

# OREGON CAVES RIVAL THE MAMMOTH CAVE OF KENTUCKY

## CAVERNS IN SOUTHERN PART OF STATE HAVE BEEN EXPLORED FOR SEVEN MILES WITHOUT FINDING THE END

BY W. L. CHIRSEY.

FEW people in Oregon, to say nothing of our country in general, are aware that in the southern part of this state is to be found a series of caverns second only to the world-famous Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. Indeed, the Oregon caves may one day be granted first place, for no attempt at thorough exploration has ever been made, though the main passages have been penetrated to a distance of more than seven miles, with no indication of the end.

It was in 1844 that Elijah Davidson, out hunting in the mountains, followed his dog on a fresh bear track, to find them baying before a dark opening in which the wounded animal had taken refuge. From the cavern rushed a stream of limpid water, through which Mr. Davidson had to wade in entering. A few feet inside the bear was despatched, but the discoverer had seen enough to fill him with wonder and curiosity, and as soon as neighbors could be enlisted in the expedition, the party returned.

The country being thinly settled, it was some time before the caves were sufficiently known to attract visitors from abroad. Then a party of San Francisco capitalists became interested and decided to develop the caves as a commercial enterprise. Men were hired to cut a trail over the mountains, others worked inside, enlarging small passages, that they might be easily traversed, and a big hotel was planned and all was bustle and activity. The promoters themselves camped at the entrance, spending many hours daily in the caverns. Cards whilled away the time and games for princely stakes were played in a chamber still known as the "Gamblers' Hall." At the close of the summer the capitalists departed, with assurances that money would be sent to pay the workers, but the paymaster never appeared. It was a great disappointment to the sturdy mountaineers, who had worked for a small wage and then lost that.

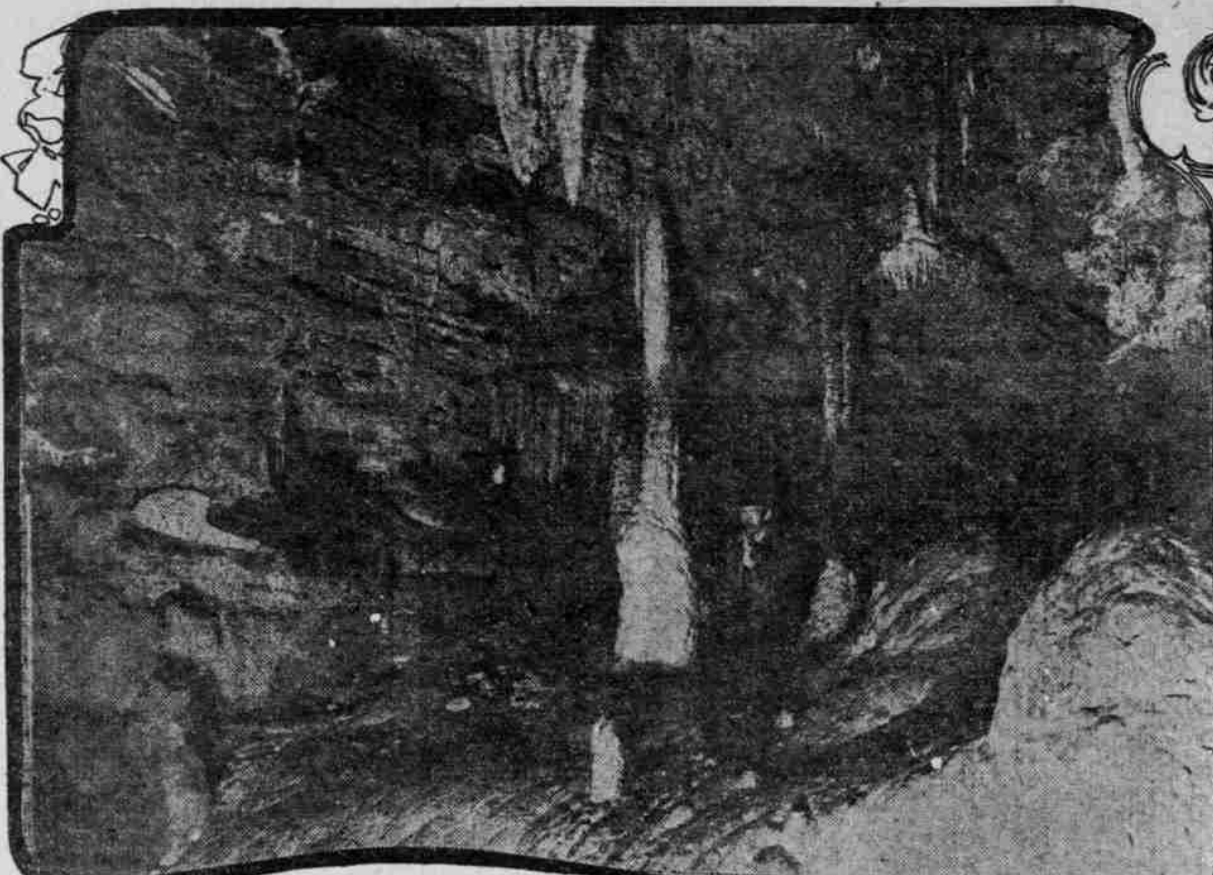
After several years had elapsed two young men built them a cabin and undertook to establish their residence there so that by "squinting" they would be given a title to the claim when the Government surveyed the land. Several bridges were constructed over the mountain streams, more work was done on the trail and the boys worked hard, but seeing that the longest for survey was indefinite and uncertain of success, they reluctantly abandoned their claim. Within the past year the United States Government has recognized the caves as one of the scenic marvels of its domain by withdrawing the spot from entry and designating it a National park, a fitting sequel to its romantic history.

