

gin like a mirror. We clambered down the slope, and as the eye became more accustomed to the obscurity, the lake stretched farther back. There was a crazy little punt moored to the shore, and, after lighting candles, Captain Nares rowed the governor back into the darkness, the candles throwing a dim light for a time,—while the voices became more hollow and distant—upon the surface of the water and the vault of stalactite, and finally passing back as mere specks into the silence.

After landing the governor on the opposite side, Captain Nares returned for me, and we rowed round the weird little lake. It was certainly very curious and beautiful; evidently a huge cavity out of which the calcareous sand had been washed or dissolved, and whose walls, still to a certain extent permeable, had been hardened and petrified by the constant percolation of water charged with carbonate of lime. From the roof innumerable stalactites, perfectly white, often several yards long and coming down to the delicacy of knitting-needles, hung in clusters; and wherever there was any continuous crack in the roof or wall, a graceful, soft-looking curtain of white stalactite fell, and often ended, much to our surprise, deep in the water. Stalagmites also rose up in pinnacles and fringes through the water, which was so exquisitely still and clear that it was something difficult to tell where the solid marble tracery ended and its reflected image began. In this cave, which is a considerable distance from the sea, there is a slight change of level with the tide, sufficient to keep the water perfectly pure. The mouth of the cave is overgrown with foliage, and every tree is draped and festooned with the fragrant *Jasminum gracile*, mingled not unfrequently with the "poison ivy" (*Rhus toxicodendron*). The Bermudians, especially the dark people, have a most exaggerated horror of this bush. They imagine that if one touch it or rub against it, he becomes feverish, and is covered with an eruption. This is no doubt entirely mythical. The plant is very poisonous, but the perfume of the flower is rather agree-