

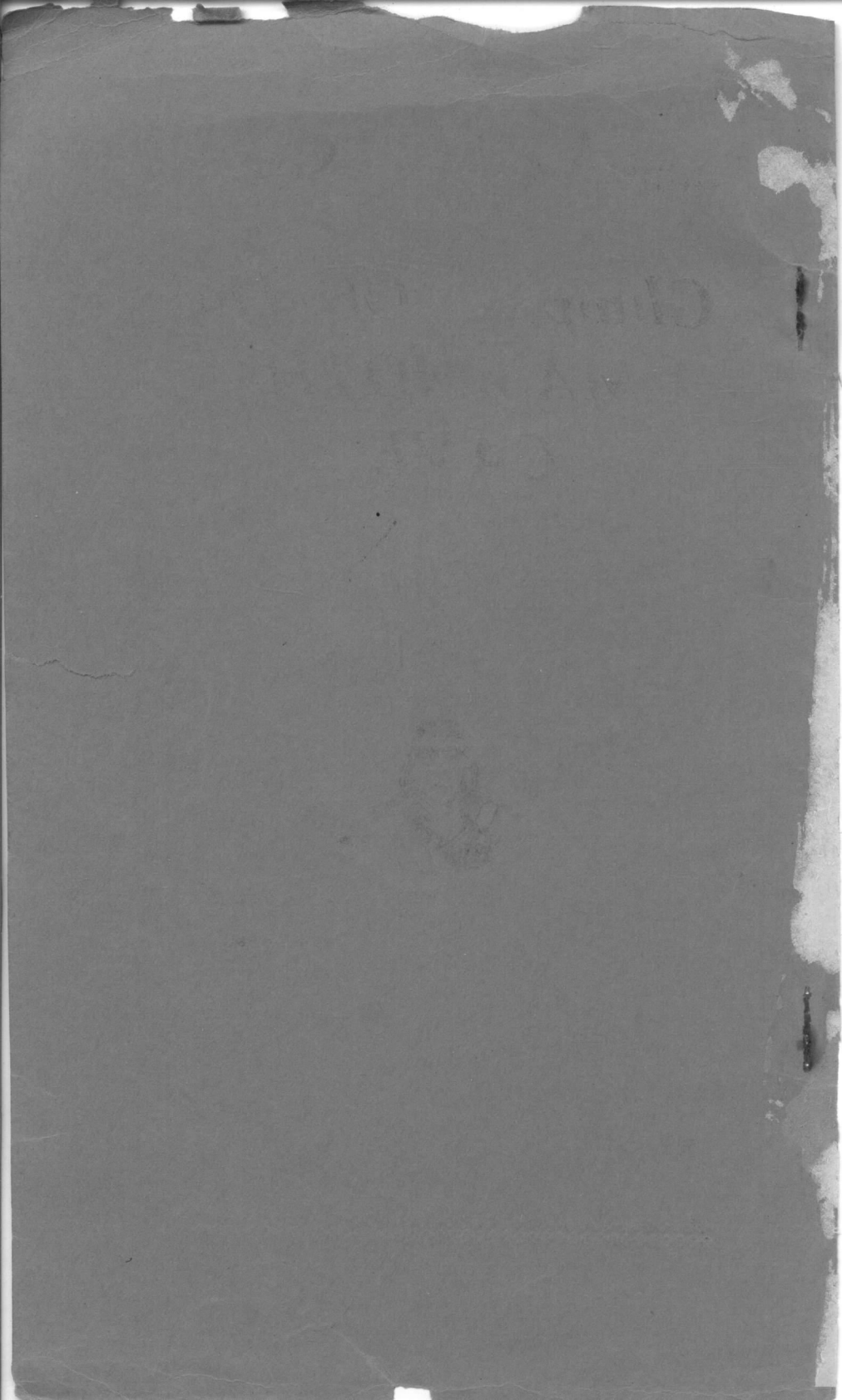


