

appears to cover but a small area at any one place, and it has been observed that within short distances of each other, fresh and salt rivulets may be seen, pursuing the same direction, and each retaining its character throughout its whole course.

The lakes in the eastern section of Australia are also nearly all either salt or brackish. Lake George, situated beyond Goulburn, near the source of the Yass river, which empties into the Murrumbidgee, is the largest of these lakes. It is at present only five or six miles in length, by about four in width, although according to unquestionable authority, it was, within twelve or fourteen years, sixteen miles long by twelve wide. Lake Bathurst, which is not far distant from Lake George, has also undergone a similar diminution. In the latter lake there are to be seen stumps of trees, which prove, that although within a few years a considerable lake, and at present decreasing in its extent, it had at a former, and that at no remote epoch, been a marsh, if not actually dry land. Should its present diminution continue, which must take place if the seasons of drought are not interrupted, it will in a few years be again dry land.\*

The facts observed at these lakes prove in the most conclusive manner the very great irregularity in the climate of New South Wales. It would appear from them, that, however great the floods now occasionally experienced are considered, those that have occurred must have exceeded them, and filled the basins of these lakes, to such a depth, that within the fifty years that they have been known, the excess of evaporation has not been sufficient to restore them to their pristine state.

In conformity with the condition of these lakes, many places now dry are pointed out, where, within the memory of the settlers, lakes or ponds existed; and near the course of streams, grass is to be seen attached to the trunks of trees thirty feet above the present level of the water, which must have been lodged there by very great floods.

The great and important changes that floods of such extent and destructive force must produce on the face of the country, may be imagined, and particularly when like New South Wales it is principally composed of soft sandstone. To such causes may be ascribed the numerous coves of the harbours and bays, and the deep ravines which often break the monotony of the table-land. In relation to the bays

\* In the basins of the salt lakes of the interior, plants which grow on the shores of the ocean are found in abundance; as for instance the *Salsola*. These lakes even exceed in saltiness the waters of the ocean; those brought by Major Mitchell, and analyzed, contained one hundred and thirteen grains of dry salt in three ounces of water; the specific gravity of the water was from 1.0386 to 1.0553.