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Lutay Caverns.

CONV. 1855



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COMING South from New York or Philadelphia, the Royal Blue Line of the B. & O., via Baltimore and Washington will hand you over to the Norfolk & Western system at Shenandoah Junction, and right royal time they do make; should you prefer another route, why board the Flying Dutchman of Old Pency, "the Pride of the East," and "presto change" there you are at Hagerstown via Harrisburg.

Once in the arms of our Norfolk & Western, fling dull care away, for you are on a railway whose first care is the comfort of its patrons; in due time you arrive at the mountain village of Luray, and then your first care should be to get to the Hotel Laurance. Ask for its 'Bus, get in, and it will take you to a restful and comfortable home, from whence you can visit the Caverns at your leisure.

Concert of action on the part of the Caverns Company and of the Hotel Laurance is positive assurance of well appointed service from arrival to departure of visitors.

For further information, address J. KEMP BARTLETT JR., Secretary and Treasurer Luray Caverns Company, corner St. Paul and Baltimore Streets, Baltimore, Md., or LEWIS ZERKEL, Superintendent, Luray, Va., or,

H. B. MIMS,
Owner and Proprietor of Hotel Laurance,
Luray, Page Co., Virginia

How to

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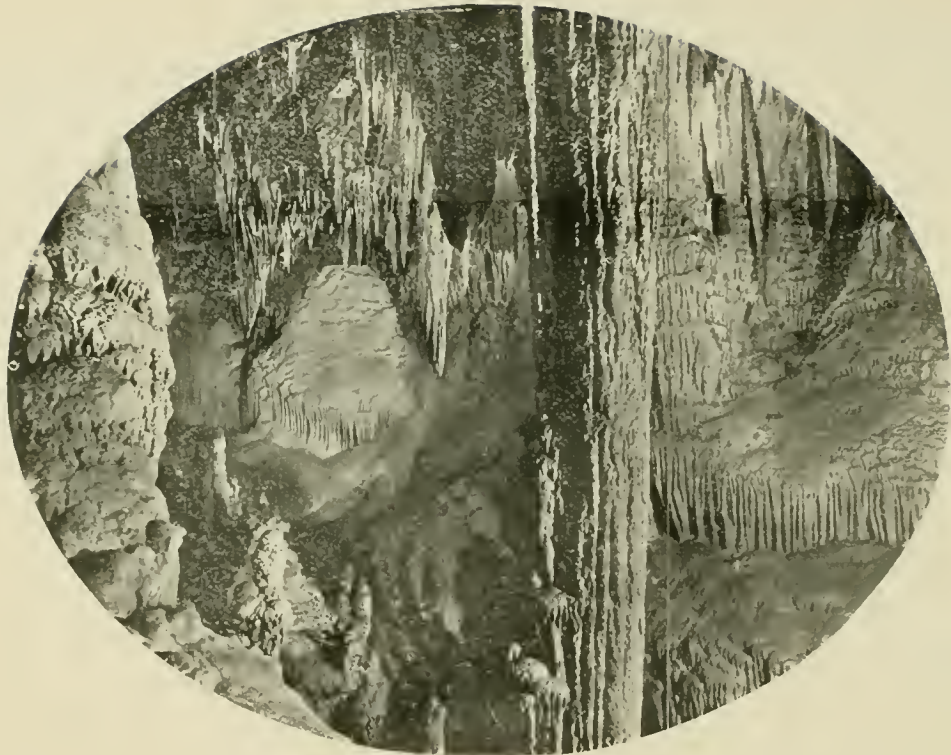
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INTRODUCTION.

There are few intelligent persons nowadays but have heard of the Seven Wonders of the World, but few there are able to name them. Here they are: 1st, The Pyramids of Egypt. 2d, The Temple of Diana at Ephesus. 3d, The Mausoleum of Artemisia. 4th, The Walls and Hanging Gardens of Babylon, built by Queen Semiramis. 5th, The Colossus of Rhodes. 6th, The Statue of Olympius Jupiter. 7th, The Watch Tower of Alexandria. See *New York Ledger*, May, 1892.

The relentless hand of time has not spared these ancient works of man, and however grand they may have been in their day, to-day they are nothing but a dream—a tale that is told.

