

my ears, an' I couldn't hear the cat any more, only the bats seemed to be all a-squeakin' in my head; the water splashed into my mouth an' I choked. I knew the water was forty foot deep in here an' I could see myself sinkin', sinkin', down into the terrible, thick darkness an' cold, an' then I'd strike the rocks an' lay there on the bottom, an' the bats would go on squeakin', an'—my 'twas awful!"

The man shivered and then resumed the story.

"I couldn stand it so long as I had any strength left an' I clawed an' splashed till at last I almost broke my knee against a rock an' crawled up on the shore. I was so tired I jest laid there on the slimy rocks an' listened to the critter a-scratchin' round on the boat, somewhere out in the water. I knew I'd been lucky for once for there was only one place where there was any shore, so I reckoned I must be over there in the dry cave; an' I knew there was a hole where I could get out if I only had a light to see to find it; but a light was jest what I didn't have. The bats was still again an' I was tryin' to think what to do, when the wild cat give another screech an' all the little rascals begun again—how I hate them little cusses. I thought the old feller must be after me again an' I jumped up an' turned to run. I was so scared I forgot my lame knee, an' the slippery rocks, an' the dark, an' I tumbled in a heap 'fore I'd took a half dozen steps. Well, the only way to get out was by that hole, so after awhile I got up, pretty careful this time, an' started slowly towards the back of the cave. I found the side an' then felt my way along to the opening. It took a long time to find it an' I tumbled down a dozen times 'fore I got out, but I managed it after a while. I was covered with dirt, an' blood, an' bruises, an' 'twas two weeks 'fore I could use my arm again."

He rolled up his sleeve and showed me three long, red scars on his arm where the creature had struck him.

"What became of the cat?" I asked.

"I don't know. Got out the same way I did, p'r'aps. The Snyder boys come in two days' after in another boat with a couple guns an' found my boat floatin' bottom up, at the end of the cave, an' the paddle broke in two pieces; but the cat was gone."

While the guide was telling the story he was slowly paddling towards the mouth of the cavern and soon we arrived at the landing. As we went up the steps, he threw his coat aside and