

doubt, for when she got opposite the parsonage she stopped!

"Whoa!" said Deacon Joel promptly, coming out of the buffalo-robe; "I declare if the animal a'n't up on the North Road and opposite the parsonage!"

Marvelous things were happening to Deacon Joel that night, and now another happened,— a sudden thought struck him.

"I declare!" he said slowly, "I never thought of it before, but why shouldn't we go in—and be married now—to-night! I dunno what Mis' Eben *would* say!" he finished, with a happy little chuckle.

"And I never thought of it before," said Chrissy (who had regained her normal self under the genial influences of the hour), with a laugh, "but I declare I don't see anything to hinder! I a'n't got any money to spend on weddin' fixin's, and if I had I'd rather be married in the dress I've got on than any other in the world—it's the one that brought us together. We can stop and tell the folks,

and I'll give you the best corn-bread you ever ate for breakfast to-morrow mornin'."

And she did.

"Well, well!" said Uncle Siny, when the thing was made quite clear to his belated comprehension. "Seems to me the Deacon a'n't done much courtin'. There was his father, now, Deacon Elim, he courted his wife nigh onto eight year, and, if folks spoke the truth, like to not get spunk enough to speak out then. She wa'n't a bit like the Deacon; he was soft-spoken, and she was kind o' high strung; it allus beat me to see why she hadn't ha' made him speak up before. She was a Slater—Luke Slater's daughter—'Doctor Luke' we allus use' to call him, 'cause he was the seventh son. Well, well, I s'pose it's all right, but 'pears to me the Deacon a'n't done much courtin'."

"I've gen'ally noticed that when old bachelors once get started they do things up in a hurry," remarked John's wife, sententiously.

Mrs. Schuyler B. Horton.

A COLORADO CAVERN.

SINCE describing in *THE CENTURY** the remarkable series of caverns at Luray, Page County, West Virginia, I have visited some recently discovered caves in Colorado, which bear some resemblance to those at Luray. They are near Manitou, half a dozen miles from Colorado Springs, and penetrate one of the foot-hills of Pike's Peak, being known locally by the name of the central one—the Cave of the Winds—which is an absurd name, and should be changed to something with a meaning before being fixed in the nomenclature of the region.

The manner of the discovery closely recalls the history of Luray. In both cases there was a cavern near by already known, but little valued. In the spring of 1880 the Rev. R. T. Cross, formerly principal of the preparatory department at Oberlin College, Ohio, was pastor of a church at Colorado Springs. To interest the boys of his congregation in recreation of an instructive character, he organized an "Exploring Society" among them. The first expedition was in June, 1880, to a cave in Williams' cañon, just above Manitou, about which little was known. The owner of the land, however, seems to have put so many obstacles in the way of their entering the cave that their leader

said: "Very well, boys, we'll go and find a cave of our own!" An hour later the merry young crew had crawled far enough into this new crevice to satisfy themselves that they had distanced the other hole in the ground.

The way to the cave is a pleasant walk up one of the prettiest of the many charming ravines that seam the rugged base of Pike's Peak. The walls of the ravine are limestone rock, stained bright red and Indian yellow, standing lofty, vertical and broken into a multitude of bastions, towers, pinnacles, and sweeping curved façades, whose rugged crests often tower hundreds of feet overhead against the violet sky. These upright walls face each other at their bases so closely that much of the way there is not room between them for one wagon to pass another, and the track lies nearly always in the bed of the shallow, sparkling brook. Half a mile up the cañon a trail climbs, by frequent turnings, up the precipitous sides of the ravine, to where about three hundred feet above the brook the sheer cliff begins. Here a rough stairway, running underneath an archway of native rock, leads to a great chimney, and a niche which serves as ante-room for the cave, which is a labyrinth of narrow passages, occasionally opening out into low-roofed chambers of irregular size, into which protrude ledges and points of rock from the stratified walls, greatly

* For January, 1882.

limiting the space in which it is possible to move about. These passages are often so contracted that you are called upon to stoop in passing through, and if you insist upon going to the end of the route, you must squirm along on all fours for several rods at a time.

The passages and chambers are not upon the same level, but run under and over one another—mainly in three general levels—and show numerous slender fox-holes, which the guide tells you lead to some Stygian retreat you have already visited, or are about to enter. Boston Avenue is one such passage, partly artificial, between Canopy Hall and another large chamber, originally separated at that point by a thin wall of clay. Chicago Avenue is another side-squeezing, but very pretty channel, which forms part of the regular four-hours' walk through the caves; for if one is to "do" the whole of the nearly one hundred chambers already discovered it will take him fully that length of time. Often the end of one of these tortuous underground crevices, or passage-ways, is found in a round sink, like one of the great "pot-holes" sometimes found in a river-bottom, and the like of which I have never seen in any other cave. Many of the protruding ledges, especially in Canopy Hall, are thus perforated, and the guide will tell you that they were ground out by revolving pebbles, but it is easy to show the error of this, and demonstrate that the slow action of water, and the atmospheric agents that have cut the rest of the cavern, are responsible for these "pot-holes" also. Instead of them there will sometimes yawn at your feet, in a way likely to startle you, a squarish chasm, or the path will end in the side of a vertical chimney, seeming endless as you attempt to make your candle-beams penetrate the thick darkness which fills the shaft above and below.