In Virginia, and who has not heard of Virginia? In the bosom of Virginia has been discovered Caverns that may justly claim to be the Eighth Wonder of the World. Come, come to Luray, and see for yourself, and as you gaze at the work of the Great Architect, you involuntarily exclaim, "What wonders hath God wrought!"

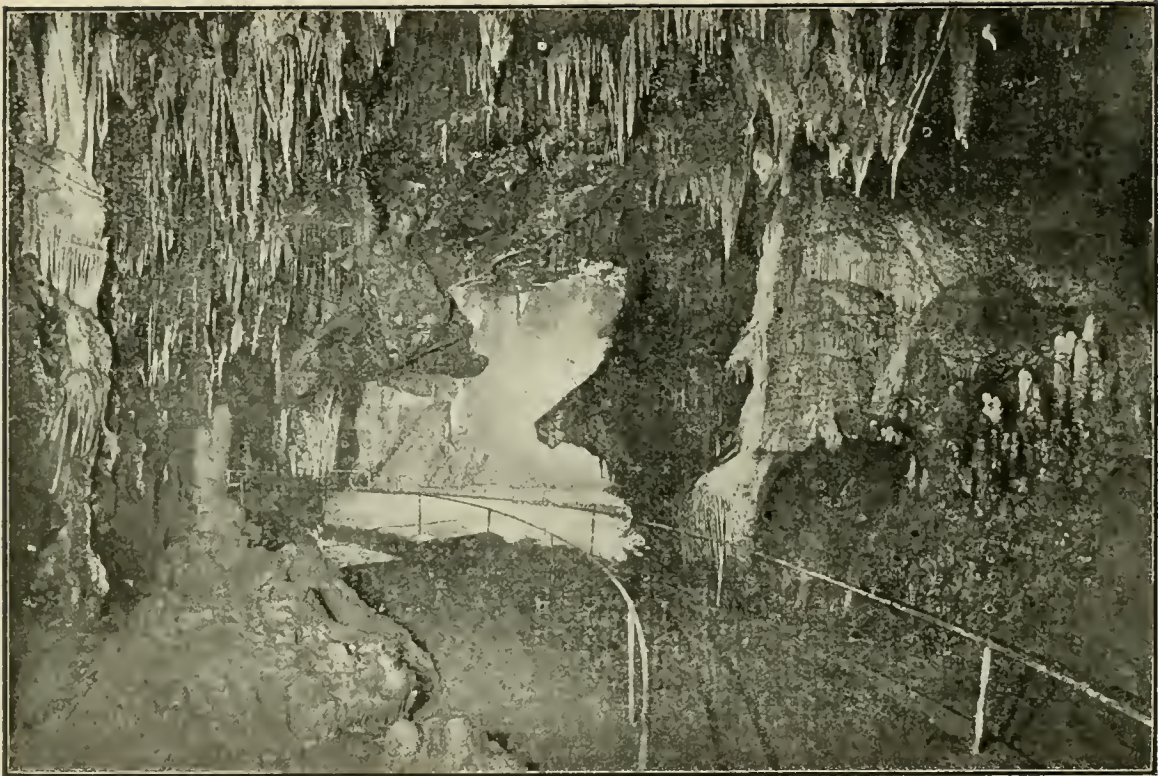


BRANDS CASCADE.

THE LURAY CAVERNS.

THE LURAY CAVERNS are situated in Page county, Virginia, about three hundred and fifty miles from New York City, and about one hundred and ten miles from Washington, D. C. The full extent of its subterranean depths was not at first known, and later explorations have developed hidden treasures which were not dreamed of by the discoverers. About a mile and a quarter west of Luray, near the New Market pike, is a conical hill, long known as Cave Hill from the existence of a cave* near its summit. At its base is a large depression filled with water. Along its sides, here and there, are sink-holes, marked with a growth of briars and weeds, known to vagrant boys as the haunts of rabbits. Their more important significance was not understood, however, until after the arrival in April, 1878, of Mr. B. P. Stebbins, a photographer of Easton, Md., who induced several of the townspeople to join him in the search for an undiscovered cave which, from the surface indications, he felt sure must exist in the neighborhood. With his companions in this memorable hunt he prospected about the country, digging here and there at promising localities, but without success, until, at length, on the 13th of August, 1878, they examined a depression on the hillside, about forty

*Discovered in 1795 by Ruffner, a famous hunter and pioneer, who was afterwards killed in combat with the Indians. On May 17th, 1825, new discoveries were made by a party of fifteen gentlemen from Luray, who penetrated a distance of half a mile. Reaching, it has been inferred from their description, Hades and other portions of the "new cave" of Stebbins and Campbell.



