

toil of discovery, at a distance of 702 yards from the mouth, the explorers rested from their labours in a large and lofty irregular grotto, in which they heard the sound of water falling in a still more advanced subterranean recess. It has been ascertained, at no inconsiderable personal risk, that this water falls into a deep pool or linn at a lower level, beyond which further progress appears to be impracticable. In fact, Mr. James Farrer explored this dark lake by swimming,—a candle in his cap, and a rope round his body.

In this long and winding gallery, fashioned by nature in the marble heart of the mountain, floor, roof and sides are everywhere intersected by fissures which were formed in the consolidation of the stone. To these fissures and the water which has passed down them, we owe the formation of the cave and its rich furniture of stalactites. The direction of the most marked fissures is almost invariably N.W. and S.E., and when certain of these (which in my geological works I have called ‘master fissures’) occur, the roof of the cave is usually more elevated, the sides spread out right and left, and often ribs and pendants of brilliant stalactite, placed at regular distances, convert the rude fissure into a beautiful aisle of primæval architecture. Below most of the smaller fissures hang multitudes of delicate translucent tubules, each giving passage to drops of water. Splitting the rock above, these fissures admit or formerly admitted dropping water: continued through the floor, the larger rifts permit or formerly permitted water to enter or flow out of the cave. By this passage of water, continued for ages on ages, the original fissure was in the first instance enlarged, through the corrosive action of streams of acidulated water; by the withdrawal of the streams to other fissures, a different process was called into operation. The fissure was bathed by drops instead of streams of water, and these drops, exposed to air-currents and evaporation, yielded up the free carbonic acid to the air and the salt of lime to the rock. Every line of drip became the axis of a stalactitical pipe from the roof; every surface bathed by thin films of liquid became a sheet