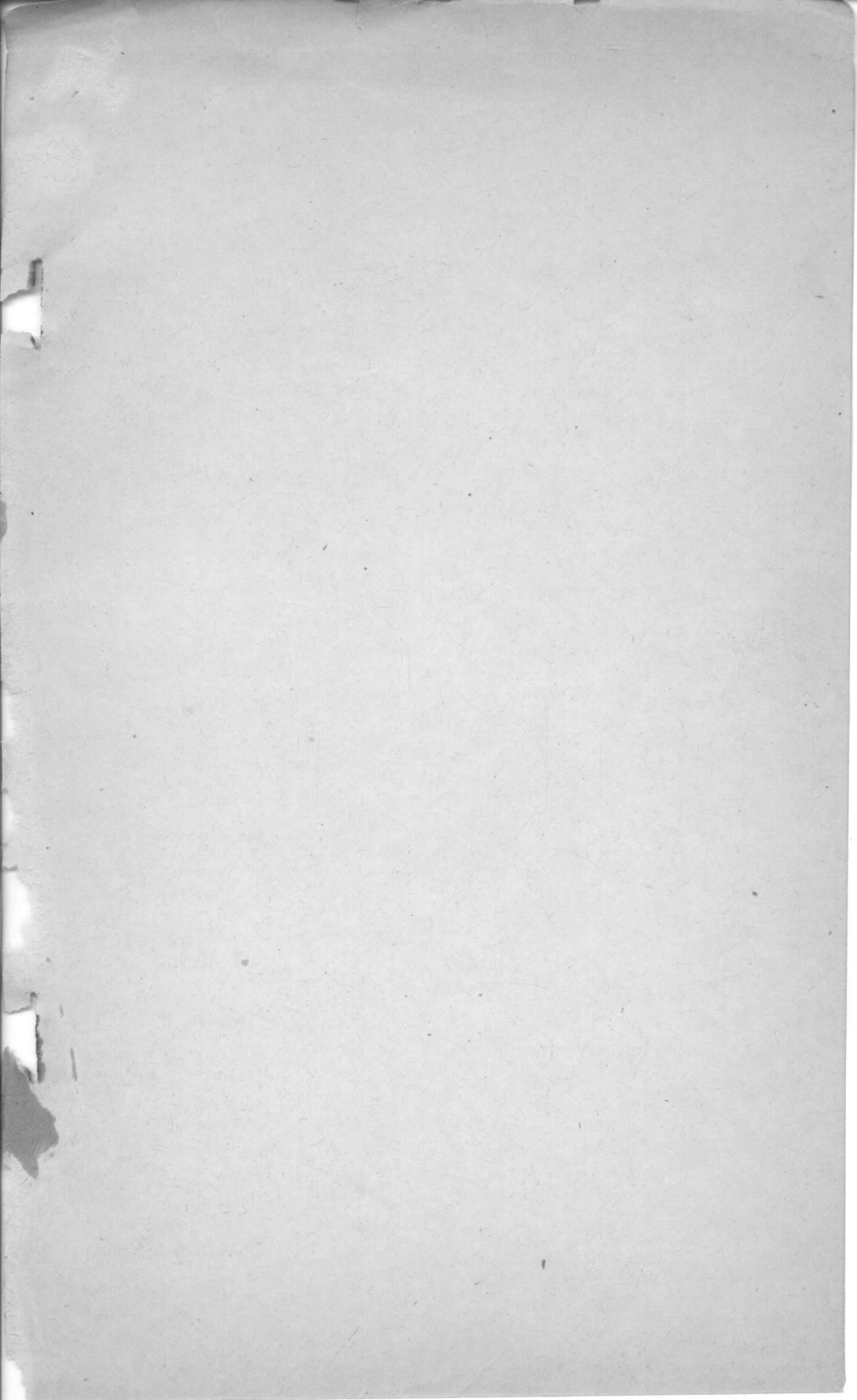
*Glimpses Of The*  
**MAMMOTH**  
**CAVE**

