

length a change takes place, rain falls abundantly, and the plains, on which but lately not a blade of herbage was to be seen, and over which the stillness of desolation reigned, become green with luxuriant vegetation. *Orchideæ* and thousands of flowers of the loveliest hues are profusely spread around, as if nature rejoiced in her renovation, and the grain springing up vigorously gives promise of an abundant harvest. This change from sterility to abundance in the vegetable world is accompanied by a correspondent increase of animal life, the waters become stocked with fish, the marshy districts with frogs and other reptiles; hosts of caterpillars and other insects make their appearance, and spreading over the surface of the country commence the work of devastation, which however is speedily checked by the birds of various kinds that follow in their train. Attracted by the abundance of food, hawks of three or four species, in flocks of hundreds, depart from their usual solitary habits, become gregarious and busy at the feast, and thousands of Straw-necked Ibises (*Ibis spinicollis*), and other species of the feathered race, revel in the profusion of a welcome banquet. It must not however be imagined that this change is effected without its attendant horrors; the heavy rains often filling the river-beds so suddenly, that the onward pouring flood carries with it everything that may impede its course; and woe to the unhappy settler whose house or grounds may lie within the influence of the overwhelming floods! A painful instance of the desolating effects of this sudden irruption of the waters came under my own observation while travelling in the plains bordering the Lower Namoi in New South Wales. On pulling up my horse at one of the huts erected by the stock-keepers charged with the flocks and herds depastured in this vast grazing-ground, I found it occupied by Lieut. Lowe and his nephew, who had gone thither for the purpose of being present at the shearing of the flocks belonging to the former gentleman. Although strangers, their reception of me was warm and hospitable, and I left them with a promise of making their abode a resting-place on my return. My second welcome was such as friends receive from friends, and rejoicing that I had made the acquaintance of persons so worthy and estimable, I left them busy in their operations, happy and prosperous. Seven days after my departure from their dwelling heavy rains suddenly set in; the mountain-streams swelled into foaming torrents, filling the deep gullies; the rivers rose, some to the height of forty feet, bearing all before them. The Namoi having widely overflowed its banks, rolled along with impetuous fury, sweeping away the huts of the stock-keepers in its course, tearing up trees, and hurrying affrighted men and flocks to destruction. Before there was time to escape, the hut in which Lieut. Lowe and his nephew were sojourning was torn up and washed away, and the nephew and two men, overwhelmed by the torrent, sank and perished. Lieut. Lowe stripped to swim, and getting on the trunk of an uprooted tree, hoped to be carried down the eddying flood to some part where he could obtain assistance. But he was floated into the midst of a sea of water stretching as far as he could discern on every side around him. Here he slowly drifted; the rains had ceased, the thermometer was at 100°, a glaring sun and a coppery sky were above him; he looked in vain for help, but no prospect of escape animated him, and the hot sun began its dreadful work. His skin blistered, dried, became parched and hard, like the bark of a tree, and life began to ebb. At length assistance arrived—it came too late; he was indeed just alive, but died almost immediately. He was scorched to death.

Sir Thomas Mitchell, in his recently published “Journal of an Expedition into the interior of Tropical Australia,” has given a most vivid picture of the manner in which floods occasioned by distant rains fill the river-beds, and which I beg leave to transcribe. Sir Thomas being somewhat unwell while encamped on the banks of the Macquarie, the channel of which was deep and dry, sent Mr. Stephenson, one of his party, to Mount Foster, to make inquiries about the river and the stations on it lower down. Mr.