The Marble Hills of Oregon, in the midst of the most picturesque mountain scenery imaginable. Descending into a little valley over rugged granite boulders, the forest-covered mountains rising on every side, one comes to Cave Creek, which bursts from the foot of a perpendicular granite wall 100 feet in height. Nature has draped the white facade with luxuriant green moss, in beautiful contrast to its uncovered portions. It is like a grand overture introducing the theater of wonders to follow.

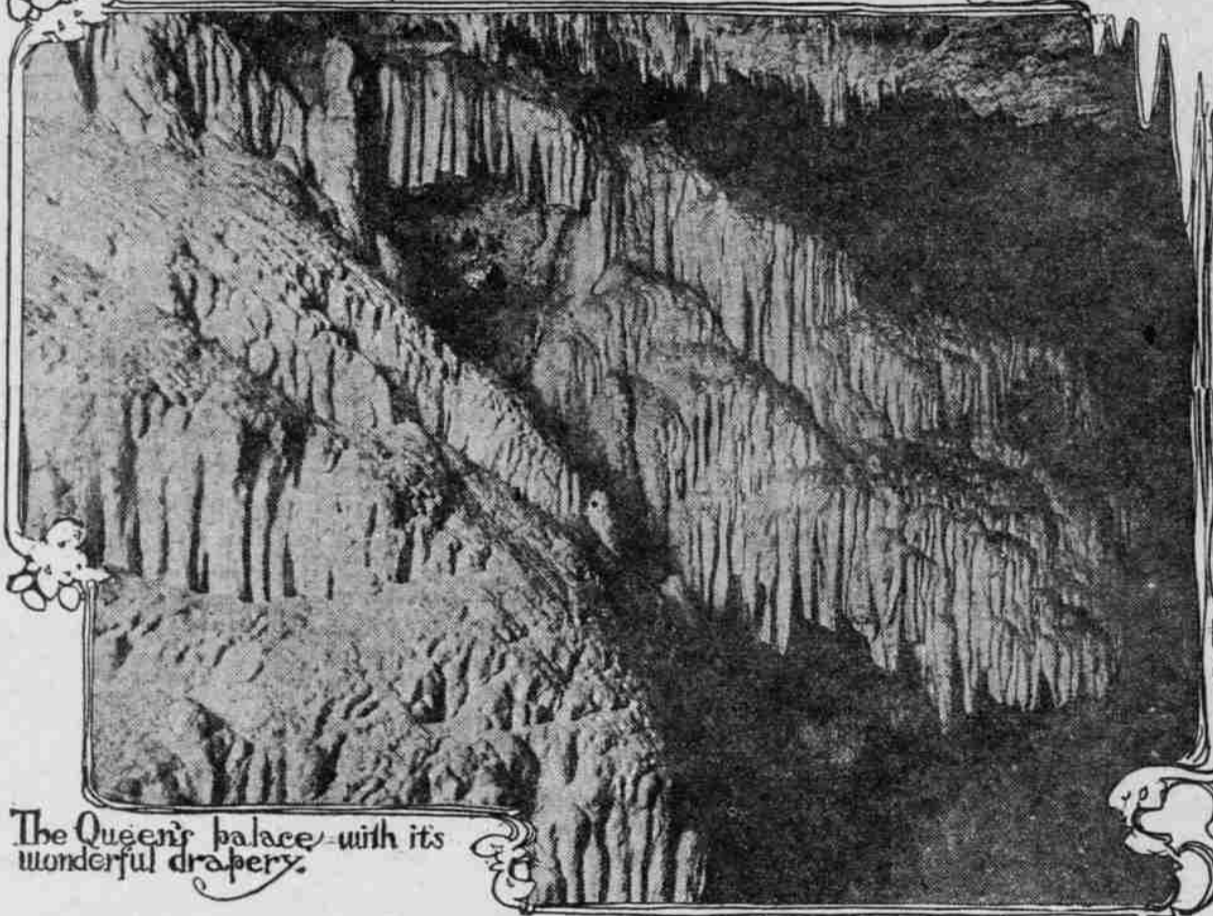
Entering a low passage by following the bed of the stream, one gradually ascends over rugged rocks to the upper levels, leaving the cave below a hundred feet and the real beauties begin to disclose themselves. The walls are of creamy whiteness, while slender stalactites depend like icicles from the ceiling, stalagmites rise from the floor; fantastic formations of the same soft white abound on every hand. Darkness, absolute and impenetrable, is broken by the candles as one moves through the larger chambers. Silence as in a vacuum reigns—not a sign of life exists in air or water. Every stalactite has its drop of crystal liquid, yet it never seems to fall, and the caves are in most places remarkably dry. The air is pure and fresh, the temperature remains at 50 degrees the year around.

One of the first rooms is the "Queen's Palace." At the sides rising in tiers like the seats of an amphitheater, are shelves draped with translucent stalactites, couches hung with fairy tapestry. It is a royal apartment in very truth.

Not so large as some others, but unique in its attractiveness, is "The Oregon Loft." Down the center hangs a



A STALACTITE-STALAGMITE PILLAR



The Queen's palace with its wonderful drapery.