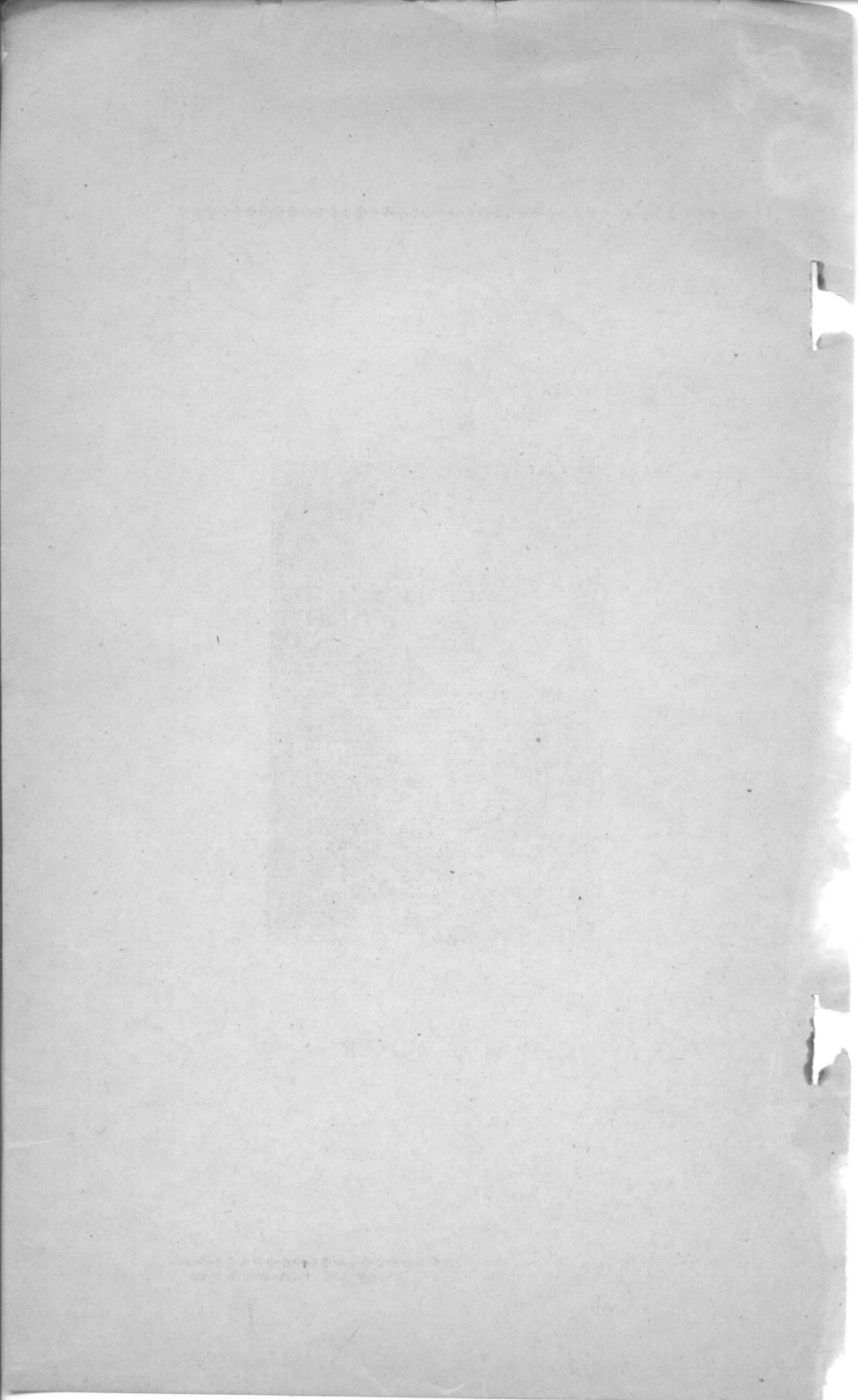


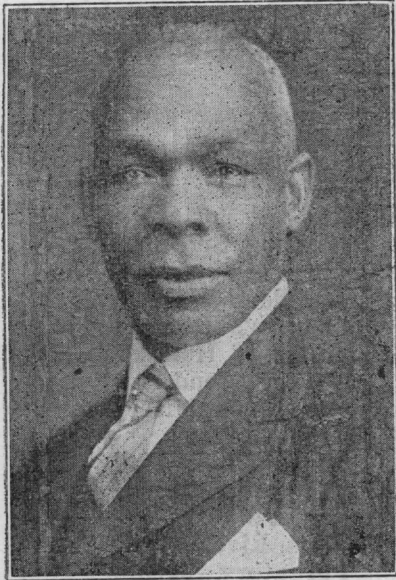
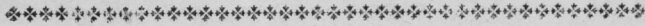
THE A. B. KOGER, COLLECTION











—By—  
C. C. SOMERVILLE

## Pictures in the Cave

Wood Bowl  
Dantes Inferno  
Owl Hall  
Richard Spring  
Leopard Spots  
Lover's Retreat  
Revellers' Hall  
Gorman's Dome  
Valley of Humility  
Grecian Bend  
Fat Man's Misery  
Great Relief  
Odd Fellows' Hall  
Hill Gehenna  
Rapier's Pit  
Echo River  
Purgatory Stream  
Cork Strew  
Side Saddle Pitt

TO  
YOUTH OF OUR RACE

who are just entering upon life, and many of whom are just out of school, and have had but little time to think and meditate upon the wonders of God's creation in this wonderful world into which we have been ushered, for "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork," I have affectionately dedicated this little volume and trust that it will be read with profit and pleasure.

