

many miles in an east and west direction, is said by Major Mitchell to be a prolongation of the range which runs parallel to the coast. According to him, at the distance of one hundred miles inland, the range trends to the northward, and thence pursues a course to the northeast.

To the northward of the Liverpool range, plains of considerable extent spread over the country, and form the district of New England, which affords fine pasturage. These plains lie at an altitude of between two and three thousand feet, and from that circumstance enjoy a much cooler climate than Sydney, although five degrees nearer the equator.

The most remarkable part of New South Wales is the district of Illawarra, situated on the coast, about sixty miles to the south of Port Jackson. This is a narrow strip, that seems to be formed by the retreat of the sandstone cliffs from the sea, to a distance which varies from one to ten miles. The cliffs or mountains vary in height from one thousand to two thousand feet. This region is extremely fruitful; its forests are rich with a great variety of foliage, and of creeping plants which twine around the trees. The great size and number of the trees served to remind the gentlemen who visited it, of the vegetation of the tropical islands, luxuriant with tree-ferns, bananas, banyans, &c. This luxuriance is in part owing to a rich and light soil, composed of decomposed basalt and argillaceous sandstone, mixed with vegetable mould, but more to the peculiarity of its climate. The high cliffs which bound it to the west, keep off the scorching winds which reach other parts of the coast from that quarter, and the moisture of the sea-breeze intercepted by them, is condensed, falling in gentle showers. For this reason, it is not subject to the long and frequent droughts that occur in other parts of New South Wales.

These droughts are sometimes of such long continuance, that we at one time read of the whole country having been burnt up for want of rain, a famine threatened, and the sheep and cattle perishing in immense numbers.

These have been succeeded by long-continued rains, which have raised the rivers thirty or forty feet, flooded the whole country, deluged the towns and villages, and completely destroyed the crops. Such floods carry with them houses, barns, stacks of grain, &c., drown the cattle, and even the inhabitants are in some cases saved only by being taken from the tops of their houses in boats.

The year of our visit, 1839, added another instance to the list of disasters of the latter kind; and the published accounts state that twenty thousand sheep were lost in the valley of the Hawkesbury by