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SUMMER READING

The Prince Edward Island Magazine for August is out and for sale at usual places. It's a first rate number and the contents, which are as follows are of a high order of merit:

- H. M. S. Crescent Frontispiece
- The Star Hill Survey Kathie and Hughes
- The Broken Spectre I. M. Adversity, a Day Dream J. Edward Rendle
- Bedeque and its People—11' Henry H. Hooper, Detroit, Mich.
- Newspaper Life and Newspaper Men—IV J. H. Fletcher
- Mt. Albion Reminiscences Robert Jenkins
- In Swamp Land Lawrence W. Watson
- Land of Nowhere Bert Marie Cleveland
- The River Plate and the Argentine Republic Joseph R. Coe, West

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F. W. HALES, Secretary Steam Navigation Co. I. C. Charlottetown, July 25th, 1900

IN THE CAVLS OF THE BATS.

REMARKABLE DISCOVERY IN OKLAHOMA BY A GEOLOGICAL SURVEY PARTY.

Like a story of wonderland is the tale of caves told by members of the Oklahoma geological survey, which has penetrated into the wild lands not long delivered from the sway of the Indian tribes. Immense caverns extending beneath level valley lands, in whose weird depths are sheltered millions of bats, are among the wonders they have recorded.

Hints of the strange things to be found in the western part of the new territory have come at times to those who have been acquainted with the Indians. But the red men were jealous guardians of their lands while they held them, and few except those who were members of the tribes by blood or marriage were permitted to venture into the hill country.

Rumors of immense mineral deposits, of strange waters and of curious fantasies of nature led to the organization of an expedition led by Dr. A. H. Van Vleet, and its explorations, just reported to the State authorities, have given new interest to what was believed to be merely another prairie territory.

It was in the valley of Salt Creek that Dr. Van Vleet found the phenomena that interested him most. A few of those who had rushed into the territory when it was opened have found their way to the valley, and there are some farms and ranches on what is practically a broad plain.

Apparently the valley stretches unbroken for miles, with no hint of any wonder of nature concealed within it. But one who attempts to ride across it, as members of the survey party did, will find his way barred in almost the centre by a great chasm, from 300 to 400 feet deep, whose sides are formed of great bluffs of red clay and rock and gypsum.

In the bottom of his flows Salt Creek. It well deserves its name, for its waters have a strong flavor of brine. It is a small stream in summer and in winter, but in the spring, when the floods come, it sweeps over the bottom of the canyon and becomes almost a river.

The gorge it has formed gives abundant evidence of its past power. Hundreds of years ago it found its channel through the valley and cut a deep way for itself through the red clay on the surface. It progress downward was stayed by a ledge of rock on which the clay has formed, but this, too, yielded to the wash of the waters, and then the stream found a yielding substance almost as soft as clay.

Underneath the rocks was a great deposit of gypsum, extending for miles. Through this in flood after flood the waters of the stream cut, until at length they found a bed more solid than that above, on a great flooring of rock.

If the waters could not go deeper, however, they could go sidewise through the gypsum, and this they did. Floods that came down in the years eddied against the side walls and tore out new places for themselves. Gradually the gypsum was worn away until the creek had made for itself fantastic channels in darkness far outside its bed.

The waters fairly sported in this work. When they cut away the supports of masses of gypsum these fell below, only to be washed away or to form pillars in passages around which the waters might swirl. Towers and minarets of curious design were left on the walls of the gorge, making it beautiful as well as wonderful.

Dr. Van Vleet's party explored these caves as far as they could. In some places the entrances were so low that it was difficult to crawl into them, but once inside great chambers opened up and the torches used by the party could not give a view of the roof. Sometimes the course of a cavern could be followed for miles along the creek, with large and small

openings giving an opportunity to see wonders within.

But exploration of their depth was found impossible. When the party ventured into any of these caverns with torches they disturbed inhabitants that had never before had such visitation and resented it. Great swarms of bats, winged and furry things, swooped down from the roofs and in from the passages into which the light penetrated, flew around the explorers' heads and even dashed blindly into the flame of the torches.

The men were compelled to fight fiercely against the horde of small things. They were worsted, too, in the fight, for the best they could do was to stand their ground. If they attempted to venture into the passages they could see opening further along they would awaken new hordes of the winged things and their foes would be multiplied two-fold and sometimes ten-fold.

They were fairly stifled by the onslaught. Their torches were several times extinguished and they had to grope their way to light, and they feared to venture into the depths of the caves lest they should be left without means to guide them back into the stream.

Dr. Van Vleet was greatly impressed by this spectacle of millions of the winged ones setting at defiance the efforts of his party, and he made a study of the bats. He remained several nights in the canyon to observe what they would do. While daylight lasted there were no signs of life in the gorge. It was only when one flared a torch against the fantastic sides and roofs of the caves that there was any indication of the life that lay in the canyon.

But when the first signs of darkness came, then the canyon showed its people. With the shadows would come solitary bats winging out of the caverns, like scouts in the fore of an army. They would wheel up among the rocks and down again, weirdly circling, as though not yet certain of the course they would take or of the light to guide them.

