THE PEOPLE'S JOURNAL.

DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY, AND THE DISSEMINATION OF MORALITY, LITERATURE, AND NEWS.

VOL. VIII. COUDERSPORT, POTTER COUNTY, PA., JULY 5, 1855. NO. 7.

THE PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:
BY ADDISON AVERY.

Terms—Invariably in Advance:

One copy per annum, $1.00
Village subscribers, 1.25

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Select Poetry.

From the London Athenæum.

GOING HOME.

We said that the days were evil,
We felt that they might be few,
For low was our fortunes level,
And heavy the winters grew;
But one who had no possession
Looked up to the azure dome,
And said in his simple fashion,
"Dear friends, we are going home."

"This world is the same dull market
That wearied its earliest stage;
The times to the wise are dark yet,
And so hath been, many an age.
And rich grow the toiling nations,
And red grow the battle spears,
And dreary with desolations
Roll onward the laden years.

"What need of the changeless story
Which time hath so often told,
The specter that follows glory,
The canker that comes with gold,—
That wisdom and strength and honor,
Must fade like the dark sea-foam,
And death is the only winner?—
But friends, we are going home!

"The homes we had hoped to rest in
Were open to sin and strife,
The dreams that our youth was blest in
Were not for the wear of life;
For care can darken the cottage,
As well as the palace hearth,
And birth-rights are sold for pottage,
But never redeemed on earth.

"The springs have gone by in sorrow,
The summers were grieved away,
And ever we feared to-morrow,
And never we blamed to-day.
In depths which the searcher sounded,
On hills which the high heart clomb,
Have trouble and toil abounded;
But, friends, we are going home!

"Our faith was the bravest builder,
But found not a stone of trust;
Our love was the lavish gilder,
But lavished its wealth on dust.
And time hath the fabric shaken,
And fortune the clay hath shown,
For much they have changed and taken,
But nothing that was our own.

"The light that to us made baser
The paths which so many chose,
The gifts there was found no place for,
The riches we could not use;
The heart that when life was wintry
Found summer in strain and tone,
With these to our kin and country,
Dear friends, we are going home!"

BAYARD TAYLOR IN THE MAMMOTH CAVE.

Bayard Taylor has been in the Mammoth Cave. As his descriptions are among the best that any traveler has ever given us of the places he visited, that of so celerated and remarkable a spot as the Mammoth Cave, can hardly fail to be interesting. After relating his arrival at the Cave Hotel, he goes on thus:

The season for travel has hardly commenced, and we found but seven visitors on our arrival. Two of these had just returned from a trip beyond the rivers, under the charge of "Stephen," the famous cave guide, and their clothes, bespattered with mud, gave us some indication of the character of the trip. As our stay was limited to two days, we decided to visit the cisfluvial avenues the same afternoon, reserving the grand journey over the water for the next day. The rivers had been gradually rising for four days, and were then at precisely the most inconvenient stage, though not yet impassible. Mr. Miller informed us that they rarely rose more than four days in succession, and there was no likelihood at present that we should not be able to cross them. I engaged Stephen for the next day, and took Alfred, one of the other guides, for our initiatory excursion.

After dining off a noble haunch of venison, Alfred made his appearance with a bundle of lamps and announced that everything was in readiness. Turning around the hotel to the northward, we entered a rocky ravine in the forest, and in a few minutes were made aware by a gust of cold wind that we had reached the entrance to the underground world. The scene was wild and picturesque in the extreme, yet the first involuntary sensation was something akin to terror. The falling in of the roof of the main avenue of the cave as it reached the surface of the earth, has formed a gap, or pit, about fifty feet in depth, terminating in a dark, yawning portal, out of which a steady current of cold air was breathed in our faces. Trees grew around the edges of the pit, almost roofing it with shade; ferns and tangled vines fringed its sides, and a slender stream of water falling from the rocks which arched above the entrance dropped like a silver veil before the mysterious gloom. The temperature of the cave is 59° throughout the year, and that of the upper air being about 75°, the colder stratum was ebbing out. When the inside and outside temperatures are equal, as they were this morning previous to our visit, there is no perceptible current.

Taking each a lighted lamp, we descended some rocky steps to the floor of the cavern, passed behind the tinkling cascade, and plunged into the darkness. The avenue rapidly contracts, and is closed by an artificial wall, with a door, which is sometimes locked to exclude pilferers. Having passed this, the daylight disappeared behind us. Our eyes, blinded by the sudden transition to complete darkness, could barely see a roof of solid rock not far above our heads, and masses of loose stones piled on either side. This part of the avenue is called "The Narrows." The space gradually expanded; the arch of the ceiling became more dim and lofty, and the walls only showed themselves by a faint and uncertain glimmer. The floor under our feet was firm and well-beaten, the air we breathed pure and refreshing, and a feeling of perfect confidence and security replaced the shrinking sensation which I think every one must feel on first entering.

