

Spelunking — 1860s style

Spelunking, from page A1

these smooth rocks quite a number of names appear, with dates ranging from 1843 to 1857."

The sight inspired Nemo to describe the cave as, "an old legend book, full of fantastic, entwined rocks and crystals; each room, each channel, is another page; the same poem, the same language, and yet always new chapters."

The writer's account of their exploration included the names of other rooms visited — "Bat Room," "The Devil's Gulch," and "Two Stories." Their trip in-

cluded a cookout near the entrance. "Being perfectly satisfied and highly edified, we returned to the entrance just before day-break, built up a fire, and cooked and ate our 'rations,' and started for home."

Perhaps the most interesting part of Nemo's account concerned the story of a near-mishap at the cave.

Related Nemo, "The Saltpetre Cave is situated, or rather the mouth of it, on the farm of Hugh Sample, and was first explored in 1843. A company of students came out to it some 10 years ago, and

neglecting to procure a guide, got lost.

"Two days after, Capt. Blair found their horses at the entrance, in a starving condition, and at once divining the cause, went into the cave, and in the vicinity of "The Devil's Gulch" found the young adventurers comforting each other with the consolation that they had reached 'that bourne from which no traveler ee'r returns.' He led them out, and I don't suppose their visit has ever been repeated."

Concluded Nemo, "Old Monroe is not so far behind in the cave line. The Saltpetre Cave is worth visiting. More anon."