

Again, in the case of much of the forest on the West Coast, often talked of as inexhaustible, a great proportion is situated in very inaccessible places, and is of little or no commercial value as timber; besides which, in the case of narrow valleys with steep shingly hill-sides, covered with but a thin coating of vegetable deposit, we cannot be too careful how we remove the forest, the result of any general or extensive clearing being that the little soil there is soon washed away, leaving barren hill-sides of no value for any purpose, and resulting, by the rapid pouring off of rainwater from their bare and steep slopes, in most disastrous floods, followed by long and often equally disastrous droughts. This is so well known on the Continent of Europe, that what is called "selection felling," by which individual trees only are removed as they mature, is the system universally in force, and experience teaches us that any departure from it under such circumstances is very dangerous, and should invariably be avoided if possible. These points will be dealt with more fully further on in considering climatic considerations, &c. They must strike any one who has studied the subject during a tour such as I have just completed, and no conclusion is more firmly impressed on my mind than that, whilst New Zealand has a splendid and most valuable property in her forests as they exist now, she must be very careful in their management, and no longer proceed blindfold in their disposal and removal, otherwise she will not only lose them without any adequate return or income to the public or colonial purse, but very much besides in the shape of equable climate and ample but not excessive supply of water, which years of labour and heavy expenditure will hardly replace.