

always hailed with joy by the traveller in these arid regions, as a sign of the vicinity of water. The sound resembles the click of a stone-hammer, and the effect of the united notes of several, is similar to the frog concerts of our springs. According to Mr. Coxen, each bird utters a single note.

It was remarked that the native animals of Australia are fast disappearing. The kangaroo, once so numerous, is now seldom seen; but the native dog still commits ravages among the sheep.* Some of the animals which have become rare are preserved in the Sydney Museum; among these are the wombat (*Cheropus*), and the *Ornithorhynchus*, in relation to which so many questions have been raised. Snakes of many kinds still abound, even in the immediate vicinity of Sydney, whose bite is said to be fatal, and which is of course much dreaded. The stories that are related of such poisonous bites, and the dread of them that animals show, make those who wander through the paths extremely cautious, particularly as their small size and grassy colour render them difficult to be seen.

Among the distinguished gentlemen of the colony, to whose hospitality our naturalists were indebted, is John Blaxland, Esq., who resides at Newington, on the river, near Paramatta. The ladies of his family are in possession of a handsome hortus siccus of native plants, collected and prepared by themselves.

A part of this gentleman's estate consists of extensive salt-works, formed by drawing the tide-water from the river into ponds. In these it is evaporated as much as possible by the heat of the sun, and is afterwards boiled. The quantity of salt made at these works during the preceding year (1838) was one thousand tons. About seventy assigned servants (convicts) are employed in the manufacture.

The water of the ocean is far from being the only source of this necessary of life in Australia. Salt springs are abundant, and almost all the wells, particularly those of the sandstone region, are said to afford only brackish water. The small streamlets, and in dry seasons even the rivers, are found to be salt; and there is hardly a traveller or navigator, but has given an account of his disappointment in finding salt water, when every indication gave the promise of fresh.

Major Mitchell attributes the occasional saltiness of the Darling river, to salt springs, or to its passing through beds of rock salt. This river, as has been stated, has no tributary for more than six hundred miles, and has at times little or no current; and it is where the stream has no sensible motion, that the saltiness is most marked. The salt

* The natives had never attempted to domesticate the dog, and all of the species found, when the country was colonized, were wild.