

the floods. Such evils indeed appear to be of frequent occurrence and the settler in New South Wales has to contend with the elements in an unusual degree.

Such disasters are equally injurious to the husbandman and the wool-grower; for the same cause that destroys the crops, also carries off the stock, so that it is only the large capitalist who can successfully struggle against or overcome such adverse circumstances. It is some recompense for this state of things, that one or two favourable years will completely repay all former losses; and it is due to the perseverance and industry of the inhabitants of New South Wales to say, that they have already, in spite of the difficulties they have had to encounter, made it one of the most flourishing colonies on the globe.

What these difficulties are, may be better understood by quoting some remarks of Major Mitchell, the Surveyor-General, who has had greater opportunities than any other person of examining the country, every accessible portion of which he has visited.

“Sandstone prevails so much more than trap, limestone, or granite, as to cover six-sevenths of the whole surface comprised within the boundaries of nineteen counties, from Yass Plains in the south, to the Liverpool range in the north. Wherever this happens to be the surface, little besides barren sand is found in the place of soil. Deciduous vegetation scarcely exists there; no turf is found, for the trees and shrubs being very inflammable, conflagrations take place so frequently and extensively in the woods during summer, as to leave very little vegetable matter to turn to earth.

“In the regions of sandstone, the territory is in short good for nothing, and is, besides, generally inaccessible; thus presenting a formidable obstruction to any communication between spots of a better description.”

The information obtained from other sources does not, however, sustain so very unfavourable a picture; it may, indeed, be true, when applied to the labours of husbandry alone, but there is reason to believe, on the other hand, that the excellence of the great staple of the country, its wool, is in a great measure to be ascribed to the short and sweet pasturage which these very sandstone districts afford. These lands produce, except during the prevalence of excessive droughts, a nutritious herbage, and form a dry healthy soil, on which sheep thrive particularly well, although it is said that one hundred acres of this description, of average quality, will not support more than five or six head of cattle.

In seasons of drought, the flocks and herds are driven into the interior. The year of our visit (1839) was accounted a wet one, and