Portsmouth, Va.

C. C. S.

Wonderful Mammoth Cave. Wonderful it surely is; grand, wierd, mysteriously and strangely fascinating. It is the realm of perpetual silence and eternal light, with darkness visible, save where it is vanished by the explorer's hand lantern; and in here one finds the book of night wide open and if voices are heard at all, they come from the deep abyss. Human intellect is unable to realize or estimate the time required by the Almighty Architect to chisel out this gigantic cavern in this limestone rock. The brain reels when it tries to fathom the mysteries to be seen on every hand—pits, domes, hills, valleys, pools and rivers found in this strange place and shrouded in stygian darkness.

## DISCOVERY

This is the largest known cavern in the world, situated in Edmonson County, Ky. It was discovered by a hunter in 1809, and lies about ninety miles southeast of Louisville on the L. and N. Railroad. It consists of numerous limestone caverns which have been explored for 152 miles in the different ramifications. The tourist visiting the cave sees only those parts of most easy access, and he can make his tour under the direction of a careful guide in about two and a half or three hours according to his speed, covering a distance of eight or nine miles.

In August, 1909, another colored gentleman and I made our entrance into the cave. On the 10th day of August and about 2:30 P. M., led by our faithful guide, Bob Leary, we began the descent into the subteraneous cavern and it was



something after 4 P. M. before we made our exit. Our guide has served in this capacity for a quarter of a century during which time he has lead some of the most distinguished people, both of America and Europe to see nature's triumphant wonders and because of contact with these celebrities, though comparatively illiterate, he can tell of the old country and things historical going back to the days of ancient Greece and Rome and the fascinating stories of mythology connected therewith. It is simply marvelous to hear him talk, being a man without letters.

### Registration for Admission

Those that think that the laws of "Jim Crow" are effective only on the public carriers above the ground will make a new discovery before they are permitted to enter the cave. There were twenty of us on the little railroad that led from Louisville; eighteen of the number being white. When we applied for permits for admission, the white lady in charge of the office said very politely: "You will have to wait here until I can get you a guide." She took the phone and called headquarters, saying: "Send me a guide for some colored visitors—only two, the colored gentleman and myself." And yet the separation proved a blessing in disguise for it gave us ample time to make investigations and seek inquiries as we desired without being crowded or embarrassed. The registration fee was \$2.00 and each was given a lantern to insure our footing, and after donning cave habilament, we were told to follow the guide. The visible effect upon us as we reached the iron gate through which we must pass, except when opened for ingress or egress of tourist is the sharp, stiff current continuously emitting from the mouth of the cavern; but strange to say, it is not foul or charged with fetid matter, but is pure and invigorating and generally at a temperature of 59 Fah.

The first object of special attention in our descent was the Wood Bowl, where we get the last trace of the Indians who evidently had made the

cave a rendezvous and an asylum long before the white man ever had pressed his feet upon American soil; and this view is sustained by many relics found here such as arrow heads, carved stones and polished shells.

The next strange scene is the Owl Hall where the image of a screech Owl is out in clear outlines in the solid rock, and is pointed out to the visitor who at once grasps the conception of the picture. Curiosity led me to drink from Richard Spring which derived its name from the first lady who was bold enough to descend to such a depth in this underworld although since the adventure of this woman, many others had made further and more hazard attempts, essaying to equal or outstrip man even to the riding in an airplane.

### DANTE'S INFERNO

As the traveler gazes upon wonder upon wonder, he is shown the Leopard Spots Rug where the indications made into the sides of the walls on either side, and contrasting so sharply with the many colors, that the spots resemble the leopard's hide with unmistakable distinctions. Leaving this place of growing interest and curiosity our descent downward gives us an indelible impression where our guide tells us it is Dante's gateway through which we must pass to the Inferno. We pause to think of Alighirri Dante, the celebrated Italian poet and one of the greatest in the world, taking rank in powers of imagination next to Milton.

