

range. Notwithstanding the havoc made in its flocks for the supply of the markets, it affects the neighborhood of towns, and is observed to feed much on the fruit of the sour-gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), and on poke berries (*Phytolacca decandra*.) Sometimes it disappears from a district for a week or two, and returns again in larger flocks than before. In March it begins to sing, and pairs early in April. Many pairs breed in the United States, but great numbers spread themselves over every part of the fur countries, extending almost to the northern extremity of the continent. Its nests were observed by the expedition as high as the sixty-seventh parallel of latitude; and, from the reports of various travellers, it is known to visit the north-west coast of America. It arrives in the Missouri, (in lat. 41 1-2,) from the eastward, on the 11th of April, and in the course of its northerly movement, reaches Severn river in Hudson's bay, about a fortnight later. Its first appearance at Carlton House, lat. 53, in the year 1827, was on the 22d of April. In the same season it reached Fort Chipewyan, in latitude 58 3-4, on the 7th of May, and Fort Franklin, in latitude 63, on the 20th of that month. Those that build their nests in the fifty-fourth parallel of latitude, begin to hatch in the end of May; but 11 degrees farther to the north, that event is deferred till the 11th of June. The snow even then partially covers the ground, but there are, in those high latitudes, abundance of the berries of the *Vaccinium uliginosum*, and *Vitis idæa*, *Arbutus alpina*, *Empetrum nigrum*, and of some other plants, which, after having been frozen up all the winter, are exposed, on the first melting of the snow, full of juice, and in high flavor. Shortly afterwards, when the callow young require food, the parents obtain abundance of grubs.

"The Red-breasted thrush builds its nest on the branch of spruce-fir tree, generally above five or six feet from the ground, taking no particular pains to conceal it, and frequently selecting a tree in the immediate vicinity of a house. Its nest is formed and lined with a compact coating of dung and clay. The male and female labour in concert in constructing it; and when the young are hatched, they jointly undertake the task of feeding them. The eggs, five in number, are about fourteen lines long, and have a bluish green colour. Those of the common thrush. The male is one of the loudest and most assiduous of the songsters that frequent the fur countries, beginning his chaunt immediately on his arrival. His notes resemble those of the common thrush, but are not so loud. Within the Arctic circle the woods are silent in the bright light of noon-day, but towards midnight, when the sun travels near the horizon, and the shades of the forest are lengthened, the concert commences, and continues till six or seven in the morning. Even in these remote regions the mistake of those naturalists who have asserted that

the feathered tribes of America are void of harmony, might be fully disproved. Indeed, the transition is so sudden from the perfect repose, the death-like silence of an arctic winter, to the animated bustle of summer; the trees spread their foliage with such magical rapidity, and every succeeding morning opens with such agreeable accessions of feathered songsters to swell the chorus—their plumage as gay and unimpaird as when they enlivened the deep-green forests of tropical climes, and the return of a northern spring excites in the mind a deep feeling of the beauties of the season, a sense of the bounty and providence of the Supreme Being, which is chiefly purchased by the tedium of nine months of winter. The most verdant lawns and cultivated glades of Europe, the most beautiful productions of art, failed in producing that exhilaration and joyous buoyancy of mind which we have experienced in treading the wilds of arctic America, when their snowy covering have been just replaced by an infant but vigorous vegetation. It is impossible for the traveller to refrain, at such moments, from joining his aspirations to the song which every creature around is pouring forth to the great Creator."

THE BURNING SPRING.

DEAR SIR—In the prosecution of my Sunday School Agency, I yesterday reached this place, in the immediate vicinity of which is the Burning Spring, and truly it is a curiosity. On approaching it I heard it boiling with a noise similar to that of a fifty gallon kettle over a hot fire. It is situated near the shore of a small creek, which winds its way through a deep valley between the mountains, and near the road side. There is a hole in the ground two or three feet deep, and about the same diameter, which after the rain, is filled to the top with water, that is kept perpetually and briskly boiling by the gas which issued from a narrow space between two rocks at the bottom. The water is always kept muddy, but never runs over, except by an extra quantity of rain.

After viewing it for a few minutes, a lighted taper was applied to the ascending gas, and instantly the whole surface of the water was covered with a bluish red flame, three feet high, emitting a smell similar to that of burning alcohol, and with an intense heat. Thus it continued to burn for one hour, while I remained, and I left it on fire.

This blaze, on a dark night, I am informed, illumines the whole valley and circumjacent hills, and never goes out, except by the effort of man, or the descending shower.

If nothing interferes to extinguish the flame, it continues to burn, the water becomes heated, and finally evaporates, when the issuing gas, burning with more intense heat, consumes whatever combustible substance may have been thrown into the water; and even the collected mud at the side of the hole is pulverized with heat, as at the mouth of a furnace.

Were this gas suitably confined and di-

rected, I have no doubt it might be used to some valuable purpose, either to drive a steam engine or illumine a city; but no use is made of it, nor does the owner of the land seem to regard it with interest or as a curiosity.

Whence this gas, or whatever produces it, I leave to the conjectures and experiments of the learned, being confident it is the most singular phenomenon I have ever seen.—*S. S. Journal.*

THE CASSET.

Devoted to Select Tales, Sketches from Biography, Natural and Civil History, Poetry, Anecdotes, the Arts, Essays, and Interesting Miscellanea.

HAMILTON, SEPT' 29, 1832.

We have again to crave the indulgence of our readers for the irregular appearance of this paper, in consequence of our own continued bad health, and the accidental illness of others from whom we expected assistance, but trust we shall be more regular for the future, in the mean time we hope that the false and malicious reports of evil minded persons who endeavored to take advantage of our illness, will be treated with that contempt which they deserve. We neither expect nor intend that this paper shall stop, but should such an event take place, we will ourselves make it known to our subscribers, therefore it will be quite unnecessary for those who have made themselves so busy about it to do so any more, or for our subscribers to listen to their base misrepresentations.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.—Having suffered under a tedious illness which prevented us from attending to business or collecting our accounts, we shall feel particularly obliged if those who have not yet made a payment, will remit or pay in either half a year or a years subscription on receipt hereof. We shall also feel grateful to those who have paid for half a year, if they will remit another half years subscription as early as convenient. Eight numbers will complete the year. Though the sums due individually to this establishment are very small, they amount to a large sum in the whole, such as would set us far above the reach of those malignant traducers who have endeavored to injure us when oppressed by the visitation of disease.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We have a number of communications upon our file, but being unable to attend to their correction, have deferred them until another opportunity occurs for laying them before the public.

LADIES BOOK.—We have received another number of the Ladies Book, which as usual abounds with productions of superior excellence both in prose and verse, from which we shall give copious selections in our next.