

large masses of greenstone, basalt and other igneous rocks. It is flanked on both sides by thick beds of palæozoic formations, chiefly sandstone, but also containing limestone and coal. In the northern portion of the chain Dr. Leichardt found similar formations—and especially trap and granite near the Burdekin river. In the Port Phillip district there are similar igneous rocks, and on the coast tertiary formations resting on the edges of upturned palæozoic beds. In West Australia, the Darling range consists of granite below, covered by metamorphic rocks; and between it and the sea is a plain composed of tertiary beds. In the colony of North Australia there is a great sandstone plateau, rising about 1800 feet above the sea, and probably of palæozoic age; whilst on the immediate shore and round the Gulf of Carpentaria are beds supposed to belong to the tertiary period. Similar formations constitute the substratum of the central desert; in which Captain Sturt was compelled to turn back, when half-way to the Gulf of Carpentaria, from the southern coast. Hence these tertiary rocks are probably continuous through the whole centre of the island, and during the tertiary period all this portion of the country was submerged, whilst the high lands on the coast rose like four groups of islands from the shallow sea.”—*Athenæum*, Nov. 24, 1847.

Whichever of these opinions be the correct one, we certainly find the natural productions of all these portions of the country composed of precisely the same types, the generality of which differ entirely from those of the islands of the Indian Archipelago on the one hand, and of New Zealand and Polynesia on the other.

With respect to the position of Australia, it will only be necessary to state that it is situated between the 10th and 45th degrees of south latitude, and the 112th and 154th degrees of longitude east from Greenwich; its extent, in round numbers, may therefore be said to be 3000 miles in length, or from west to east, and inclusive of Van Diemen's Land nearly the same in breadth, or from north to south. In its present uplifted position its form is nearly square, with a depressed centre bounded by an almost continuous range of hills and plateaux, which, varying in altitude from one to six thousand feet above the level of the sea, in some places approach the coast and present lofty and inaccessible cliffs to the ocean, while in others they trend towards the interior of the country at a distance of from twenty to eighty miles from the coast-line; but inasmuch as these elevations are all of an undulating and not of a precipitous character, no part of the country can be considered as strictly alpine. Nothing can be more different than the features of the country on the exterior and interior of this great barrier, particularly on the eastern coast, where, between the mountains and the sea, the vegetation partakes to a great extent of a tropical character; it is there, on the rich alluvial soil, formed by the debris washed down from the hills, that we find various species of *Eucalypti*, *Fici*, and other trees, many of which attain an immense altitude, and forests of towering palms; the surface of the ground beneath clothed with a dense and impervious underwood, composed of dwarf trees, shrubs and tree-ferns festooned with creepers and parasitic plants in the richest profusion, the continuity of which is here and there broken by rich open meadow-like districts admirably adapted for the pasturing of cattle, and to which, from the frequent occurrence of the *Angophoræ*, a tribe of trees in which the settlers see a fancied resemblance to the apple-trees of Europe, the name of Apple-tree Flats has been given. Within the ranges, on the other hand, we find immense open downs and grassy plains, studded here and there with detached belts and forests of *Eucalypti*, *Acaciæ*, &c., presenting a park-like appearance, to which, as we advance farther towards the interior, succeed either extensive marshes or land of a most sterile description. The face of this vast country consequently presents much variety of aspect; the