As the shadows deepened others would join these first few adventurers, and the gorge would become all alive with the silent things that swept around and never seemed to alight. Then, as darkness came, the great army of bats would begin their swift flight out from the depths in which they had hidden themselves.

In great clouds they would appear. Thousands on thousands would emerge from every opening in the canyon. Thicker and thicker they would grow in the air above, until it seemed to the watchers below that a great cloud had settled over the canyon. It could be seen that they were leaving for the plains above to take a long flight in search of food, but the number in the gorge would not seem to grow less.

Minute after minute the black things would continue to come out of the dark openings in the cliffs, not checking, but all the while wheeling upward, until one might doubt whether all this life were real and believe the furry things were passing and repassing through some subterranean way, like the soldiers in a stage army.

For more than half an hour each night Dr. Van Vleet and his party saw this army of little things pass out, and being scientific men they tried to compute what the number must be. They stopped when they came to the millions, for they agreed the number could be nothing less.

When the sky began to show light again the winged things would come

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THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS

F Charlottetown was OTTAWA to-day and we had been sorry you were not covered for a large amount. I hope you can get your low rates.
E. H. BEER

back. First there would be the few scouts, the ones that dreaded the light most, and that delved into the cave depths to find security. Then would come the vanguard, and then the great body, a cloud again, haunting as the first rays of the sun shot across the plain to find their places before they were blinded by the orb that furnishes life and light to other things.

When daylight came in full the gorge would be still again, and the vision of the bat army to those who had observed it as more like a visit to fairyland than a real sight in the days of the material life.

There were other wonders, too, to be found in the canyon of Salt Creek. From out of the ledges on the side would spurt clear springs of water that had found a course through the rocks and the gypsum until they could gain freedom in the creek bed. The water was clear and inviting to those who were thirsty and could find nothing but salt waters of the creek. But those who drink it regret, for it is the "gyp" water, which brings woe.

From other ledges of sandstone come other springs of water, pure and sparkling. The suffering traveller who essays to quench his thirst in these finds only more thirst, from somewhere they bring the brine that flows through the creek.

Where Salt Creek leaves the hills the bluffs rise almost three hundred feet above the creek bed, and at the top of the two massive ledges of gypsum are scarcely a quarter of a mile apart. Some person has stretched a stout wire from ledge to ledge, on which a framework on a pulley supports a swing.

Starting from one bank, the swing with its occupant is whirled downward across the canyon almost a quarter of a mile, and then as far upward toward the opposite ledge as its momentum will carry it, then back toward the starting point, and back and forth, back and forth, each trip shorter, until it comes to rest suspended above the middle of the canyon, fifteen feet from the ground.

CURIOUS DWARFS IN THE PHILIPPINES.

President McKinley recently received from Professor Dean C. Worcester, of the Philippine Commission, a very interesting account of the curious plack dwarfs of the Philippines. There are about 25,000 of these pigmies, he says and they are known as Negritos. They are to be found of pure race in the provinces of Bataan, Luzon and also in Northeast Mindanao. Some of these have been gathered into settlements by missionaries, who are trying to civilize them, while others, mostly half breeds, live near Christian towns, where they do a little work from time to time, for which they receive payment in the form of trinkets or cloth. Sometimes a Christian family will buy a dwarf child and rear it for a servant, but usually it escapes to the forest as soon as it is big enough.

These dwarfs are remarkably like monkeys. According to Dr. Becker, the average stature of the men is four feet eight inches, and the women are three or four inches shorter. Their chests are not well developed, and

they have no calves to their legs. Each big toe is widely separated from the others, and the three outer toes of each foot are turned inward, as in some monkeys. Their feet are large and clumsy, and their hair is distributed over the scalp in regularly scattered clumps. Their heads are apparently too large for their bodies, and the mop of wool which they wear accentuates this effect. So monkeylike are they that they can counterfeit apes in a startling manner, their jaws projecting far beyond their noses and their faces deeply wrinkled, like monkeys.

The men wear no clothing except a cord drawn around the waist, from which hangs a small piece of cloth, whereas the women wear an apron made from the bark of a tree.

Marriage among the Negritos is indissoluble, and only one wife is allowed. Matrimonial customs vary among them, but as the ceremony of marriage is unlike anything of the kind to be seen anywhere in the world. It takes the form of a test of marksmanship, the young woman herself being the target.

She stands about fifty yards from her lover, holding under her arm a mass of palm leaves. He fires a blunt arrow, and if it passes through the leaves without striking the girl the two are married. If he fails the union is forbidden, but as the Negritos are very expert with the bow such a thing rarely happens.

The Negritos are very independent, and neither the Spaniards nor the Malays have ever been able to subdue them. Of a gentle nature, they never kill a human being wantonly, but they regard with suspicion the Christianized natives, who often maltreat them. If attacked they defend themselves vigorously, and in retaliation will rob and destroy the fields of their enemies or even assail their villages at night. To their children they give the names of birds, plants or insects. They cannot count above ten, and, while able to distinguish colors well, have no words for them. If a plague breaks out, such as cholera or smallpox, they are apt to desert the sick.

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