agement of expeditions to different parts of this continent for the collection of specimens of Natural History, and for the observation of physical phenomena. The report recently distributed, which covers the proceedings of the Institution for the year 1861, contains some interesting information respecting the progress of several explorations. I refer the reader to the Journal for explorations made in the peninsula of California; but the recent Northern contribu-tions to Natural Science are of such interest, that the lover of know-ledge will appreciate them. "Explorations of the Hudson's Bay by Mr. Kennicott." "At the date of the last advices from Mr. Ken "At the date of the last advices from Mr. Kennicott, when the Smithsonian Report for 1860 was presented, he was at Fort Resolution, on Slave Lake, where he spent the preceding spring and summer, principally in collecting eggs of birds,-He left Fort Resolution in August, 1860, and returned to Fort Simpson and proceeded down the Mackenzie to Peel's River. From Peel's River he crossed the Rocky Mountains to La Pierre's house, occupying four days in the transit, and arriving Sept. 18th; left the next day for Yukon, at the junction of the Porcupine or Rat River and the Yukon, at the junction of the rotcupile of hat longitude 146°. Fort Yukon, the terminus of his journey, was reached on the 28th of Sept., 1860."

At Fort Anderson river (a stream between the Mackenzie and Copper Mine rivers) and in the barren grounds close to the Arctic Ocean.— At Fort Anderson he expected to collect largely of the skins and eggs of birds, rare mammals, &c. * * * * * * * * * *

have largely extended their important contributions to science, (referred to in the Report) of the highest value, which taken in connection with what Mr. Kennicott the naturalist is doing, bid fair to make the Arctic natural history and physical geography of America as well known as that of the United States." "Pre-eminent among these valued colaborators of the institution

"Pre-eminent among these valued colaborators of the institution is Mr. Bernard R. Ross, Chief factor of the Mackenzie River dis trict. This gentleman's contribution consists of numbers of skins of birds and mammals, some of great variety, insects, &c., besides a very large series of specimens illustrating the manners and customs of the Esquimaux and various Indian tribes. Mr. Ross has also deposited some relics of Sir John Franklin, consisting of a gun used by him in his first expedition, and a sword belonging to the last one, and obtained from the Esquimaux. Mr. Ross is at present engaged in a series of investigations upon the tribes of the North, to be published whenever sufficiently complete, and illustrated by numerous photographic drawings."

The following gentlemen connected with the company have also contributed material of great value :--Mr. James Lockhart, Mr. W. Hardisty, Mr. J. S. Onion, Mr. John Reed, Mr. A. Taylor, Mr. C. P. Gaudet, Mr. Jas. Flett, Mr. A. Mackenzie, &c. "Second in magnitude only to those of Mr. Ross are the contri-

"Second in magnitude only to those of Mr. Ross are the contributions of Mr. Lawrence Clark, Jr., of Fort Rac, on Slave Lake, consisting of many mammals, nearly complete sets of water-fowl and other birds of the north side of the Lake, with the eggs of many of them, such as the black-throated diver, the trumpeter swan, dc. "Other contributions have been received from Mr. R. Campbell,

"Other contributions have been received from Mr. R. Campbell, of Arthabasca; Mr. James Mackenzie, of Moose Factory; Mr. Gladman, of Rupert House; Mr. James Anderson, of Mingan; Mr. George Barnston, of Lake Superior, and Mr. Connolly, of Rigalette. Mr. Mackenzie furnished a large box of birds of Hudson Bay, while from Mr. Barnston were received several collections of skins, and eggs of birds, new and rare mammals, insects, fish, &c., of Lake Superior."

"It may be proper to state in this connection that the labors of Mr. Kennicott have been facilitated in the highest degree by the liberality of the Hudson Bay Company, as exercised by the directors in London, the executive officers in Montreal (especially Mr. Edward Hopkins), in particular by Gov. Mactavish. In fact, without this aid, the expense of Mr. Kennicott's explorations would be far beyond what the Institution could afford, even with the assistance received from others. Whenever the rules of the Company would admit, no charge has been made for transportation of Mr. Kennicott and his supplies and collections, and he has been entertained as a guest wherever he has gone. No charge also was made on the collection sent from Moose Factory to London by the Comp. uy's ship, and in every possible way this time-honored company h s shown itself friendly and co-operating in the highest degree to the scientific objects of the Institution."