HANGING ROCK.

feet in diameter by ten feet in depth, filled with loose stones and brush, and grown up with weeds. Removing these obstructions with considerable labor, they found an opening from which a current of air was escaping. The opening was further enlarged: Mr. A. J. Campbell was lowered by means of a rope, and reaching the bottom, candle in hand, peered about him. He found himself in a narrow rift about fifteen feet long by five feet wide, with no apparent outlet. Closer examination disclosed a hole through which with some difficulty the discoverer of the Caverns passed into the large open space now known as Entrance Hall. Having abandoned the rope which connected him with his companions, he for some time contemplated with rapt interest the strange scene presented to his eyes, until (the rest of the party becoming alarmed at his absence) his nephew, William B. Campbell, followed in search of him. The importance of their discovery was appreciated, and at night the party returned with candles and explored Stebbins Avenue, Entrance Hall, and Entrance Avenue as far as Muddy Lake, since drained and replaced by a dry cement walk. The lake—then a considerable body of water—stopped them, and of the largest and grandest part of the cave they remained in ignorance until, on a venture, they had purchased the land under which it lay.

Soon after its discovery the tract of land overlying the cave, and containing twenty-eight and one-half acres was sold by order of the county court at auction, to close up a bankrupt estate, and Messrs. Stebbins, Campbell & Co. became the purchasers. The price paid was double what the land had brought at a previous sale. It was considered by persons not in the secret a bad bargain, as the soil is light, consisting of a thin clay strewn with fragments of quartz, while the hillside is disfigured with sink-holes and masses of lower silurian limestone projecting in horizontal strata from the surface.

A few days later, however, the town was electrified by the announcement of the discovery



TITANIA'S VAIL.

of a wonderful cave. The commotion was immense, and when the nature of the property with which they had parted became known, relatives of the original owners instituted suit for its recovery. The decision of the local court was in favor of the purchasers, but the case was carried to the State Court of Appeals, and was there, in the spring of 1881, decided in favor of the plaintiffs. It had scarcely been decided when the Luray Cave and Hotel Company, related in interest to the Shenandoah Valley Railroad Company (now the Norfolk and Wester R. R. Company) purchased the cave. Other bodies of land adjoining have since been added to the original tract until property exceeding the whole area of the cave, and several times the extent of the original "cave tract," now belongs to the present owners.

Luray is a good central point from which to visit the numerous battlefields of the Valley and Piedmont region of Virginia. Within a few miles are Kernstown, Front Royal, Winchester, Strasburg, New Market, Cedar Creek, Cross Keys, and Port Republic. Charlestown, the scene of John Brown's trial and execution, is in easy reach.

Luray is within easy reach of Rawley, Capon, and Jordan Sulphur Springs, and is on the direct line from northern cities to the famous Greenbrier, White Sulphur, Old Sweet, Red Sweet, Warm Springs, and other prominent Virginia watering places, and the wonderful Natural Bridge of Virginia.

Since its opening, the cave has been visited by many thousands of persons from all parts of the world, many of them scientist and foreign tourists acquainted with the caves of this and other countries. The records show that 1,468 visitors have entered the cave in one day. The general verdict is that the Luray Cave excels all others in combined extent, variety, scientific interest, and beauty of its calcite formations. The Mammoth and Wyandotte Caves are indeed larger, but their walls are almost bare. Neighboring caves to that of Luray are ad-



EMPRESS COLUMN.

mitedly inferior in the freshness, extent, and beauty of cave scenery, the richness, variety, and abundance of ornamentation to which the Luray Caverns owe their pre-eminence, and in extent, as well as ease of access. The Adelsburg Cave, in Austria, near Triete, is the only cave in the world that approaches Luray in these respects. For the latter it may be claimed that it is the most beautiful known.