Dante, it must be remembered, was the greatest poet of Italy and one of the greatest poets in the world. He divided the Divine Comedy into three parts—Hell, Purgatory, Paradise. In his dreams, he wandered into the dusky forest, when the Shade of Virgil appears to offer and conduct him through hell and purgatory.

But shadow and sunshine, a tear and a smile are so closely related that we pass from one to another almost without observing the transition, and so in the cave we pass from the pains of the inferno to the joy of the Lover's retreat where the very air of the surrounding is suggestive of

the spring time of life. A silence reigns here as elsewhere; but we are told that because no ear is here to eavedrop, and catch the lover's secrets and no sprite to listen and betray the lover's colloquy; it is called Lover's Retreat.

But what a reflection the scenes in this part of our sojourn brings to us. Everything around us seems to be in a state of perpetual preservation, except for its snowy whiteness, and yet as soon as we take up a stick and try to break it, it yields to our effort almost without resistance because its life is gone and it is only the shadow of what it once was, "death and decay in all around I see; O thou who changest not, abide with me."

### SIDE SADDLE PIT

In Morris Dome. 35 feet high and 47 feet deep. is another point of attraction never to be forgotten. We get some conception of the width and height of this awful gorge by means of a lighted torch which the guide hurls into the yawning abyss with the remark. "Look gentlemen, and see what wonders lie beyond." And indeed the pit presents an awful spectacle. for upward the flying meteor, thrown from the guide's wand seems never to reach the end of its journey. While in its descent. it appears to be pursuing an endless trail. The guide is provided with a little rouch like a shepherd's bag in which he carries the oil-charged wicks ready to be lighted and used whenever wanted.

We pass through the labyrinth for a long distance winding back and forth as if the passage will never end and we shall never come again to the change that will give us fresh air and sunshine, nature's free and unstinted gift which comes without upbraiding. Here the traveler needs nature's pure ozone as elsewhere and when it comes it proves to be a veritable tonic. Another dome looms up 200 feet from top to bottom, Gorman's Dome. As you travel and turn your eyes in any direction, a new dome appears before you, as if the great architect had domes conspicuously in his mind when he designed this won-

derful cave. Reveller's Hall is seen from this point where we observe two branches leading in opposite directions, both penetrating the unknown, the undiscovered only in part as we approach the Valley of Humility. The traveler must here bow himself and take a stooping position for a distance of many yards, because of the low archway that prevents an erect locomotion. The explorers of this cave in deciding upon the name of this particular spot, must have had in mind the fourth stage of Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress when he tells of how Prudence in suggesting to Christians the difficulties lying along the way of the journey from this world to that which is to come said, "It is a hard matter for a man to go down into the valley of humiliation as thou art now, and catch no slip by the way," says Bunyan. It is noticeable that every point of interest shown to the visitor is suggestive of something recorded in history; and teaches a lesson worthwhile.

### A POOR FUNERAL

The traveler will be interested to be told that he has reached the vantage ground where he can get a good observation of the Scotchman's trip. Here a huge overhanging stone that weighs many tons seems to rest entirely upon a small pivot. The tourist must pass partly under this trap or dead-fall. A Scotchman going through this channel once, came to this point, hesitated and finally drew back. When asked why he faltered and drew back, he said, "The stone might be dislodged and leave its fastenings then there would be buried a Scotchman, with a mighty poor funeral. The witticism justifies the halting of the Scotchman. But very close to this overawing death-trap, the Grecian Bend, where with unusual width the low arch canopy spreads out so as to give an appropriate name to this particular spot. Our mind runs back to the time when our ladies did not feel that they were dressing in the height of style and regulation unless they wore the Grecian Bend, whether it was silk, velvet,

cotton or yarn.

But with the passing of years, times have changed so the ladies who formally appeared in full dress in the Grecian Bend have not only discarded that, but the bustle as well, substituting therefor the V cut dress front and back together with the abbreviated skirt that lacks a few inches of reaching above the knees. In our imagination we see this rapid transposition in the ladies habilament going to such an extent that it will not be very long before we shall not be able to bi-sex the young people, they will be so similar in dress and carriage and in many instances so entirely wanting mother Eve's fig leaves.

