

some parts of the sandstone district which produced good crops of grain,* in drier seasons would have been dry to barrenness.

In such a climate it is not surprising that there are hardly any streams that merit the name of rivers. It is necessary to guard against being misled by the inspection of maps of the country, and forming from them the idea that it is well watered. Such an impression would be erroneous, and yet the maps are not inaccurate; streams do at times exist in the places where they are laid down on the maps, but for the greater part of every year no more is to be seen than the beds or courses, in which, during the season of floods, or after long-continued rains, absolute torrents of water flow, but which will within the short space of a month again become a string of deep pools. Were it not for this peculiar provision of nature, the country for the greater part of the year would be without water, and, consequently, uninhabitable.

The principal rivers which are found to the east of the Blue Mountains are, the Hunter, George, Shoalham, and Hawkesbury. None of these streams are navigable further than the tide flows in the estuaries, which sometimes extend twenty or thirty miles inland, for beyond them they are usually no more than twenty inches in depth. Each of these streams has numerous tributaries, which drain a large area of country, and during heavy rains the main branches are suddenly swelled, and cause the floods which have been spoken of. To the west of the mountains, the water-courses are of a very different character. The Darling, for instance, through a course of seven hundred miles, does not receive a single tributary, although it is said to drain an extent of sixty thousand square miles. It possesses the other character which has been mentioned, of being frequently reduced to a mere string of pools. The Darling, Morrumbidgee, and Lachlan, unite about one hundred miles from the ocean, and their joint stream is known by the name of the Murray, which after passing through Lake Alexandria, enters the sea at Encounter Bay. The surface drained by these streams is about two hundred and fifty thousand square miles.

Another remarkable occurrence observed in these western waters, is the disappearance of a river in swampy lands, where, as is supposed, it is swallowed up by the caverns in the limestone rocks. This is the case with the Macquarie, which has its source near Bathurst.

According to all accounts, salt is very generally diffused throughout New South Wales, and even all Australia. It has been reported as being found in masses in the sandstone, but no specimens of it were

* In the diluvial flats along the rivers, the wheat crop is usually about twenty-five bushels to the acre. Forty to forty-five bushels have been obtained, but such crops are very unusual.