Through several such chimneys, or shafts, you follow your guide in climbing long ladders (ultimately to be replaced by stairways) up to a higher or down to a lower level. Clinging to the spidery supports with only a little halo of light about you, both ends of the ladder or the slender bridge hidden from view, and apparently unsupported, you thrill with a sense of romantic peril, and take extraordinary interest in what the guide is telling of his first explorations of this subterranean maze, when there was no route to be followed, nor even a ladder to assist his getting about. You wonder more and more, not only how such a labyrinth ever was explored, but how its passages can be remembered even with daily practice. I can best picture the tortuous complexity of underground shafts and tunnels,

cracks and crannies, by asking you to imagine the atmosphere a solid, and yourself some pigmy following the tangled and criss-crossed interior of the thickly branching twigs of a tree. However, in remote portions of the cave, not yet accessible to the general public, there exist very large rooms. One of these is two hundred and fifty feet long, and of varying width. Another would be large were it not incumbered by fallen masses and by drip-stone pillars, which are vertically ribbed, as though made of boards set on end with rounded edges outward. A third room, the biggest of all, measures four hundred and fifty feet in length, and is wide at each end, but narrows hour-glass fashion in the middle. The ceiling of this chamber is so high that no candle flame or even magnesium light has ever been strong enough to bring it into view, and the echoes are remarkable. In the greater part of the cave, however, one must continually stoop and dodge to avoid contact with the side-walls or the ceiling.

It is to the ornamentation, however, that I wish particularly to call attention. This exactly resembles that at Luray, except that it is upon a very much smaller scale. The largest drip-formed pillars in the Colorado cave are said to be not more than twenty feet in height and few in number, and the great majority of the stalactites and stalagmites I saw were small, and hung in rows from overhanging ledges like the icicles on eaves in winter. There were also few stalagmites, showing that generally the dripping had been sufficiently slow to allow of the evaporation of all the water before it accumulated in too heavy a drop on the tip of the pendant that its burden of lime was building out. This varied greatly, however, in different parts of the cave, and some rooms, for example, those near the entrance, are almost utterly bare, or adorned only with little fungoid tufts of pure clay, which are left after their solid matrix has disappeared. On the other hand, so profuse has been the discharge of water over several ledges, that the native rock is wholly concealed under a great "frozen cascade" of deposited material—alabaster-white, crystalline, sparkling,—which well simulates ice. Elsewhere there is abundant proof that the water dripped rapidly and spattered, producing those curious botryoidal, cauliflower-like masses called "vegetable gardens." This was like Luray, as, also, was the tendency observed everywhere—though rarely well carried out,—toward the curtain or ribbon-like "drapery" form of stalactite, whose gracefully pendant corners make the Virginia cavern-scenery so strangely attractive. There is much less wall-rock and ceiling hidden under

these water-formed accretions here, however, than at Luray, showing, probably, that at no time was there so large an amount of water present in the rocks as found its way through the Virginia catacombs. The relatively smaller size of all the excavations at Manitou would confirm this explanation of a condition which might be expected in this dryer climate and superior altitude.

The floors of many rooms are laid several inches deep with incrustations of limework, which is embroidered with raised ridges of exquisite carving. These cross one another in every direction, making a series of small, shallow compartments, generally half-filled with the finest of clay; and several strata of this thin floor-rock will often be found superimposed upon one another, and, as a whole, easily detachable from the real bed-rock floor.

Again, where water has been caught in depressions, these basins have been lined with a plush of minute lime-crystals—tufts like small cushions of yellow and white moss. Such depressed patches are very abundant. Moreover, the rapid evaporation of such pools in confined spaces has so surcharged the air with carbonated moisture, that particles of lime have been deposited on the walls of the pocket in a thousand dainty and delicate forms of tiny stalactites and bunches of stone twigs, until you can fancy the most airy of coral-work transferred to these recesses. Here, often, the air still seems foggy as your lamp-rays strike it, and the growing filagree work gleams alabaster-white under the spray which is feeding its strange, exquisite growth. In this minute and frost-like ornamentation, to which the most skillful workmanship of the silversmith would bear no comparison, and where the flowers of the hot-house or the brilliantly tentacled dwellers in some sunny tide-cove would find their delicate beauty surpassed, this Colorado cavern can show far more than its larger rival in the Alleghanies.

The most profusely ornamented part of the

cave is that included in Music Hall, Alabaster Hall, and Grotto, the Bridal Chamber and the Dining-Room, which is central to the rest. Music Hall, which is a chamber fifty feet long, with a level floor, even sides, and a high-arched ceiling, takes its name from the musical tones produced by gently striking the resonant, vibratory stalactites. In their varying length and thickness one can easily find the octaves and so hammer out a tune, which if it be of no great compass, will contain much melody. Quaint imitative devices occur in the abundant excrescences here,—a prairie dog, the sleeping bird, and a score of others which the guides have learned to point out for our amusement, while one end of the hall is a perfect little jungle of stalactites and stalagmites. Many of the specimens here do not taper, but, having grown from their interiors by the water which trickled through, leaving successive rings at the mouth of the slender pendent tube, are of exactly the same diameter throughout; and, having grown rapidly, have not had time to waste into the clay-stained condition of the older formations, but remain beautifully translucent, as you may see by holding your yellow candle-flame behind them. Alabaster Hall and the Grotto are treasure-nooks lavishly ornamented in every pattern of cave-art.

I have said enough to show, I think, that in the Pike's Peak cave, which seems to belong to the same geological age (the Silurian) as its eastern type, the conditions of excavation were substantially the same as in the Virginian "wonder," and that consequently the same kind of spaces in the limestone rock are found in both, and the same sort of interior decoration; with this important difference, however, that the far greater supply of water in one has carved out vastly greater rooms and furnished the transportation for an immensely greater mass of material into the secondary formations of both pendent and piled up drip-rock.

Ernest Ingersoll.

THE PUNISHMENT.

Two haggard shades, in robes of mist,
For longer years than each could tell,
Joined by a stern gyve, wrist with wrist,
Have roamed the courts of hell.

Their blank eyes know each other not;
Their cold hearts hate this union drear. . . .
Yet one poor ghost was Lancelot
And one was Guinevere!

Edgar Fawcett.