row of enormous stalactites of different lengths. Struck gently with a bit of stone, they send forth mellow sounds like deep-toned bells, the pitch of the different pipes sometimes varying as

much as two octaves, yet no two alike. These reverberating chimes give an indescribably weird and beautiful effect in the silent chamber. "The Ghost Chamber" is modeled on

the grandest scale of all, though so irregular in its outline that dimensions convey but little meaning. Emerging into this great salon, one is startled by the obscure of the further end. Unlike most of the other rooms, the "Ghost Chamber" is hollowed out of a brownish rock, and the stalactite formation only appears in one place, where it covers the wall like a crystallized waterfall, producing the spectral effect that names the room. The dome is fully 100 feet in height, while the length of the room must be as much as 200 feet.



UNDER THE DOME OF THE GHOST CHAMBER.



Old Nick's Bedchamber

the fact that but a single one leads to the outer entrance gives an idea of the intricacy of the caverns and the danger in attempting to visit them alone. Occasionally some one goes in by tying a string at the entrance and unwinding the ball to serve as a return guide. Dozens of these cords have been left in place, and they give one the uncanny feeling that if they were but followed to the end there would be found a dead man, for so seldom are the caves visited

at certain seasons and so isolated is the locality that this might easily happen to an over-daring explorer.

Soon after the discovery of the place the complete skeleton of a bear was found in one of the inner rooms, and if brute instinct did not serve to liberate him from that terrible maze, there would be little hope of his being.

