

liarity of the vegetation makes the dryness apparent in other ways. From all accounts, New South Wales is subject to as great atmospheric vicissitudes, as the middle United States. For a series of years, droughts will occur, which in turn give place to years of successive floods, and these prevail to an extent that can hardly be credited, were it not that the account has been received from good authority. As a striking instance of it, Oxley, in his exploring journeys into the interior, in 1817, found the country every where overflowed, so as to prevent him from proceeding; while Mitchell, in 1835, in the same districts, was continually in danger of perishing from thirst. The latter states that he found unios (or fresh-water mussels) sticking in the banks of rivers and ponds above the level of the water; and also dead trees and saplings in similar situations.

This alternate change must exert a great influence on the productions of the soil; the rivers ceasing to flow, and their beds becoming as it were dry, with the exception of the pools heretofore spoken of, must likewise have an influence. The prevailing westerly winds sweep with force over the whole country, blighting all they touch. The effect of these hot winds is remarkable, for they will in a few hours entirely destroy the crops, by extracting all the moisture from the grain, even after it is formed, and almost ready for harvest; and the only portion that is left is that which has been sheltered by trees, hedges, or fences. They thus destroy the prospect of the husbandman when his crops are ready for the sickle. It is thought, and I should imagine with reason, that were the Blue Mountains a more lofty range, this would not be the case, as they would have a tendency to continue the supplies to the streams throughout the year, by the condensation of the vapour from the sea.

These hot winds come from the direction of the Blue Mountains, and, what seems remarkable, are not felt on the other side of the mountains, or in their immediate vicinity. Yet the extent between the coast and the mountains is not sufficient to produce these winds, being only forty-five miles; and if they proceed from the interior, they must pass over those mountains, an elevation in some places of three thousand four hundred feet. Their great destructiveness is undoubtedly caused by their capacity for moisture, although few observations have as yet (as far as I was able to obtain information) been made upon them, except in relation to the blight they occasion. It has been found that fields which have a line of woods on the side whence they blow, escape injury. The harvest immediately on the line of the coast does not suffer so much, being exempted in part from their withering influence by the moisture that is imbibed from the sea.