

anean pool or canal will be the result, according to the direction and configuration of the upper surface of the clay. This state of things will continue, till, by an increased supply, the water rises above the level of the basin, or channel, and overflowing, escapes, either through the porous strata, or by fissures in the solid rocks, to another level. If the course of the waters be subterranean, the softer beds are worn away, and chasms or caverns are thus formed, hence rivers and streams, of great extent, occur in many of our mines ; but if the water finds its way to the surface, a spring bursts forth. This is the nature of all springs, except those which arise from great depths, and probably originate from the condensation of steam, evolved through fissures by volcanic agency ; such are the thermal waters of many countries. Streams impregnated with the mineral substances contained in the strata through which they flow, are called mineral waters. Those in the tertiary strata near Epsom, contain sulphate of magnesia, whence the name of Epsom salt, given to this substance wherever it occurs. But strata which are pervious, frequently alternate with others which are not so ; or may form a basin, the area of which is partially filled with clay, through which water cannot pass : in such a case, it is obvious that the bed of sand beneath the clay, fed by the rain which descends on the uncovered margin of the basin, must form a reservoir, and the water gradually accumulate beneath the central plateau