"The Golden Star," a wonderful natural light, lead out of the Ghost Chamber and ascend for many feet, sometimes through a passage so small that one crawls on his stomach—or stays behind if inclined to embonpoint. Appropriately enough, "The Chapel" is soon reached, and here is a charming little lake of the coldest, clearest water, lying at one side of the room where the wall and ceiling approach to within a couple of feet of each other. Stalactites shaped as like clear glass rods, connect them, and where these have been broken away to allow visitors to drink the delicious water, the remaining fragments carry many a feminine tress as a reminder of fair visitors.

On and on, now climbing a ladder or descending by clinging to the rocks and stalactites, until the guide starts his charges by whispering, "There must be some one else in the cave." Far, far below, in a seemingly bottomless pit, glimmers a candle. It is but a stub left by the guide in the Ghost Chamber, and we are on an upper level, near its dome, where a simple misstep would mean a fatal accident.

Climax of beauty and grace is the "Fond Lily Room," most difficult of access, reached in its ascent. The walls are wrought with danger at every turn, yet the risk is well repaid. Covering the walls of this room, as though carved in wax, are stalactites shaped as lily pads and blossoms, while from the ceiling hang immense fluted chandeliers of the most delicate formation. Everything in the room is so perfect in its whiteness. As though this were not enough to enchant the beholder, dainty marine shells are found in strata near the floor, presenting a most interesting lesson to the geologist. "Holy of Holies" this room has been called by later visitors, and certainly it does inspire reverence—somewhat lessened when the guide gives his version of the name as "Holiest of Holes."

Some of the names bestowed are almost as picturesque as the rooms themselves. "Old Nick's Bedroom," "Kincaid's Dancehall" and the "Shark's Mouth." At one place is an immense pillar the thickness of a man's body, reaching from floor to vaulted roof; again, there is a broad shelf covered with minute crystals resembling the tracery of frost on a window pane; here the floor lies in a little ridge like sand on the beach as the tide goes out, and so strong is the likeness that one involuntarily stoops to take a handful.

There are four distinct levels to the caverns so far as known and an upper entrance has been uncovered and enlarged, perhaps 200 feet up the mountain, which makes it possible to avoid the waters of Cave Creek altogether. Night and day are as one in these vast underground galleries, whose perfection must have taken century upon century. Not the slightest change in even the smallest stalactite is discernible since their discovery, save where vandals have broken them in unreasoning quest for souvenirs.

There are two ways of reaching the caves, both involving a start from Grants Pass, whence the route is taken either Williams or Kirby, then a supplementary journey on horseback or foot. The Williams route is the shorter and the trail being constantly improved, by Kirby is considered a little the easier journey. No man is so familiar with the labyrinth as John Kincaid, who was the original explorer of many of the passages and worked in their improvement for three whole months. "Johnnie" and his "babies" are familiar figures in the mountains. The distance is a very remote from the beaten lines of travel adds immeasurably to the zest of the outing. A whole week spent in the caves would bring fresh enjoyment and surprises with every hour. A scenic feature so new, so unusual, so mysterious, should be indeluctable to hundreds and thousands to visit this marvelous natural museum.

## Mrs. William Jennings Bryan, of Fairview

Wife of Democratic Leader Who Hopes to Be "First Lady of the Land." A Helpmeet Always.

CULTURED, kindly and dignified, with the world of experience that has been hers since her husband, the unknown Nebraska lawyer, delivered the "Cross of gold" speech in the Chicago Coliseum 12 years ago, the wife of the Commoner is a woman eminently qualified to fill the position of "first lady of the land," or any position in which fate may place her.

Mrs. William Jennings Bryan has played no small part in the shifting scenes that have brought her husband again into the great white light of political leadership. Herself a lawyer of no mean ability, as her husband and his legal friends can testify, she has in turn been her husband's amanuensis and legal aid, his adviser in political vicissitudes and successes, his companion in great campaign tours and world travels, and always his unflinching comrade and counselor.

