

were to ride, for the floor of the cavern is of water. The guide arranged a pair of gasoline torches at the bow of a long, flat boat and then, when we had taken our places, headed the craft towards the darkness, and our underground voyage was commenced.

The water dripped from the roof overhead and our voices sounded hollow as though in an empty hall. Looking back we could see the entrance growing smaller and smaller, but soon we turned a corner and the outside light disappeared entirely. We moved along through chambers and corridors where the stalactites hang in all shapes and sizes. Some are in great bunches, like bananas; other in long rows, like icicles; still others are masses of rounded knobs and bunches, like bundles of vegetables. Most of them are gray or dull brown, but in places are rows and clusters of pure white ones. Along the sides, on shelves and boulders, are images and statues. One tall column is named the "Goddess of Liberty." Another, which my guide called the "Old Man," looks like a hooded monk at his devotions. We passed through the largest room, which is fifty feet to the roof, and then through a passage so low that we could reach the rock over our heads as we rode slowly under. Entering another chamber we saw thousands of bats hanging head downward from the ceiling. In some places were great masses of the little creatures and as we approached they all commenced their sharp squeaking and kept it up until our light disappeared. In some places at the sides we saw what appeared to be waterfalls and cataracts which had been suddenly turned to stone; and along here are rows and clusters of thin stalactites looking like dried fish and clusters of leaves. At one place the passage is almost blocked by a great boulder which runs into the water from one side, leaving barely room for the boat to pass. Back of this rock there is a rough, uneven chamber with its floor above water, but damp and slippery from the perpetual drip from the roof.

"That's what we-uns call the dry cave," said the guide. "There's a little narrer hole where ye can crawl out, back in there. Ye can see the end outside."

I dropped my hand with a careless splash into the dark water and the guide started suddenly and shivered as though he felt himself sinking in its chilling blackness. Seen in the flaring light of the torch, his face, for a moment, was ghastly and I