

MYSTERY OF WONDER CAVE IS TO BE SOLVED

Human Built Wall In Subterranean Passage Is to Be Blasted Out and Explorations Made.

WHAT LIES BEYOND IS QUESTION

WHAT mystery lies back of a huge wall—man-made—encountered in the labyrinthian depths of the Cave of the Quebrantahuesos, on the Wetmore road, six miles from San Antonio? Are there piles of treasure stowed there by the warrior chieftain of the Gente del Camino who, black-visaged and fierce, the prototype on land of the corsairs that ravaged the Spanish main, held up peaceful travelers and despoiled them? Or is there a heap of bones?

Mayhap the secret residence of the robber baron has been discovered. Possibly chests of precious stones, diamonds, gold, pieces of eight are there, buried for three centuries from the light of day. Possibly "El Diablo," master of the Quebrantahuesos, piled his valuables in a spot known to be safe then.

At any rate, the Twentieth century is to look in upon the Sixteenth; the dividing wall of centuries is to be torn down; pick and shovel and dynamite blast are to be utilized to bring to light the secret of the cave. Untouched since its construction, the wall is to be levelled and a discovery made. What the discovery will be no man now can say.

Emil Gottschalk Jr., a youth with an explorative turn of mind, winding the subterranean depths of the cave, ran up against this blank wall. It shut off apparently a chamber of great size. Stone, earth, and what appears to be crude cement effectually block up a passage that is alive with mystery. What lies beyond? Emil Gottschalk, with a party, is preparing an expedition with picks and shovels. A mile or more under earth they will burrow, and then attack the wall. Behind it may lie wealth or disillusionment.

Nature's Wonder Work.

The Cave of the Quebrantahuesos is located on land belonging to George Saur on the left of the Wetmore road.

going out. A huge hole, like a volcano's crater, is all that is distinguishable from the outside. Some of its peculiarities, as well as a legendary history, was given publicity in The Light a year ago. Since then more explorations have been made and greater finds have been brought to light.

Not least of these is the apparent certain establishing of the theory that at one time the cave was the abode of the robbers, highwaymen and pillagers that infested the pueblo of San Antonio de Bexar, then a dot on the Texas prairie that came under the surveillance of the viceroys of his imperial majesty, the king of Spain. History records that these bold road-robbers held up any and caught, priest or publican, and took what they wished. History likewise declares that pursuit by the troops from San Antonio appeared hopeless, as the robbers disappeared. They were known throughout this section of the country, and their fame extended to Mexico City, as the Quebrantahuesos,

meaning the vultures or the bone-breakers.

Explorations within the last two months, conducted by Mr. Saur and his son, have shown that the ramifications of the cave extend for miles, even under the corporate limits of San Antonio. A mile and a half of cordage has been let out by parties and the end not then found. Wings extend in every direction, branching off like passageways or catacombs built by nature. Huge caverns, church-like in proportions, are met with, the flicker of the candle failing to illumine the ceiling. Chasms are passed, down which a lighted candle may be lowered for several hundred yards, with no bottom; fissures appear through which one may squeeze, to find himself in other caves and passages.

Solid Wall Discovered.

It was one one of these trips that the walled-in cave was discovered. It shuts off a branch cavern which, to judge by the size of the wall, must be a chamber of large proportions. That it is human made can not be gainsaid, as the evidence of human workmanship exist in quantities. Even the crumbling mortar points indisputably to human origin. As yet no one has had the tenacity to force through this wall, but now it is to be done.

Theories of all sorts have been advanced. Some believe that the secret store house of "El Diablo" will be found. Others incline to the belief that the bones of him and his men—hemmed in at last in a final struggle with the imperial troops—lie there bleached, with decayed finery and possessions lying about. Yet others are fearful that the wall was built by the Quebrantahuesos to shut off a water supply that threatened to imperil the lives of all. Whether, when the wall is pierced, there will gush forth a tide of water, is one horn of what may be a dilemma when Emil Gottschalk and his party blast apart the solid wall and find what they seek.

George Saur, the owner of the cave, has planned to develop the guano deposits which are found in great quantities in the cave. He has had a force of men clearing the entrance and arranging for more free ingress and egress. Land has been bought nearby and the guano will become a great commercial asset, as it is known to be the greatest fertilizer that has yet been found. Deposits were not expected to be found in this section of the country, but the Cave of the Quebrantahuesos has yielded a denial because absolutely tons upon tons are therein, waiting to be brought out.

And with all this, there is not the sign of life there, except for a few harmless eyeless crickets and strange bugs and insects. They have been handled and do not bite or sting. The ray from a candle, held close by, evidently wounds them deeply for they go through the same antics that a top-of-the-ground insect does when pricked with a pin. The light, itself, must contain something harmful to these insects, born and reared hundreds of feet in the earth and never having seen daylight in their existence.

But the great curiosity of all is the thing, the mystery, which lies back of the wall. This promises to remain a secret but little longer. The mystery of the cave will be a mystery no longer.