Mrs. Bryan has undergone experiences such as probably never have fallen to another American woman. But multitudinous experiences have never altered the gentle, cultured daughter of the blind lawyer, who in 1884 gave her hand to a gaunt, unprepossessing and countless prominent characteristics.

A brief expression of her husband, when his neighbors celebrated his homecoming after the convention of 1896, is a glimpse into the domestic life of the couple. After the crowd had cheered wildly for him for several minutes, one megaphone-voiced admirer of the couple caught sight of Mrs. Bryan and shouted: "Three cheers for the next first lady of the land!"

As the cheers died away for a moment Mr. Bryan smiled and said: "My friends and neighbors, I am greatly obliged for the implied compliment, but to me she has always been the first lady of the land."

Mrs. Bryan, who is 47 years old, and the grandmother of two children, is the daughter of John Baird, whose ancestors were among the earliest settlers of Pennsylvania. On her mother's side the paternal stock were residents of New York since Revolutionary days. Her father was a man of high literary

tastes, and devoutly religious temperament. For 15 years prior to his death he was blind, and in those years his daughter was his constant companion, her unceasing care and solicitude recommending him in part for the infirmity which had befallen him. After her marriage to Mr. Bryan and the couple's removal to Nebraska, Mr. Baird was a member of the household until his death.

Mrs. Bryan's acquaintance with William Jennings Bryan began in the Jacksonville, Ill., seminary, of which she was an attendant, and his courtship was impetuous and eloquent. The exceeding "plainness" of Mr. Bryan did not handicap him materially, and their marriage followed four years of ardent courtship.

Before her marriage to the ambitious young lawyer, Miss Baird had decided that to be a true helpmeet she must aid in a material way. To that end she took up the study of law after her marriage and a few years later took the examination for admission to the bar with a dozen male candidates in Lincoln, Neb., and received the certificate that makes her eligible to take charge of a case in any of the state courts.

Mrs. Bryan never participated in a court trial. Her object had been to aid her husband and her help took the form of acting as his legal amanuensis, looking up authorities and preparing citations for Mr. Bryan and conferring with him on the important cases that now were coming to his office.

Withal, her domestic duties were not neglected, and the social friends or others who were entertained by the Bryans would have been astonished to know that she had maintained personal direction of her numerous household affairs in addition to the unofficial participation in her husband's legal business.

As the success of the "boy orator of the Platte" grew and his business prospered, Mrs. Bryan withdrew gradually from active touch with all his affairs, and on a matter arose on which Bryan deemed that the soundest and most logical advice was necessary his first and last call was for his wife.

husband's wishes and the advice of friends that she remained at his side until the end. Time has proved that

In his second campaign and in the long lecture tours of Mr. Bryan his wife

city grown to such dignity as to need constant supervision, the wife more and more assumed position as domestic director of the household, and a home and social life was established that have made her the social leader as well as the most popular woman of Lincoln.

The world tour of the Bryans brought more breadth to the personality and viewpoints of the couple, and the trinkets, souvenirs and gifts accumulated in the tour have made the Fairview home one of the most interesting in the country.

The home is a handsome structure, occupying the summit of a slope, and commands a beautiful view of the surrounding country and the City of Lincoln. Almost 200 acres of land, under cultivation, the property of the Democratic leader, surround it. Flowers bank up one side of the house, on whose broad veranda much Democratic history will be written in the next three months.

In the great reception rooms the artistic nature of Mrs. Bryan has been given vent, and mural decorations, pictures and vases form a harmony of color and beauty that have won the admiration of the most aesthetic of its Eastern guests.

The social life of Mrs. Bryan is not one that encompasses much of mere gaiety or entertainment for the sake only of entertainment. She is a believer in woman's clubs, holding their influence generally to be toward the betterment of the home.

Shortly after her removal to Lincoln she established the first Zephyrus Club in the city and frequently has been an official in it, as well as its most active supporter. In the discussion of current topics in the club Mrs. Bryan always has taken a leading part, although she avoids politics and purely political discussions at all times.

She is a voluminous reader and has followed the trend of her husband's studies as assiduously as himself. Modern economics, political and social, the philosophy of the past and present and current political themes and their intricacies are as familiar to her as to the most astute and learned politicians in Washington.

