

ments,—to crossing or avoiding these had been confined our gymnastic exertions. But each person was now called upon to display all the resources of his agility and muscular vigour ; to assume positions the most foreign to his usual habits, to creep upon his stomach or drag himself along upon his back, to glide along the sides on a ledge not more than a couple of hands' breadths across, to walk with his body bent in every possible and impossible curve, to descend rocks almost as steep and as lofty as houses, to cling—with taper or torch in one's teeth—to every rugged projection or corner, and not to make a step without carefully examining beforehand the place

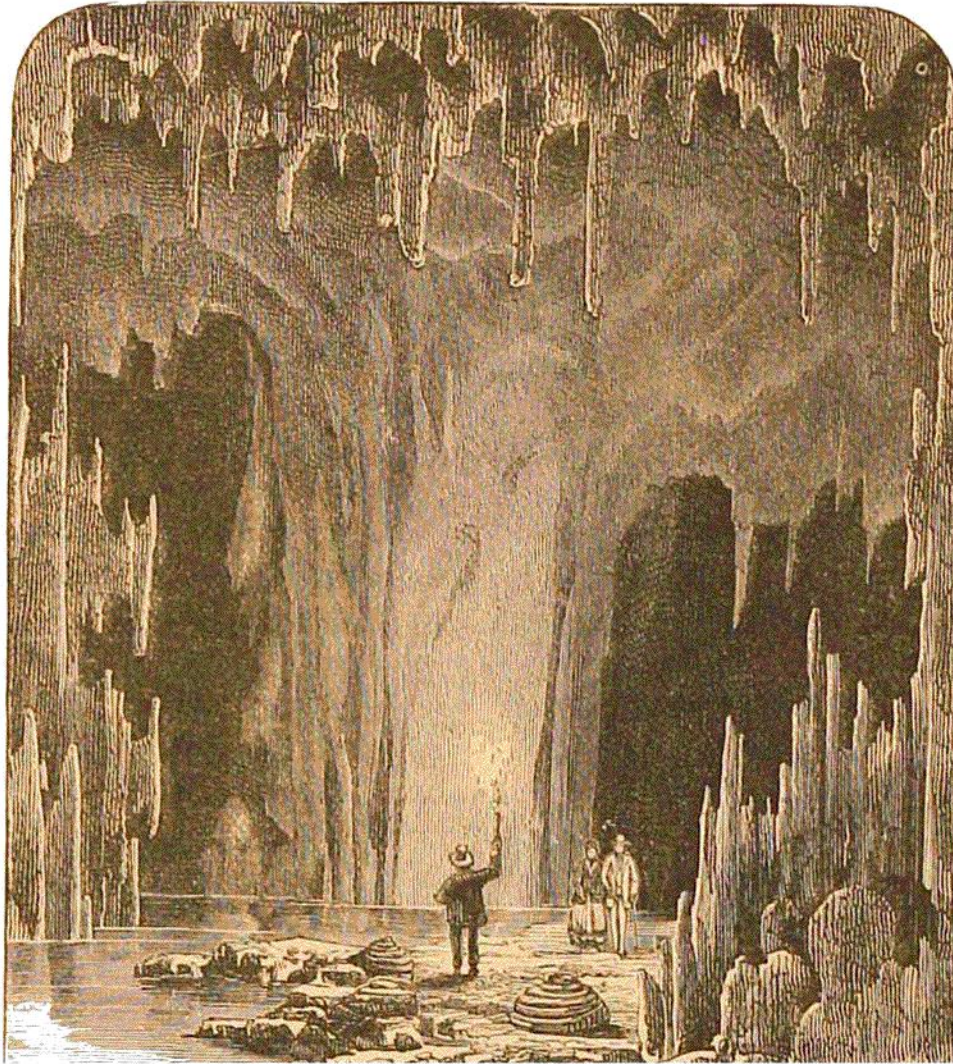


FIG. 172.—GROTTE DES DEMOISELLES, AT GANGES, IN THE HÉRAULT—HALL OF THE VIRGIN.

where he was about to plant his foot. We do not put ourselves forward, however, as heroes ; no serious danger now-a-days exists. The really perilous places, such as, for instance, the famous *Pas du Diable*, by which you enter the Grand Hall, has been provided with iron railings, and a ladder of the same material replaces the adventurous rope-ladder formerly in use. No accident has ever occurred, though delicate women have several times most gallantly explored the grotto even to its most trivial details.

And for any fatigue undergone by the tourist the compensation made to him is magnificent. The *Hall of the Virgin*, into which we have just penetrated, is