“Comparing this great natural curiosity with others of the same class,” says the report of a party sent out from the Smithsonian Institution, “it is safe to say there is probably no other cave in the world more completely and profusely decorated with stalactitic and stalagmitic ornamentation than that of Luray.”

“The Century” magazine of January, 1892, speaks “of the ornamental formations of crystalline rock, which render this cave without a peer in the world, perhaps, for the startling beauty and astonishing variety of its interior.”

So much for a short history of the discovery and exploration of the Cavern; we now proceed to explore it for ourselves. On entering the Cave House we were conducted to a door at the head of a flight of 52 stairs, when we were halted until our party was ready, then under instructions from the guide, we descended, and at the bottom we found ourselves in a large chamber described as Entrance Hall, in the centre of which stands the beautiful Washington Column, proudly rearing its head to the ceiling, and mingling with scores of brilliant stalactites 30 feet above the floor; after a few introductory remarks from the guide, who explains that the whole formation of the Cave is composed of what is known as Carbonate of Lime, and is caused by water being charged with carbonate acid and carrying a heavy solution of lime, which, after percolating through the rocks and striking the air, the water evaporates and deposits the solid matter on the ceiling, walls and floors, thereby causing the Stalactites



SIDE VIEW OF BALL ROOM.

toform from the ceiling, Stalagmites to grow up from the floor, and Helictites to grow out from the sides. With this little explanation we press on and the Vegetable Garden, a spot covered with curious formation resembling cauliflower, then we descended further and come to a semi-circular room with a gallery running around it, reminding one strongly of the Amphitheatre, after which it is named; then we pass on and go under a miniature Natural Bridge (which has a striking resemblance to its wonderful namesake) and ascend a few steps and stop at Fish Market, when, after trying to guess what kind of fish the formation resembles most, the guides laughingly informs us that they are Rock Fish; we again ascend a few steps, and pass under a low hood arch of solid rock, extending over 500 feet from side to side, without any visible support whatever, and is know as Elfin Ramble; then descend into a gigantic ravine known as Pluto's Chasm, which is 75 feet deep and 500 long; after reaching the bottom we view some surpassingly beautiful stalactitic formation in the shape of drapery, which hangs in wonderful and graceful folds, and is, with the exception of The Saracens Tent, the most beautiful formation of its kind in the Caverns; while retracing our steps we are startled to hear the deep intonation of a bass drum, which we find is caused by the guide beating on a piece of stone drapery, at length we came to the beautiful little Crystal Spring, with its ceiling studded with minute stalactites, and its basin lined with crystals, whence its name; after taking a sip of its water we pass on and descend into the skeleton gorge, at the bottom of which are to be found several human bones said to be those of an Indian boy; then we ascend and pass under the Swiss Chalet, a beautiful overhanging roof like formation and come to The Imperial Spring in a cosy little nook studded with stalactites, and though it seems very shallow, the water is seven feet deep; we then catch a glimpse of Brand's Cascade, a beautiful torrent-like formation plunging down the rocks, and soon find ourselves at the head of Pluto's



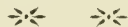
ORGAN IN CATHEDRAL HALL.

Chasm, guarded by Proserpine's Pillar, and the ghostly Spectre Column, gleaming in the darkness of the Chasm; we pass on and stoop under the Tall Man's Misery, and suddenly come upon the beautiful and graceful Titian's Veil, in wonderful folds of snowy whiteness, and then turn to the right and find the Lost Blanket, with its graceful folds and beautiful coloring, looking as if somebody had hung a real blanket on a peg and it had become dripping wet with water; upon turning around we get another distant view of the beautiful Titania's Veil, and pass on till we come to the Magnificent Empress Column, standing out boldly in all its gleaming whiteness, and just to the right we see perched upon the wall the lifelike Madonna and Child, while to the left is the Hawes's Column, named after Prof. Hawes, of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C., who was one of the first scientific men to visit the Caverns; then we go a little further and glance up to the ceiling and see a very beautiful piece of white drapery, called Helen's Shawl, after the famous Helen of Troy; as we journey further we see the Leaning Tower and come to the grandest and most sublimely beautiful piece of drapery formation in the world, and is known as the Saracen's Tent in all its Oriental splendor, with a beautiful translucent scarf hanging inside as if the owner had carelessly hung it there for inspection; we then pass on through Diana's Bath, and into the Throne Room, with its throne in all its regal splendor, and pass into The Cathedral, where we listen to the guide playing on its wonderful organ and chimes, and view the gigantic Fallen Column, which measures 10 feet in diameter and 30 feet in circumference. Scientists claim that it fell over 4,000 years ago, and base their calculations on another gigantic column, of about the same size, that has formed on the end of it since it fell; we also view from this point the Angel's Wing, a beautiful white wing-like formation about 15 feet high; then we pass on by the tower of Babel, with its mixed up tiers, and come to the entrance of Giant's Hall, where the beautiful Sultana and