She has endeavored to keep in touch with modern literature, although she frankly confesses that it has little charm for her and that she finds the style of the writer is more interesting than the theme of the book. She is an ardent admirer of Victor Hugo, of whose work she says:

"Every word he has written is a classic message."

The three children of the Bryans are as popular in Lincoln as their parents. While the companions of their parents on the world tour, recently completed, they have seen little of the strenuous political life of Mr. Bryan and have been kept in the background and away from public view, so far as Mrs. Bryan has been able to accomplish it. The marriage several years ago of Ruth Bryan was the first intimation to many newspaper readers that a grown daughter of the "peerless leader" was in existence.

William Jennings Bryan, Jr., and Grace

was not with him constantly, although she made many trips through the country to attend events which marked epochs in the career of her husband.

After the Commoner had been established, the home at Fairview purchased and the affairs of Mr. Bryan in his home



MRS WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

## Helen Keller on Blindness

Star. Perhaps my sun shines not as yours. The colors that glorify my world, the blue of the sky, the green of the fields, may not correspond exactly with those you delight in; but they are none the less color to me. The sun does not shine for my physical eye, nor does the lightning flash, nor do the trees turn green in the Spring; but they have not, therefore, ceased to exist any more than the landscape is annihilated when you turn your back on it.

BEFORE my teacher came to me I did not know that I am. I lived in a world that was a no-world, writes Helen Keller in the Century.

I cannot hope to describe adequately that unconscious, yet conscious, time of nothingness. I did not know that I knew aught, or that I lived or acted or desired. I had neither will nor intellect. I was carried along to objects and acts by a certain blind natural impetus. I had a mind which caused me to feel anger, satisfaction, desire.

These two facts led those about me to suppose that I willed and thought. I can remember all this, not because I knew that I was so, but because I have a certain blind natural impetus. I had a mind which caused me to feel anger, satisfaction, desire.

The posts have taught us how full of wonders is the night; and the night of blindness has its wonders, too. The only lightless dark is the night of ignorance and insensibility. We differ, blind and seeing, one from another, not in our senses, but in the use we make of them, in the imagination and courage with which we seek wisdom beyond our senses.

I have not touched the outline of a star nor the glory of the moon, but I believe that God has set two lights in my mind, the greater to rule by day, and the lesser by night, and by them I know that I am able to navigate my life bark, as certain of reaching the haven as he who steers by the North

reception rooms, clambering about the porches and in general indicating their complete and triumphant possession of the premises. Whatever rules Mrs. Bryan may have enforced for her own children or secretly held in abeyance for other people's grandchildren, her own are hampered by no regulations, restrictions or admonitions. They go, as they list, and that is to education, to the home, and do what they please, and there is none to cry halt or to restrict them.

The political conferences of their grandfather have been interrupted and his adherents, who rule states and political bodies, made to render obeisance to ones mightier than William Jennings Bryan. It has come with good grace from the landscape is annihilated when you turn your back on it.

"Run outside now and play." Mrs. Ruth Bryan Leavitt and W. J. Bryan, Jr., were attendants at the Denver convention and are expected to render full reports of its picturesque features to their father, mother, sister, nephew and niece upon their return.

His Perambulator. When Billy Brown was but a babe tucked in a perambulator, his sister had to push the thing and it seemed to irritate her. And Billy's growth up to William Brownne, Ows of himself, and motor. His sister's kindness he repays. And make his auto tote her. But far as I can figure out, his plights as bad as ever. "Ties" she pushes two, while Billy tussles with a lever.

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The calamity of the blind is immense, irreparable. But it does not take away our share of the things that count—service, friendship, humor, imagination, freedom. It is the secret inner will that controls one's fate. We are capable of willing to be good, of loving and being loved, of thinking to the end that we may be wiser. We possess these spirit-forms equally with all God's children. Therefore we, too, see the lightnings and hear the thunders of Sinai. We, too, march through the wilderness and the solitary place that shall be glad for us, and as we pass God maketh the desert to blossom like the rose. We, too, go in unto the Promised Land to possess the treasures of the spirit, the unseen permanences of life and nature.

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