As the pupils of our eyes expanded, and we began to discern more clearly by the light of our lamps the dimensions of the grand avenue, we reached a spacious hall called the Vestibule, which is said to be directly under the Cave Hotel. It is 70 to 80 feet in hight, branching off on one side into a spacious cave called Audubon's Avenue. Near it is the great Bat-room, which hundreds of bats have chosen as a place of hibernation. We were now in the Main Cave, which extended for three or four miles before us with an average hight of about 50 and an average breadth of at least 80 feet, in some places expanding to 150 feet. What are the galleries of the Vatican, the Louvre, Versailles, and the Crystal Palace of London and Paris to this gigantic vault hewn in the living rock? Previous to the crossing of the Bottomless Pit in 1838, and subsequently of the Rivers in 1840, all the published accounts of the Mammoth Cave described only this avenue and its branches. The sides are a perpendicular wall, with a distinct and sometimes bold cornice and a slightly arched ceiling which often resembles a groined vault. The limestone lies in horizontal strata with scarcely a fault, and all the wonderful forms which it assumes are clearly traceable to the action of water.

Immediately on entering, you see the remains of the saltpeter works which were carried on here form 1808 to 1814. The old hoppers or leaching vats, the sluices for carrying off the water, and many other appliances, are still almost as perfect as if the manufacture had just been relinquished. The wood work remains perfectly sound and uncorrupted, and even the ruts made by cart wheels and the prints of the oxen's hoofs in the then moist soil have not been effaced.

It is said that saltpeter to the value of $20,000 was washed from the earth in one year, and in the course of three years the same earth became as richly impregnated as before. This property is also communicated to the air, but probably in a less degree. I am not aware that it has ever been analyzed; but whether from the absence of vegetable exhalations and the consequent purity of its constituent elements, or from the presence of some exhilarating property, it is certainly more bracing and invigorating than the air of the upper world. After we had become accustomed to its diminished temperature, its inhalation was a luxury. I can only compare it to a very mild nitrous oxide. The oxen which were taken into the cave to haul earth to the saltpeter vats became fat and plump in the course of two or three months without any extra feed. As a sanitarium for consumptive patients, the cave does not seem to answer; but the experiment has not yet been fairly tried—most of the invalids who came here having been in the advanced stages of the disease. Besides, the absence of sunlight—which seems to exercise a subtle influence upon human as upon vegetable vitality—might counterbalance in many cases the advantages of an equable and stimulating air.

Nearly a qnarter of a mile beyond the Vestibule, we came to a second dome inserted like a transept in the main avenue or nave, and called The Church. The roof, which is about 80 feet high, is almost Gothic; and on the left hand is a gallery or choir, with a projecting pulpit at one of the angles; here service is often performed on Sundays during the summer. We took our seats on some timber that was taken from the saltpeter vats, while the guide ascended to the gallery and finally took his station in the pulpit. Here he kindled a Bengal light which hissed and sputtered like a sacrificial flame, throwing a strong pale-blue lustre up against the vast, rude arches, and bringing out the jagged walls in vivid relief against the profound darkness on either hand. In spite of the semi-sanctity given to the place, this illumination seemed to me nothing less than an offering to the Kentucky gnomes and kobolds—the underground fairies who have hollowed out for themselves this marvelous palace under her green hills.

Continuing our walk, with eyes that now saw clearly not only the grand dimensions of the avenue, but its rude suggestions of pilasters, friezes and cornices, and the dark cloud patterns that mottled its gray ceiling, we passed in succession the Kentucky Cliffs (so called from their resemblance to the rocks on Kentucky River), Willie's Spring, a tiny thread of water which has channeled itself a fantastic fluted filche from the top of the base to the wall, and the Second Hoppers, where the operations of the old miners seem to have been prosecuted on a very extensive scale. Above these hoppers, on the right hand, is the mouth of the Gothic Avenue, branching off at right angles to the main cave. It is reached by a flight of steps. The scenery of the cave became more and more striking as we advanced. The roof is coated with a thin incrustation of gypsum, which is colored in patches with black oxide of manganese, giving it a rude resemblance to a gray sky fleeced with dark clouds. In the waving and uncertain light of the lamps, these clouds seem to move as you walk, and to assume capricious and fantastic forms. Now you see an oval lake surrounded with shrubbery, now a couchant beast, or a sitting figure like the colossal deity of a Theban tomb. In one place there is a huge ant-eater, very perfect; in another an Indian chief wrapped in his blanket; then a giant, with his wife and child; and finally a charcoal sketch, in which the imaginative can see Napoleon crossing the Alps.

