

back can gallop through it. It is traversed by a few flat-bottomed valleys, which are green and free from trees: in such spots the scenery was pretty like that of a park. In the whole country I scarcely saw a place without the marks of a fire; whether these had been more or less recent—whether the stumps were more or less black—was the greatest change which varied the uniformity so wearisome to the traveller's eye. In these woods there are not many birds; I saw, however, some large flocks of the white cockatoo feeding in a corn-field, and a few most beautiful parrots; crows like our jackdaws were not uncommon, and another bird something like the magpie. In the dusk of the evening I took a stroll along a chain of ponds, which in this dry country represented the course of a river, and had the good fortune to see several of the famous *Ornithorhynchus paradoxus*. They were diving and playing about the surface of the water, but showed so little of their bodies that they might easily have been mistaken for water-rats. Mr. Browne shot one: certainly it is a most extraordinary animal; a stuffed specimen does not at all give a good idea of the appearance of the head and beak when fresh; the latter becoming hard and contracted.<sup>1</sup>

20th.—A long day's ride to Bathurst. Before joining the highroad we followed a mere path through the forest; and the country, with the exception of a few squatters' huts, was very solitary. We experienced this day the sirocco-like wind of Australia, which comes from the parched deserts of the interior. Clouds of dust were travelling in every direction; and the wind felt as if it had passed over a fire. I afterward heard that the thermometer out of doors had stood at 119°,

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<sup>1</sup> I was interested by finding here the hollow conical pitfall of the lion-ant, or some other insect: first a fly fell down the treacherous slope and immediately disappeared; then came a large but unwary ant; its struggles to escape being very violent, those curious little jets of sand, described by Kirby and Spence (*Entomol.*, vol. i. p. 425) as being flirited by the insect's tail, were promptly directed against the expected victim. But the ant enjoyed a better fate than the fly, and escaped the fatal jaws which lay concealed at the base of the conical hollow. This Australian pitfall was only about half the size of that made by the European lion-ant.