Columns, and thousands of other stalactites and stalagmites make a scene indescribably sublimely grand; we now descend into Giant's Hall and pass the Giant's Staff and magnificent drapery on the way, and find ourselves on the lowest level in the Cave, the floor being 265 feet below the surface and the ceiling about 80 feet from the floor; this is the largest in the Caverns, and in the centre we find the gigantic and beautiful Double Column, it is formed by the junction of an immense stalactite from the ceiling and a stalagmite of equal proportions from the floor, which gives a magnificent effect. We then pass on to the Grand Ball-Room, whose broad expanse of ceiling is studded with the most beautiful stalactite formation. There have been eight couples married in this room; stepping to one side, we find a faint little Ladies' Riding Whip, a long slender stalactite with a knob on the end forming a handle; we then pass on and view the Coral Spring, and ascend into Miller's Hall and Collins's Hall, the latter named after Prof. Jerome J. Collins of the ill-fated Jeannette Polar Expedition, both of which rooms are considered the finest specimens of small stalactitic formation in the Caverns, their ceiling being studded with myriads of them. We then retrace our steps to the Grand Ball-Room, when the guide informs us that we have reached the end of the Luray Caverns, and will now retrace our steps toward the entrance, passing on the way through the Grand Canyon of Pluto's Chasm, with another glimpse of the ghostly Spectre Column, and up and on to the Crystal Spring, Fish Market, under the Natural Bridge by the Amphitheatre, Vegetable Garden, Washington Column, and up the long flight of steps out into the open air, with a feeling of thanksgiving that we had been permitted to see such an indescribably beautiful and wonderfully sublime spectacle, and we involuntarily exclaim, "What wonders hath God wrought;" and as words fail to describe this wonder, all we can tell our friends is to go and see for yourself.

BEFORE AND AFTER ——— **STOP AT** ———
VISITING
THE CAVERNS, The Hotel Laurance

IF you want a nice, comfortable resting place, where you can get a good wholesome meal, and a cleanly and comfortable room, which together with **ELECTRIC BELLS, HOT AND COLD BATHS, WELL HEATED AND VENTILATED ROOMS,** and the most **IMPROVED SANITARY PLUMBING,** combined to make our service all that is to be desired.



The Hotel Laurance

Is an all-the-year-round Hotel, located on the highest point in town, and nearest to the Caverns. Since the burning of the famous Luray Inn, November, 1891 (not yet rebuilt), the Laurance has been recognized by the travelling public as the leading house in town; it is very comfortable and home like and cheerful, and just the place for Tourists en route to rest over night. Visitors stopping at The Laurance make no mistake.

A **GOOD LIVERY** is connected with the House, and our facilities for transferring visitors to and from the Caverns are equal to any emergency. Concert of action on part of the Caverns Company and of the Laurance is positive assurance of efficient service from arrival to departure of visitors. The Laurance is the official League Hotel of the L. A. W. Association, has been running twenty years, and stands upon its merits. So stop at The Laurance, and you will be pleased. Rates, \$2.00 per day.

H. B. MIMS, Manager.



Hours of Admission and Charges Therefor.

At 8 A. M., with Electric Light, \$1.00 each person.

After 6 P. M., without electric, " 1.50 each person.