Under the last of these pictures Alfred stopped, and after stating that we were just one mile from the entrance, threw the light of his lamp upon a large white rock which lay upon our right hand, and asked us what it resembled. "Why," said one of us, "it is very much like a coffin." "You are right," said he; "it is the Giant's Coffin, 57 feet in length." He then informed us that he should leave the main cave and take the road to the River Styx, in order to show us some of the most remarkable objects on this side of that stream. We followed him, one by one, into a crevice behind the coffin, at the bottom whereof yawned a narrow hole. Half stooping, half crawling, we descended through an irregular, contracted passage to a series of basement halls, called the Deserted Chambers. The first of these is the Wooden Bowl, a room about 100 feet in diameter, with a low, slightly concave ceiling. The name may have been suggested by this circumstance, although there is a story of an ancient wooden bowl having been found in it by the first persons who entered. A staircase called the Steps of Time—for what reason it is impossible to say—leads to still lower chambers, two of which are connected by a passage called the Arched Way, from the smooth and regular curve of its white ceiling. In the furthest one is "Richardson's Spring," a little bowl of crystal water, which we found very cool and refreshing, despite the flavor of the limestone rock.

The roof presently shot up into a pointed, irregular vault, and we heard the sound of dropping water. Alfred, who was in advance, cautioned us to remain still while he leaned forward and held out his lamp, which disclosed the mouth of a pit. The sides were as smooth as if hewn by a stone cutter, and worn into deep grooves and furrows by the waters of ages. A log is placed along one side to protect visitors, and we leaned upon it while he kindled a sheet of oiled paper and suffered it to whirl slowly down into the gulf, glimmering on the wet walls and the dark pools of water in its mysterious womb.

Leaving the deserted chambers, we descended a deep staircase into the Labyrinth—a winding way thirty or forty feet high, and barely wide enough for two persons to pass. This brought us to another pit, along the brink of which we walked, clambered up a ledge, and at last reached a window-like opening, where Alfred bade us pause. Leaning over the thin partition wall, the light of our united lamps disclosed a vast glimmering hall, the top of which vanished in darkness, and the bottom of which we could only conjecture by the loud, hollow splash of water-drops that came up out of the terrible gloom. Directly in front of us hung a gigantic mass of rock, which in its folds and masses presented a wonderful resemblance to a curtain. It had a regular fringe of stalactites, and there was a short outer curtain overlapping it at the top. The length of this piece of limestone drapery could not have been less than one hundred feet. In a few moments Alfred, who had left us, reappeared at another window on the right hand, where he first dropped some burning papers into the gulf, and then kindled a Bengal light. It needed this illumination to enable us to take in the grand dimensions of the dome. We could see the oval arch of the roof a hundred feet above our heads; the floor studded with stalagmite as far below; while directly in front the huge curtain that hung from the center of the dome—the veil of some subterranean mystery—shone rose-white, and seemed to wave and swing, pendulous in the awful space. We were thoroughly thrilled and penetrated with the exceeding sublimity of the picture, and turned away reluctantly as the fires burned out, feeling that if the cave had nothing else to show, its wonders had not been exaggerated.

Leaving Goran's Dome—the name which has been given to this hall—we retraced our way through the labyrinth, and following the main passage a short distance further, came to the Bottomless Pit, formerly the limit of excursions in this direction. It was finally crossed by means of a ladder, and is now securely bridged, and the path along its brink protected by an iron railing. The bridge is renewed every four years, even though the timbers remain sound, to guard against all possibility of an accident. The Pit is 175 feet deep, and is covered by a pointed dome forty or fifty feet high. It is a horrid gulf—dark, yawning as the mouth of Tartarus. Peices of burning paper dropped from the bridge slowly fell into the depth, eddying backward and forward and showing the black, furrowed walls on either side. The vault above our heads, in its grooves and niches, and projecting points, reminded me very vividly of the Moorish domes in the Alhambra. There is a *stalactic* element in Saracenic architecture which must have had its suggestion in Nature.

