and daring prowess, which would have done honor to the character of a hero. Yours, &c.

Luray, May 4, 1825.

From the N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

### UNION SUNDAY SCHOOL.

One of the most interesting sights with which we were ever favoured, was yesterday afternoon presented to our view on entering Castle Garden, the place appointed for the celebration of the Ninth Anniversary of the Sunday School Union. It was about half past three o'clock when we went in, and at that period many thousand ladies and gentlemen were seated on the upper seats, the lower part of it being reserved for the scholars. At 4 o'clock it was announced that the children arrived at the bridge, and in a few moments the Rev. Dr. Milnor, president of the society, entered, accompanied by the venerable ex-president, Richard Varick, Esq. followed by the clergy, the general committee and the scholars. The officers of the society, and the clergy, occupied seats on the portico in front of the school. The female scholars were seated on the lower seats of the gallery, and the males were arranged in order in the large circle below. Each school was preceded by a banner with a number from 1 to 55, and on most were appropriate

ate mottoes; such for example as the following:

"Thou art the guide of my youth."  
"Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep."  
"Thou from a child hast known the Holy Scriptures."  
"Train up a child in the way he should go."  
"Union is Strength."  
"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."  
"The truth shall make you free."  
"St. George's Church—Let there be light."  
"One thing is needful."  
"Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands to God."

After the scholars had all entered and were arranged, the Rev. Dr. Milnor called the assembly to order, and the Rev. Mr. Cox, of this city addressed the Throne of Grace. The scholars then sang a hymn, in which they were assisted by Messrs. Sage, Earl, Allen, Aldeb, Chester, Sandford and others; after which the Rev. Mr. Cone, of the Baptist church, delivered a short address. The rev. gentleman in looking around the assembled thousands, justly remarked, that he not only required aid from on high, but the best attention their situation would permit, if they desired he should be heard by those who were round him. He reviewed what had been the effect of Sunday school tuition both in England and America, and urged upon its friends and increased devotion to the cause in which they were engaged. He observed that in this happy country, where public honors were not reserved for titled dignitaries, we had every inducement to instruct the youth, that when we are called from the places we now fill, some of those that are now training in Sabbath schools, will succeed. It is therefore our duty to use every exertion in our power to increase the interest already manifested for the promotion of Sabbath schools. Another motive, and it is a very strong one—said the speaker, is the religious instruction which the scholars receive in these schools; they are not only fitted to fill useful stations in society, but they are directed to the Lamb of God. What a field for christian benevolence! Look forward to that day, when the vast multitude, which are now before me must pass down to the silent grave; our heads must soon be placed beneath the cold clods of the valley; and if those that are now looking upon this scene with so much apparent satisfaction, wish for that important hour to be tranquil, let them aid the managers of this excellent institution to train up the children in the way they should go. In conclusion, the Speaker then in a most feeling and appropriate manner, addressed the superintendents, teachers, and scholars. The spectacle was intensely interesting.

It was generally believed that not less than fifteen thousand persons were present, including between four and five thousand children. A gentleman counted one hundred and fifty nine clergymen, many of whom were from different parts of the U. States.

In the evening, the annual meeting was held in St. George's church. Before the appointed hour, the church was crowded. After an introductory prayer by the rev. Mr. Carey, from the East Indies, the annual report was read by Horace Holden, esq. From this document we learnt, that the present number of scholars attached to the Union is 4433, under the care of 616 superintendents and teachers; that 2160 scholars are able to read the scriptures; and that during the past year, 165 bibles and 211 testaments have been given, as rewards for good behaviour, punctual attendance, and for committing portions of the scriptures to memory. We also gathered from the report, that during the year now expired, many of the teachers and scholars, had made a profession of religion, and become members of the visible church. Since the last annual meeting, the society had become auxiliary to the American Sunday School Union Society established at Philadelphia; and Peter Hawes and Thomas Stokes, esqrs. are delegated to attend the annual meeting of that institution. Many interesting facts are mentioned in the report, among which we noticed, that in one of the churches in this city, out of 32 who joined at one time, 27 had been attached to a Sunday school; and in another, 98 out of 100. Nineteen twentieths of the foreign missionaries had been members of Sabbath schools; and two thirds of the Evangelical ministers of the church of England had been ascertained to have belonged to Sunday schools in their youth. The managers in the report regret the want of a sufficient number of teachers in some of the schools, and appeal to the young men of our city, who feel an interest in Sabbath schools, to come forward and engage in this excellent institution.

On concluding the report, Mr. Holden read a letter from a teacher, which he had just received, communicating an account of the death of one of his scholars. The circumstances attending the child's illness