

Dells of Wisconsin: Black Hawk's Cave

These narrows in the Wisconsin River are situated in Adams County, about a mile and a half above the place where we are located, and are considerably noted for their wild scenery, and especially for their somewhat dangerous character in rafting through them. The perpendicular rocky banks are fifty or sixty feet high, and, for half a mile or more, the river is narrowed to about one-fourth its average width. In one place, the rocks on either side are only about fifty feet apart; and this place is spanned by a timber bridge, called "Dell Bridge." Near the west end of this bridge is an opening in the rocks, called "Black Hawk's Cave," because, it is said, Black Hawk once secreted himself there to avoid his pursuers. We lately visited this cave, approaching it from the ice on the river. We walked in, upon the ice, about twenty feet; then climbed a rather dangerous precipice, some thirty feet high, from which point one may wind around and upwards, and emerge at the top of the bank; but we chose to take our back track rather than climb higher. In the spring, when the river is high, we understand the water rushes through the Dells with great force; and as the river is quite crooked, raftsmen find it very exciting, as well as rather dangerous passing through. Persons from the vicinity frequently resort there during the rafting seasons to see the rafts pass through, and we have been informed that sometimes as many as a hundred rafts pass there in a single day. It is thought that when the dam at this place shall be completed, the water will set back so as to considerably check the force of the current at the Dells, and render rafting through them comparatively safe.