

gle through the woods, each man armed with a spear in his right hand, and a large stone in his left: at their head appeared a chief, who was distinguished by being painted. Though in the proportion of five to one of our people they passed peaceably on.

That their skill in throwing the spear sometimes enables them to kill the kangaroo, we have no right to doubt, as a long splinter of this weapon was taken out of the thigh of one of these animals, over which the flesh had completely closed; but we have never discovered that they have any method of ensnaring them, or that they know any other beasts but the kangaroo and dog. Whatever animal is shewn them, a dog excepted, they call kangaroo; a strong presumption that the wild animals of the country are very few.

Soon after our arrival at Port Jackson, I was walking out near a place where I observed a party of Indians busily employed in looking at some sheep in an inclosure, and repeatedly crying out, Kangaroo, kangaroo! As this seemed to afford them pleasure, I was willing to increase it by pointing out the horses and cows, which were at no great distance. But unluckily, at the moment, some female convicts, employed near the place, made their appearance, and all my endeavours to divert their attention from the ladies became fruitless. They attempted not, however, to offer them the least degree of violence or injury, but stood at the distance of several paces, expressing very significantly the manner they were attracted.

It would be trespassing on the reader's indulgence were I to impose on him an account of any civil regulations, or ordinances, which may possibly exist among this people. I declare to him, that I know not of any, and that excepting a little tributary respect which the younger part appear to pay those more advanced in years, I never could observe any degrees of subordination among them. To their religious rites and opinions, I am equally a stranger. Had an opportunity offered of seeing the ceremonies observed at disposing of the dead, perhaps some insight might have been gained; but all that we at present know with certainty is, that they burn the corpse, and afterwards heap up the earth around it, somewhat in the manner of the small tumuli, found in many counties in England.

I have already hinted, that the country is more populous than it was generally believed to be in Europe at the time of our sailing. But this remark is not meant to be extended to the interior parts of the continent, which there is every reason to

conclude from our researches, as well as from the manner of living practised by the natives, to be uninhabited. It appears as if some of the Indian families confine their society and connections within their own pale; but that this cannot always be the case we know, for on the north-west arm of Botany Bay stands a village, which contains more than a dozen houses, and perhaps five times that number of people; being the most considerable establishment that we are acquainted with in the country. As a striking proof, besides, of the numerosness of the natives, I beg leave to state, that Governor Phillip, when on an excursion between the head of this harbour and that of Botany Bay, once fell in with a party which consisted of more than three hundred persons, two hundred and twelve of whom were men: this happened only on the day following the murder of the two convict rush cutters, before noticed, and his Excellency was at the very time in search of the murderers, on whom, could they have been found, he intended to inflict a memorable and exemplary punishment. The meeting was unexpected to both parties, and considering the critical situation of affairs, perhaps not very pleasing to our side, which consisted but of twelve persons, until the peaceable disposition of the Indians was manifest. After the strictest search the Governor was obliged to return without having obtained any information. The laudable perseverance of his Excellency to throw every light on this unhappy business did not, however, stop here, for he instituted the most rigorous inquiry to find out, if possible, whether the convicts had at any time ill-treated or killed any of the natives; and farther, issuing a proclamation, offering the most tempting of all rewards, a state of freedom, to him who should point out the murderer, in case such an one existed.

I have thus impartially stated the situation of matters, as they stand, while I write, between the natives and us; that greater progress in attaching them to us has not been made, I have only to regret; but that all ranks of men have tried to effect it, by every reasonable effort from which success might have been expected, I can testify; nor can I omit saying, that in the higher stations this has been eminently conspicuous. The public orders of Governor Philip have invariably tended to promote such a behaviour on our side, as was most likely to produce this much wished for event. To what cause then are we to attribute the distance which the accomplishment of it appears at? I answer, to the sickle, jealous, wavering dispositions