

CRYSTAL CAVE, MONTANA.

SIX miles from White Sulphur Springs is a mountain on whose sides are many curious rock formations, which have won for it the title of Castle Mountain. Curious and picturesque as the mountain is in many respects, the one great feature of interest is Crystal Cave, a cavern of unknown extent and manifold beauties. Though its existence has been known for a number of years it has never been thoroughly explored, the most complete investigation of its mysteries having recently been made by a few members of THE WEST SHORE staff, accompanied by R. N. Sutherlin, editor of the *Rocky Mountain Husbandman*, A. Spencer and I. Salhinger. Mr. Sutherlin has frequently visited the cave and called attention to its attractions in his paper, but never succeeded in arousing in others the enthusiasm he himself possesses. When he kindly offered to lead our party to the cavern and penetrate its dark recesses even further than he had ever gone before, the decision to accept was quick and unanimous. Providing ourselves with clothing whose intimate acquaintance with dirt was a guarantee of its fitness for such a journey, we procured a conveyance and quickly traversed the half dozen miles intervening between the city and mountain. In this distance we had gradually ascended 1,200 feet on the mountain side. A further climb on foot of 500 feet, and then a descent on the opposite side of the ridge nearly an equal distance, brought us to the mouth of the cave. The entrance, over which is suspended a natural bridge of rock, is a gradual descent of about 100 feet over loose boulders, similar to the mouth of a steeply inclined tunnel, the aperture being some twenty feet wide and fifteen feet high.

Almost immediately we were ushered into the main, or "crystal," chamber, an apartment of irregular shape, with a perimeter of 250 feet, and a height to the crystal-studded ceiling of sixty feet. The floor was free from rocks, but was covered with stalagmites and crystals. Mud was freely smeared over everything, no doubt brought in by animals that probably hibernate there in winter. From this main apartment we penetrated into twenty-three separate chambers, reaching them by traversing numerous passages leading in all directions. Some of these avenues are comparatively open and free from obstructions, while others are choked up with rock or so small that much difficulty is experienced in passing through them.

The most interesting of these narrows at one place to such an extent that it is with much difficulty that the body can be forced through at all. In fact, one of our party so exceeded the standard of rotundity that he could not even get "in with a squeeze and a grin," and he "observed that the hole was small." This we christened "A Tight Squeeze." It led us into a large chamber where both stalactites and stalagmites were in special abundance. They thrust themselves up from the floor or hung pendant from the ceiling, little drops of water trembling on their points, while the walls sparkled with crystals under even the dim light of our tallow candles.

Stalactites were observed of all sizes, from a mere drop of water to a pendant cone two and a half feet in length, one of which we brought away with us as a souvenir and curiosity. In one chamber we found a spring of ice cold water. Several of us slaked our thirst, but one member of the party declined to indulge on the plea that he had no accommodations for internal stalactites. Many passages were observed which were so obstructed by rocks as to be impenetrable. A little giant powder would remedy this defect, and might give access to still larger apartments and lead still farther into the interior of the mountain. Fully three hours and a quarter were consumed in our explorations, though but a short time was spent at any one place, the numerous chambers and passageways keeping us almost constantly in motion to complete the circuit in that brief time. Crystal Cave will no doubt become an object of much interest to the thousands who will be drawn to that portion of Montana by the healing waters of White Sulphur Springs.

LUMBERING ON PUGET SOUND.

THE *Tacoma News* gives the following estimate, based upon reliable information, of the daily output of logs at the various logging camps on Puget Sound:

Olympia camps.....	108,000
Black Lake.....	40,000
Oyster Bay.....	26,000
Little Skookum.....	70,000
Mud Bay.....	22,000
Big Skookum.....	40,000
North Bay.....	18,000
Hartstein Island.....	80,000
Henderson Bay.....	48,000
West Passage.....	14,000
Yashon Island.....	12,000
One on Hood's Canal.....	30,000
Whidby Island.....	31,000
Casmano.....	18,000
Skagitno.....	87,000
Fidalgoy Island.....	210,000
Bemish.....	21,000
Guemes.....	74,000
Stillaguamish.....	22,000
Port Susan.....	91,000
Skokomish.....	30,000
.....	173,000
Total daily output.....	1,167,000

This amount, if correct as far as stated, would be considerably increased by numerous small operators not mentioned, and by the larger camps on Hood's Canal not reported. The mills on the Sound are now all running on full time, and have a daily capacity about as follows:

Tacoma.....	200,000
Port Blakely.....	200,000
Port Grumble.....	150,000
Port Madison.....	80,000
Port Ludlow.....	80,000
Utsalady.....	80,000
Seabeck.....	80,000
Port Discovery.....	150,000
.....	100,000
Total.....	1,040,000

By these figures it will be seen that if the mills put out daily their full capacity there will not, at this rate, be a large accumulation of logs at the end of the summer's operations for the mills to go on during the winter, should the demand for lumber continue. At present prices, and with the dull state of the market, with all the seeming activity, millmen and loggers are enabled to realize very small profits, even if they are able to come out whole at the end of the season. Wages in the camps vary from \$20 to \$80 per month. Last year they were from \$40 to \$135. A 24-foot fir log recently cut in Snohomish County by Blackman Bros. measured 80 and 96 inches respectively across the smaller and larger ends.