

## Chapel in Salt Mine

The City of Wieliczka, Polish Austria, has been appropriately termed a city of salt, for there are the most wonderful salt mines in the world. So long ago as 1024 the mines were first worked, and for the last 860 years salt has been excavated, until at the present day the mines cover a vast area, in which are to be found underground streets and squares, with restaurants, ballrooms, chapels and a railway station, and over thirty miles of train lines, with trains.

The artificial illumination for this underground city is supplied by electric light, and when the rooms are illuminated the result is dazzling in its brilliancy. Turning out of one of the main passages, however, the gaiety and splendor are left behind, and in its place quietude and prayer reign supreme; for here is situated what might be justly termed the most remarkable place of worship in the world. The room, which is known as St. Antony's Chapel, is a marvelous and lasting testimony to the patient work and ingenuity of a miner.

In 1698 this unknown miner, unaided and persevering, commenced his self-imposed task of hewing out the chapel, every part of which is made from the solid salt.

Several times each year the priest of the district holds services in this underground chapel, and one service in particular is annually celebrated on July 3d with considerable pomp and earnest devotion. The priests, attired in full robes, descend the mines in state, and are accompanied by hundreds of pious people, who journey for miles from all parts of the country in order to take part in the service. A crowd of sightseers, too, attracted by ceremonies so unique in their surroundings, come especially on this day to view the mines and reverently listen.

The Queen's chapel, the second important one, also possesses a magnificent altar, which has been carved with expert skill in solid salt. On the side of the chapel, too, has been carved, with almost incredible art, a view of Bethlehem.