### THE FAT MAN'S MISERY

Things ludicrous as well as things serious must engage the thoughtful mind as one shifts the scenes of observation from one thing to another. Right here we are told to behold the Fat Man's Misery. The way through which we travel here is so narrow, so torturous, so winding that even a very thin man will have difficulty in making his way through it. The fat man stooping here, bowing there and bending yonder, finds misery almost undecipherable as he passes through this trying ordeal. A very fat woman in company with others essayed to pass through this narrow way, it being the only exit, was covered with perspiration and almost overcome with fatigue was asked when she had passed through, what she thought of the matter and her answer was in language that would not look pretty in a Sunday School book. In fact, she felt that that would be the last time she would ever pass that way, except as a corpse.

But immediately passing from this place we came to the place for which the traveler seems to be in just the "great relief." Here the visitor is permitted to sit, rest and meditate upon the wonders already shown and upon the Infinite Mind that planned these wonders when he laid the foundation of the earth, or certainly when it was in a formative state, while as Dr. Morris says, "the unseen deep must have literally boiled

as a pot wildly tempested from below, while from time to time more deeply seated convulsions upheaved suddenly to the surface, vast tracts of semi-molten rocks soon again to disappear and from which waves of other convulsions or to hiss and sputter against the intensely heated and fast foundering mass, whose violent upheaval had first elevated them and sent them abroad. What a moment of reflection; what an hour to think of one's creation, the cause and the destiny toward which he is moving. One must think of the forces of nature at work, when the imprisoned stream of hot lava was beating against the sides of this solid limestone, making a passage-way through this dark cavern ages before God said: "Let us make man." And behind these struggling fierce hot waves, there are left the jagged and pointed rocks that took formation when the foundation of the earth was laid.

Emerging from this asylum of the silent and looking up into the heavens and beholding its grandeur and magnificence with moving bodies that dart with lightning speed through the heavens and have been continuing this movement ever since the Great First Cause moved masses to put into sacred writ. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." And comparing man with his limitations and insignificance to the starry heavens David writes, "What is man that thou art mindful of him or the Son of Man that thou should visit him?"

### BIRTH OF A RIVER

Not far away from this remarkable scene is the Odd Fellow's Hall where a great chain with three big links is seen in the wall of this great chamber with outlines as distinct and clear as if they had been chiseled by Phidias, Hegesias or Agiladas. It seemed that nature here strove to demonstrate what beautiful harmony she worked in executing her plans in the forgotten ages—writing a book for man's study long before the first sign of plant life was found upon the earth.

And the geologists are trying to tell us when they are analyzing the strata of the pilocene chalk,

walden, carboniferous, silurine, cambrian, azoic period just when this was done. Right here too, the guide shows what is called the "Birth of Two Rivers"—Monongahela and Allegheny. One flowing to the east and the other to the west.

Closely associated with this scene is the marvelous outlines of "Snakes seen in the rocks." This would seem a strange contradiction, since the only forms of animal life found in the cave are eyeless fishes, eyeless cockroaches, and yet as paradoxical as it may seem, when attention is called to it, there appears to be the distinct snake forms overhead seemingly in the act of making their escape, but it is a delusion; a peculiar rock formation that took place in the pre-Adamite upheaval long before this old world had cooled enough to sustain either the flora or fauna. Then in quick succession follows the river hall about a half a mile off, then the Dead Sea, a stretch of water reaching out I know not how far, and about three feet in depth at normal times; and from here we go to the hill Gehenna, and again thoughts of Dante haunt me as he crossed the river Styx on the natural bridge.

Rapier's Pitt claims attention next. A man in this mountain, who was traveling with a company of Knights of Columbus lost his footing and fell to a great depth, but was extricated, however, without any serious injury. For into these everlasting depths a cloud would be the farthest from human thought, and yet the traveler is told to "look up" and he sees what appears to be snow-clouds, sirrus, and cumulus and cirro-cumulus reflections from the dim archway, and just to the left in the wall, he is shown the outlines of a human cranium and as he tries to decipher by association, there flashes through his mind the man, who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul:—Wm. Shakespeare. And sure enough there is the prominent frontal, the broad base with his hair sticking out each side of a bald forehead. How this image came to be there and in what

manner, no one knows, and man can go no farther than mere speculation, admiring wonders in the midst of the wonderful.

