

of sparry deposit. The floor grew up under the droppings into fantastic heaps of stalagmite, which, sometimes reaching the pipes, united roof and floor by pillars of exquisite beauty.

To a marvellous specimen of this kind the 'Pillar Hall' owes its name. When the Cave was opened, its floor was very uneven, and many little pools were found in hollows of the rock or in basins, guarded by walls of stalagmite. These pools remain as they were found. The sides of these basins are usually undulated stalagmite, and there is often a bright plate of this sparry deposit spreading widely from the side over the surface of the water like a sheet of snowy ice or the leaf of a crystal plant, narrowing the area of these fairy lakes. The explanation of this is simple. The water charged with calcareous matter, and trickling down the stalagmitic sides of the Cave, is sufficiently freed from carbonic acid when it reaches the level of the water to deposit the earth, and thus by continual accretion the edge spreads out into a surface, and the sheet of spar appears to float on the water. Below the surface of the water the aggregation goes on in coralloidal or botryoidal masses, which are coherent, but much less solid than the subaërial deposit.

The calcareous sheet which is at the surface of the water appears to lose its original pure white colour when the water ceases to flow over it, and it is observed in many other places that the beauty of the surface is soon injured when it is exposed to constant or long-continued dryness.

The surface of stalagmite is generally undulated or excavated in little nests, of which the floor is formed by little bushes of calcareous spar, and the edges are crusted with that substance. This partly arises from the dropping, but is more dependent on the rippling of the thin films of water which readily yield up their earth to prominent points and ridges, and smooth the larger but sharpen the smaller inequalities of surface. In the small hollows the crystallization is less rapid and more individualized. The stalactites and pillars show usually a spirality of structure; this is probably the effect of the air-currents.