2. THE ORIGIN OF OIL SPRINGS.

The source of these vast supplies of oil has been much discussed, and there are still some points in their history which remain obscure.

We trace their remote origin to the great forests of antiquity, whose shrubs were trees, and whose trees were giants; we know their greatness by the casts of their mighty trunks, and the silhouettes of their huge leaves, which we find in our coal mines. Submerged and subjected to certain strange agencies, the vast, rank forest turned slowly into coal. Such a change involves a separation of carbon and hydrogen, sometimes as gas, sometimes as oil, or as Gravity would force the fluid to seek the lowest both combined. level it could find, through every crack and fissure, which accounts for its being found not only below but often remote from the coal Under other circumstances, the pressure of water from deposits. beneath, or the volatile nature of the gas which accompanies the oil, force it up into the highest attainable level, thus bringing it often into strata above the coal measures. Just how, or when, or why, these wonderful transitions took place, may never be definitely known ; for in the vast crucible beneath our feet, where fierce fires are always raging, each change is directed by the hand of an Almighty chemist, with faultless wisdom, and in ways often past finding out. -Merchants' Magazine.

3. MINUTE CURIOSITIES OF NATURE.

Among the papers published in costly style by the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, is one on the microscopic plants and aniinals which live on and in the human body. It describes quite a number of insects. The animal which produces the disease called itch, is illustrated by an engraving half an inch in diameter, which shows not only the ugly little fellow's body and legs, but his very toes, although the animal himself is entirely invisible to the naked eye. When Lieutenant Berryman was sounding the ocean, preparatory to laying the Atlantic telegraph, the quill at the end of the sounding line brought up mud, which on being dried, became a powder so fine that on rubbing it between the thumb and finger, it disappeared in the crevices of the skin. On placing this dust under the microscope, it was discovered to consist of millions of perfect shells, each of which had a living animal.

4. TROPICAL VEGETATION OF THE AMAZON.

The magical beauty of tropical vegetation reveals itself in all its glory to the traveller who steers his boat through the solitude of these aquatic mazes. Here the forest forms a canopy over his head; there it opens, allowing the sunshine to disclose the secrets of the wilderness ; while on either side the eye penetrates through beautiful vistas into the depths of the woods. Sometimes, on a higher spot of ground, a clump of trees forms an island worthy of Eden. A chaos of bush ropes and creepers flings its gay flowers over the forest, and fills the air with the sweetest odour. Numerous birds, partly rivalling in beauty of colour the passifloras and bignonias of these hanging gardens, animate the banks of the lagune, while gaudy macaws perch on the loftiest trees; and, as if to remind one that death is not banished from this scene of Paradise, a darkone that death is not banished from this scene of alligator rests, like robed vulture screeches through the woods, or an alligator rests, like work on the tranquil waters. Well a black log of wood or a sombre rock on the tranquil waters. he knows that food will not be wanting, for river tortoises and large fish are fond of retiring to these lagunes. If the Nile-so remarkable for its historical recollections, which carry us far back into the bygone ages-and the Thames, unparalleled by the greatness of a commerce which far eclipses that of ancient Carthage and Tyremay justly be called the rivers of the past and the present, the Amazon has equal claims to be called the stream of the future ; for a more splendid field nowhere lies open to the enterprise of man .-The Tropical World.

5. SOURCE OF THE NILE DISCOVERED.

The account furnished by the United States Vice-Consul at Zanzibar, Mr. Goodhue, renders it all but certain that the Nile has its principal source in Lake Nyanza. This sheet of water was first brought to European notice by Captain Speke, who accompanied Burton on his expedition into Eastern Africa. The Captain saw only its southern extremity; but from appearances and inquiries he was led to believe it to be about the size and shape of Lake Ontario. He expressed his belief at the time that in this sheet of water would be found the long sought source of the Nile, for the reasons that it did not discharge its waters towards the South; that they were exceedingly pure and transparent, as are those of the Nile, and that its elevation above the sea was such as to enable it to feed that mysterious river. It now appears that the outlet of Lake Nyanza is twelve miles north of the Equator, the stream flowing thence being named the Miverango, which is about a quarter of a mile in width