## THE ECHO RIVER

Leading down to this mysterious stream perhaps one of the most wonderful in the world, we pass Purgatory Stream on which boats formally glided, but it is now discarded altogether. Sahara desert in this long trail leads us through deep sand to Purgatory. But we press on thru the fascinating and engrossing scenes conspicuous on every side with the stalactites and stalactites that look like giant columns of ice. Here we get our first glimpse of the Echo River. This stream is about one mile long, 200 feet wide at some places and from 10 to 50 feet deep. The wonders of this subterranean stream are found in the life it sustains—eyeless fishes; its ebb and flow the bluish color of its waters, and above all else the "ECHO" that follows any sound uttered here.

Our Boatman propels the boat with a rod, from overhead, does it with the deftness of our expert mariner. When he called attention to the name of the river, as if to direct special attention, he called aloud which made a sound that went away, but soon came back with a reverberation that was frightening. It seemed as if the entire gorge was trying to answer back, and that answer was so deep, so sonorous, so awful that, I shall never forget it as long as I have breath. It did seem that "deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts." I have stood on the rolling sands of Old Ocean, I have bathed my feet in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, near Pensacola, Fla., I heard from the throat of the deep ocean roar like distant thunder; or like some fierce aqueous titan answering back from the mighty deep, I have listened to the roar from the everlasting hills on the top of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Allegheny, I have listened to the daily detonation from the cannon's throat, but never at any place or anywhere has a sound come back to me or that has been heard just similar to that of Echo



River. And we thought it was but a reminder of how God fills all space with His presence and answers back to the soul in the great whispering gallery of His own universe, speaking the language that the soul knows, from one who hears and knows and feels. I could not at that moment of musing but keep from thinking of Derzhavin and his ode when musing on the mightiness and magnitude of Jehovah and insignificance of man he burst into this strain: "O thou eternal one whose presence brightens, all space doth occupy, all motions guide, unchanged through time," all devastating flight. Thou only God—there is no other God beside thee; Reasons brightest spark though kindled by thy torch in vain would try to trace thy counsels ignite and dark.

### OUT OF THE LOWEST DEPTHS

Coming to the close of our never to be forgotten journey, we reach the foot of Cork Screw or Vanderbilt's Avenue. Here the Board of Trustees of Vanderbilt University caused to be placed a tablet with this suggestive inscription that will be read by tourists as long as they continue to explore this, nature's indefinable wonder:—"Out of the lowest depths there is a path to loftiest heights"—a motto that is good for every man that feels that the odds have been against him; that he is a child of misfortune with no possible chance to rise, that he has been "too much in the sun." And now we come to the Mammoth Dome, the largest yet discovered in this cave of wonders 200 feet from the base to the summit and yet it is found at this spot where the space for footing is not large enough for a trio to pass abreast. From here we climb steps 70 feet and almost perpendicular by catching hold of sharp pointed rocks and in the transit as we go in and out through the little avenues like children playing hide and seek or like the little prairie dog, who to "show off" to the visitor is as often out of sight as in sight, and at each return he brings a new smile on his face. And we enter next Bandit's Hall where stranger and more grotesque

