

bonic acid from the atmosphere through which it descends, and a little more from the plants on which it falls. When it reaches the surface of the hill it percolates through fissures in the rock, dissolving the limestone in its descent, and when the roof of the cavern is reached some of the dissolved matter adheres to it in the form of icicles, whilst the remainder falls to the ground and forms a floor. Where the drip from the roof is great, the floor rises like a hillock; where it is slight, the floor sinks. It is characteristic of the English people that wherever they go they deface objects of interest with their names, or at least with their initials. The pyramids of Egypt, the catacombs of Rome, and the temples of India are alike disfigured by the names of Smith, Brown and Robinson. It is not surprising that the floor of Kent's Cavern has been treated in a similar manner. Not only names but dates are to be found carved on the stalagmite with a chisel. Some of the dates are hundreds of years old, and are covered with coatings of stalagmite of various thicknesses. By measuring the thickness of these coatings one can ascertain the rate at which the floor is being formed. One inscription in particular was found at a spot where the drip from the roof was greatest, and where, therefore, the floor was being formed most rapidly. The coating of stalagmite over this inscription, which bore a date, was carefully measured, and the rate of the formation thus ascertained. The total thickness of the floor was measured next, and it was then perceived that the latter could not have been formed in less than one million years. Yet underneath this floor, implements made by the hands of man have been discovered. For further information on this subject the reader is referred to the writings of William Pengelly on the Cave Men of Devonshire. Mr. Pengelly superintended excavations in, and paid daily visits to, Kent's Cavern for about twenty years.

It is very clear that if men lived in Devonshire a million years ago, the Mosaic account of man's origin cannot be correct. Reliable information concerning that origin must be sought elsewhere, and we will now proceed to seek it.

ORIGIN OF LIFE

For many years, Doctor Otto von Schron, Professor of Pathological Anatomy in the University of Naples, has been making investigations into the propagation and development of bacilli. In the course of his experiments he discovered that living matter, largely albuminous in character, takes the crystalline form, and, while still living and crystalline, obeys so many of the laws, and manifests so many of the properties of inorganic crystallisation, as to leave no doubt whatever of its crystalline character. The conclusion he draws from this is that crystallisation in its terrestrial origin is a manifestation of the force called life force.

There are probably few persons who have not observed what are called frost-ferns on their window panes in the winter mornings. Many of these objects bear but a slight resemblance to ferns, but if a large number be examined some are sure to be found bearing an astonishing resemblance. The line of research here indicated may be followed up with great profit in the following manner.