The avenue beyond the pit leads to the river Styx, but as we had reserved that portion of the cave for the next day's trip, we returned through the Deserted Chambers to the Main Cave. A short distance beyond the Giant's Coffin we reached the Great Bend, where the avenue changes its direction at a very acute angle. It is still upwards of 100 feet wide and 60 or 70 in hight, with the same rough friezes and cornices, and the forms of clouds and phantom figures on its ceiling. We passed several stone and frame houses, some of which were partly in ruin. The guides pointed them out as the residence of a number of consumptive patients who came in here in September, 1843, and remained until January. "I was one of the waiters who attended upon them," said Alfred. "I used to stand on that rock and blow the horn to call them to dinner. There were fifteen of them, and they looked more like a company of skeletons than anything else." One of the number died here. His case was hopeless when he entered, and even when conscious that his end was near he refused to leave. I can conceive of *one* man being benefited by a residence in the cave, but the idea of a company of lank, cadaverous invalids wandering about in the awful gloom and silence, broken only by their hollow coughs—doubly hollow and sepulchral there—is terrible.—On a mound of earth near the Dining Room I saw some cedar trees which had been planted there as an experiment. They were entirely dead, but the experiment can hardly be considered final, as the cedar is of all trees the most easily injured by being transplanted.

I noticed that the ceiling became darker, and that the gray cornice of the walls stood out from it in strong relief. Presently it became a sheet of unvarying blackness, which reflected no light, like a cloudy night sky. All at once, a few stars glimmered through the void, then more and more, and a firmament as far off and vast, apparently, as that which arches over the outer world, hung above our heads. We were in the celebrated Star Chamber. Leaning against a rock which lay upon the right side of the avenue, we looked uprard, lost in wonder at the marvelous illusion. It is impossible to describe the effect of this mock sky. Your reason vainly tells you that it is but a crust of black oxyd of manganese, sprinkled with crystals of gypsum, seventy-five feet above your head: You *see* that it is a fathomless heaven, with its constellations twinkling in the illimitable space. You are no longer upon this Earth. You are in a thunder-riven gorge of the mountains of Jupiter, looking up at the strange firmament of that darker planet. You see other constellations rising, far up in the abyss of midnight, and witness the occultation of remoter stars.

The fascination of that scene would have held us there for the remainder of the day if the guide had permitted it. After indulging us for what he considered a sufficient length of time, he took our lamps, and descending into a branch cavern that opened from the floor, treated us to some fine effects of light and shade. By a skillful management of his lights, he produced the appearance of a thunder-cloud rising and gradually spreading over the sky. The stars are lost; the comet, gleaming portentous on the horizon, disappears; and the gorge is wrapped in shadow. Then the clouds break and clear away, and the stars seem to twinkle with a more bright and frosty luster after their obscuration. "Take care of yourselves!" cries the guide, and we can now see but a faint glimmer through the opening he entered. Now it is but the ghost of a glimmer, and now, as his footsteps are more indistinct, it ceases altogether. Yes, this is darkness—solid, palpable darkness. Stretch out your hand and you can grasp it; open your mouth and it will choke you. Such must have been the primal chaos before Space was, or Form was, or "Let there be light!" had been spoken. In the intense stillnss I could hear the beating of my heart and the humming sound made by the blood in its circulation.

After a while a golden, nebulous glow stole upon the darkness, seemingly brighter than the sunrise radiance of the East, and increased until our guide and lamps rose above the horizon. We now returned to the Second Hoppers and mounted to the Gothic Avenue. For more than a quarter of a mile this avenue has a ceiling perfectly flat, with every appearance of having received a coat of plaster. It is smoked over in all parts with the names of vulgar visitors, from which circumstance it is called the Register Room. Persons formerly carried candles in their trips through the cave, and by tying them to poles, succeeded in not only smoking their names upon the ceiling, but in many instances their portraits—for there were frequently rude attempts at drawing the figures of sheep and pigs. The lamps used at present prevent all such desecration, but there are still (and probably always will be) touching applications for candles.

The roof gradually became broken and rugged, studded here and there with unfinished stalactites, and we now entered the Gothic Chapel, where those stony icicles become large enough to form ribbed pillars and fair Gothic arches. The ceiling is not more than thirty feet high, so that this hall has nothing of the grandeur of Goran's Dome, but it is very curious and beautiful. Beyond this the specimens of stalactic formation are very numerous and I have not time to describe them minutely. We passed Napoleon's Breast-works, Vulcan's Shop, the Elephant's Head, and the Pillars of Hercules, hard by which is the Lover's Leap, where the journey ceased. Here the floor of the avenue suddenly falls away leaving a gulf about fifty feet deep, over which projects a long, pointed rock. By descending into the gulf you can enter a lower gallery leading to other wonders, among which the guide mentioned the Devil's Cooling Tub, but we had scarcely sufficient time to explore it.

