

themselves, while the eye, glancing onward, watches the dim and distant glimmers of the lights of the guides—some in the recess below, and others in the galleries above. Passing from these recesses, the passage conducts to a flight of steps that leads into a large cavern of irregular form, and of great beauty. Its dimensions are about thirty feet by fifty. Here the incrustations hang just like a sheet of water that has been frozen as it fell; there they rise into a beautiful stalactitic pillar, and yonder compose an elevated seat, surrounded by sparry pinnacles. Beyond this room is another, more irregular, but more beautiful. Besides having sparry ornaments in common with the others, overhead is a roof of the most admirable and singular formation. It is entirely covered with *stalactites*, which are suspended from it like inverted pinnacles. They are of the finest material, and are most beautifully shaped and embossed. In another apartment, an immense sheet of transparent *stalactite* extends from the roof to the floor, which, when struck, emits deep and mellow sounds, like those of a muffled drum. Farther on is another vaulted chamber, which is one hundred feet long, thirty-six wide, and twenty-six high. Its walls are filled with grotesque concretions. The effect of the lights placed by the guides at various elevations, and leaving hidden more than they reveal, is extremely fine. At the extremity of another range of apartments, a magnificent hall, two hundred and fifty feet long, and thirty-three feet high, suddenly appears. Here is a splendid sheet of rock-work, running up the centre of the room, and giving it the aspect of two separate and noble galleries; this partition rises twenty feet above the floor, and leaves the fine span of the arched roof untouched. There is here a beautiful concretion, which has the form and drapery of a gigantic statue; and the whole place is filled with stalagmitical masses of the most varied and grotesque character. The fine perspective of this room, four times the length of an ordinary church, and the amazing vaulted roof spreading overhead, without any support of pillar or column, produces a most striking effect. In another apartment, which has an altitude of fifty feet, there is at one end an elevated recess, ornamented with a group of pendant *stalactites* of unusual size, and singular beauty. They are as large as the pipes of a full-sized