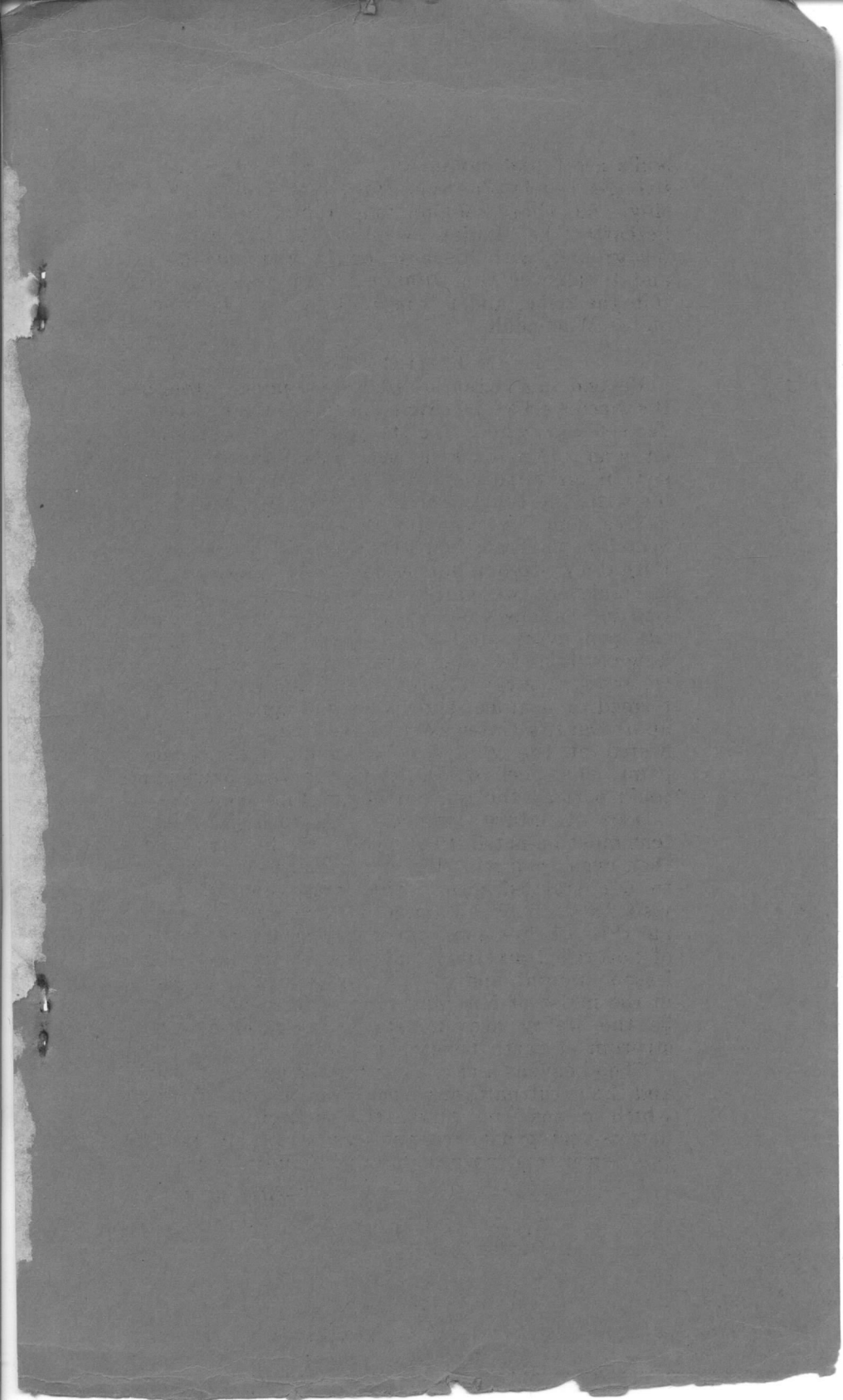
skulls are found paving the way and telling of a stronger people who when this simple child of destiny, and whose religion taught him that in the hereafter the "Indian" went to the happy hunting ground, with his bow, arrow and tomahawk and to answer the summons that calls him to join the tribe, and it was nothing but the voice of his Wacondah.

### IN RETROSPECT

Beyond this region of silence we press through the Needle's Eye to reach the top of Cork Screw, 24 feet high where like the judge in Maude Muller who looked back as he climbed the hill and saw in his mind's eye the simple country maid, his wife, the court, and the lawyer, and hummed a love song; we see the Lover's Retreat, The Scotchman's Trap, Odd Fellow's Hall, River Styx, Purgatory Stream, and Echo River. Despite the enchantment we hardly feel like repeating the trip and yet the scenery and wonders that crowded upon every step of our pathway paid us a hundred-fold for the adventure. As souvenirs we brought away bits of stone, a perfect acorn formed of a stone, a polished Stalagmite picked up at Dante's Gateway. I have only imperfectly hinted at the glimpses, for what artist could paint, what poet could interpret or what musician could portray the real virtues of this art gallery—book of nature's wonders that to a great extent must be noted 'til the crack of the dawn and then even then will this emporium be a mystery to our startled gaze. The impression of this visit through the Mammoth Cave will go with me through life and will be a pleasant reminder of nature's University and some of the enduring lessons taught and of how insignificant is man in the midst of His Maker's wonders, whether it be the starry heavens above his head, or the stratum of earth beneath his feet.

"The heavens and the earth alike speak of God, and the great natural world is but another Bible; which clasps and binds the written one; for nature and grace are one—grace the heart of the flower, and nature its surrounding petals."

H. W. BEECHER.



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