We retracted our steps to the Second Hoppers, and then returned to the mouth of the cave, having been four hours underground, and traveled about five miles. When we reached the entrance and looked out from behind the falling skein of water and trees seemed to be illuminated with an unnatural fire. The daylight had a warm yellow hue, intensely bright, and the sky was paler but more luminous than usual. The air by contrast with the exilirating nitrous atmosphere below felt close, unpleasantly warm and oppressive like that of an ill-ventilated green-house in Winter. There was too much perfume in it—to many varieties of vegetable smells—for I found that the short absence had made my scent unusually keen and intelligent. This first sensation soon wore off and left us with no other unpleasant effect from our trip than that of great hunger, of which Mr. Miller speedily relieved us.

Enough of the Mammouth Cave for one day. I shall soon write to you again, describing our second trip underground. B. T.

INTEMPERANCE IN THE CRIMEA.

The report from Scutari that Florence Nighting was ill, worn out by her heroic devotion to the duties she had undertaken, fell sadly on a multitude of hearts on this side the ocean that now rejoice to know she is recovering her strength. But as we learn from a letter of hers just published in England, the cause of this illness has not been correctly understsod. It is not the poison breath of infection, or the exhaustion of untiring toil or the glaring summer sun which already stares with fierce glow on the shores of the Bosphorus that weighed down her slender form. "All this I could have borne with deep joy," she writes, "but to see the stretcher brought to the gates every hour laden with men foaming in the mouth and black in the face, not with the gore of battle but with the horrible defacement of a foe more dreadful or deadly than the Russian or the plague, oh it is terrible!"

This foe of which she speaks in such touching language, is intemperance. The hawkers of a poison that has worked more ruin and wretchedness on earth than all other wars and wickedness, have followed like a pest in the wake of the camp and stolen on their prey. They have worked, Miss Nightingale says, more havoc than the ball of the Russian or the stroke of disease. Nor is this foul curse of drunkenness confined in the Crimea to men alone. Before Florence Nightingale sank and abandoned her post of duty, she had night after night to sit up, unable to trust the women appointed as nurses and paid to watch over the couch of sickness.

Until the grog-shops were started in the Crimea her work was toilsome indeed, but still a labor of love and hope. Her nurses were vigilant and took pride in sharing the honors of their task. They are now profligate and abandoned drunkards. So this noble girl, not until repeated efforts at reclamation, has been forced to admit. Before drink came, her patients were heroes; now they are sots. Veins swollen with liquor are, under the Crimean sun-glare, like powder in the focus of a burning lens. She has had to move with disgust through lines of beastly victims of intemperance. Hitherto she had overcome the incapacity of rulers, the obstructiveness of subordinates, dirt, dearth, disease and death, but before these last horrors, in which under the raging physical distemper a still fouler moral disease destroys, no wonder that, disheartened and distressed, the brave heart which had so long supported her frail strength gave way.

From her sick and almost dying couch she has sent an imploring voice, as many noble children of humanity have done before, calling upon that country whose incapacity her heroism has redeemed, to sweep away those wretches who fatten and feed upon the misery and ruin of their fellow-men, who, as she says, "know not what they do." Banish, she cries, banish this deadliest of enemies from your own ranks! It can hardly be that such an appeal, coming from such a source and at such an hour, can pass unheeded. It will touch not alone the heart of England, but will rouse and animate to new exertion the brave and the good of every land.

The picture of the work of this demon of drink in the Crimea, is but a faithful type of its doings in every spot in which it obtains dominion. If those only, who often "knowing not what they do," engage in and sustain this fatal traffic, could follow its victims and have passed before them the brute degradation to which it has brought once honest men, and the misery it has planted on many a happy hearth, we cannot believe but that they would shrink with horror from this wringing of wealth out of the blood of their fellow-beings. It is not in the revel round the camp-fire of the Crimea that the effects of intemperance are found. It is in those scenes which have struck down the gentle spirit of Florence Nighingale, it is in the hospital and death-heap at Scutari. It is not in the glee of the gilded bar-room or the riotous roister of the convivial circle that drink is to be seen in its true form, but in the foul dens of vice in the poor-house and in the prison, to which it is the ever-teeming fountain of poisonous supply. And let those everywhere who labor to set bounds to this deadly evil, take new courage and gather a more persistent resolution from the coöperation of this noble woman, who now so justly commands the sympathy and admiration of the world.—*Tribune.*

Although birds do not preach, the larger species prey continually.