

There is a portion of this country that is an exception to the general rule of aridity, namely, the district of Illawarra. This forms a belt of from one to ten miles wide, and has the range of the Kangaroo Hills just behind it, of one thousand feet; these are sufficiently high at this distance from the coast to condense the moisture, and also to protect the district from the blighting effects of the blasts from the interior.

One is entirely unprepared for the alleged facts in relation to this country; for instance, Mitchell, in his journey to the south and west, during the four winter months, witnessed no precipitation of moisture except frosts in the mornings, and the thermometer was often below the freezing point. Violent winds occur, which have obtained the name of brick-fielders. They are nothing more than a kind of gust, peculiar to the environs of Sydney, after a sultry day. During one of these gusts little or no rain falls, though the wind frequently approaches a hurricane in force. These winds get their name from bringing the dust from the brick-fields, formerly in the suburbs of Sydney, but which are now almost entirely built over. The temperature during the blow generally falls twenty or twenty-five degrees, in the space of as many minutes; the dust is very great, and the wind so strong, as to cause apprehension lest the houses should be unroofed, or the chimneys thrown down. Our standard barometer was carefully watched during the coming on of two of these gusts, and found to fall 0.200 in., the first time; and the second only 0.020 in.; but the temperature fell each time about ten degrees. They were not, however, true brick-fielders, or such as a resident would so denominate.

Snow has been known to fall in Sydney, but so rarely, that we were told some of the inhabitants were doubtful as to its nature. On the mountains it is not uncommon, and in the winter season is always seen on those in the New England district, which, although three or four degrees to the northward of Sydney, enjoys a much cooler climate.

Major Mitchell often found that the temperature exceeded 100° of Fahrenheit. The heat was, of course, very oppressive, and more so on account of the little shade the native trees afford. The difference of temperature between the day and night is great, but upon this point I was able to get but little information; the meteorological registers that have been kept at Sydney, have omitted the night hours altogether.

I have been favoured since my return with the abstract returns of the meteorological registers during parts of the years 1840 and '41, kept at the South Head of Port Jackson, two hundred and fifty-four feet above the level of the sea. Being kept immediately at the sea-coast, this record does not furnish so satisfactory an account of the climate, as if the place of observation had been farther in the interior.