

obtained by the Expedition. Scarcely a well is dug in the interior which is not brackish; and, according to Major Mitchell, Captain Sturt, Oxley, and others, many of the rivers are quite saline in parts of their course. The northern tributaries of the Hunter and Darling are instances of this.

The lakes are also said to be saline, and in some instances sufficiently strong to afford a large and profitable yield of salt; but being very far in the interior, and without the means of transportation, they are of little value. Along the south coast of Australia, such lakes are described as existing near the sea, and may possibly prove of some value to that portion of New Holland.

Lead and iron have been found in small quantities; the deposits of the former are all trifling. Those of the latter afford too impure an ore, and not in sufficient abundance, to be worked.

The minerals stated to be found in Australia, specimens of which were procured for the Expedition, are, chalcedony, agates, jasper, quartz, augite, and stilbite; feldspar, arragonite, gypsum, chlorite, mica in granite; sulphur and alum, galena and plumbago, magnetic iron, iron pyrites, and basalt.

Fossils appear to be confined to particular localities, but are by no means rare.

Columns of basalt of great regularity are found on the coast of Illawarra, but the articulations are all plane.

The water is much impregnated with alum and iron, and its use is avoided by the inhabitants.

Deserts covered with saline plants are said to be frequently met with.

Mitchell, in his travels in New South Wales, speaks of the different heights of the ranges of mountains in this country, some of them in the southern and some in the eastern portion as being covered with snow, and rising four thousand five hundred feet above the sea. To the Blue Mountain range he ascribes a height of three thousand four hundred feet, composed entirely of sand; beyond this the granite or dividing range occurs, which is only two thousand two hundred feet in height. The Canobolus Mountains, further to the westward, are four thousand four hundred and sixty-one feet high, and of primitive rock; beyond these, the extensive plains of the interior, the valley of Millewa or Murray river, seem again to be entirely composed of sedimentary rocks, similar to the sandstone of the coast.

The climate of Australia may be considered generally as very dry; the irregularity of the rains, and the nature of the soil, all prove that it is so; yet the aridity is not marked, as in other countries, by a general tendency in the plants to produce thorns, although the pecu-