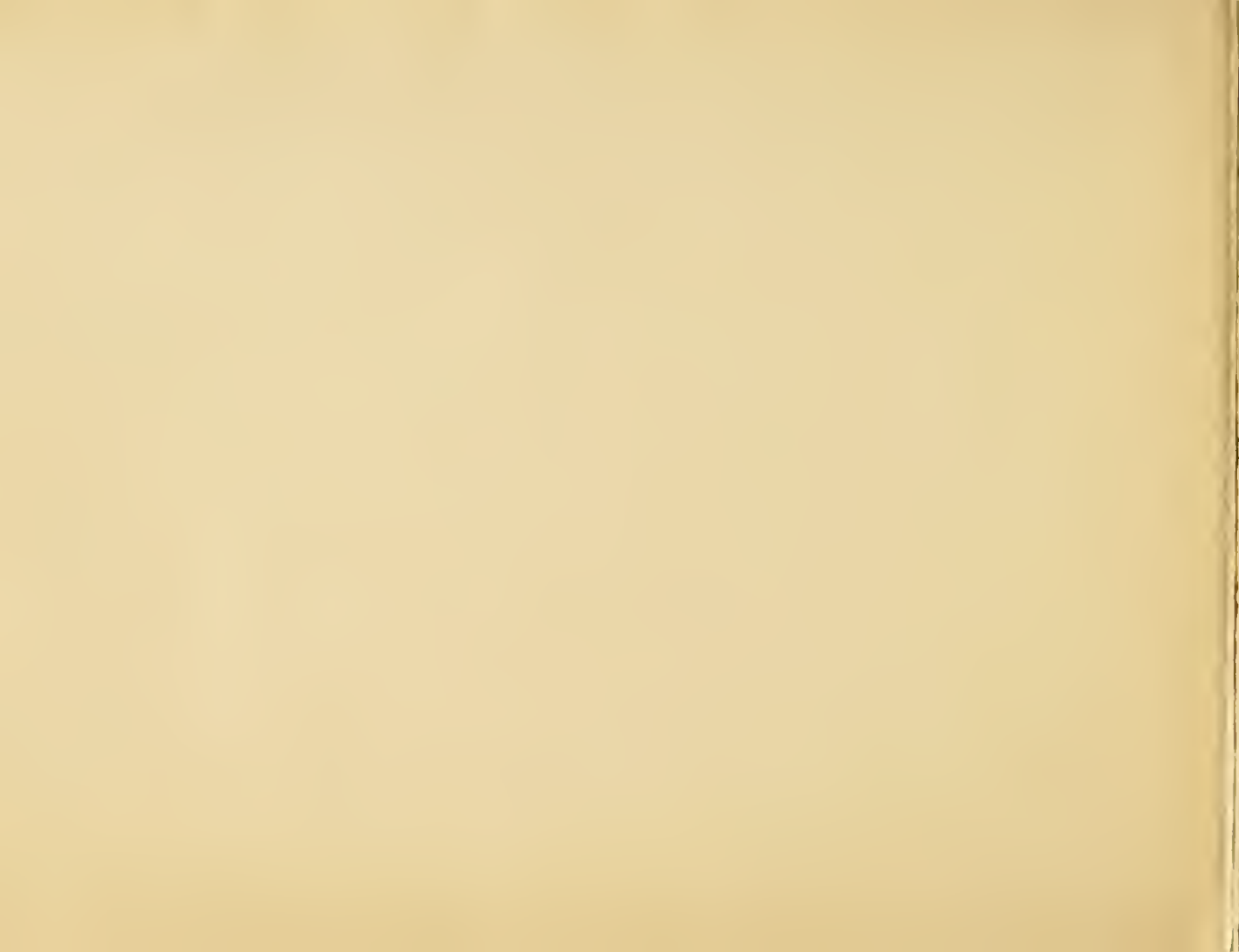
Extra charges for electric lights on parties of less than
six after 6 P. M., as follows :

One person,	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$2.00
Two persons, each,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.00
Three persons, each,	-	-	-	-	-	-	.75
Four persons, each,	-	-	-	-	-	-	.50
Five persons, each,	-	-	-	-	-	-	.25

Parties of six or more are furnished electric light after 6
P. M., they having paid the admission
fee of \$1.50 each.

These charges include the services of guides, are fixed
by the Company, and no deviation from
them is allowed.





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