

could, I think, have been expected from them.

Temporary wooden store-houses, covered with thatch or shingles, in which the cargoes of all the ships have been lodged, are completed; and an hospital erected. Barracks for the military are considerably advanced; and little huts, to serve until something more permanent can be finished, have been raised on all sides. Notwithstanding this, the encampments of the marines and convicts are still kept up; and to secure their owners from the coldness of the nights, are covered in with bushes, and thatched over.

The plan of a town I have already said is marked out; and as free stone of an excellent quality abounds, one requisite towards the completion of it is attained. Only two houses of stone are yet begun, which are intended for the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. One of the greatest impediments we meet with, is a want of lime-stone, of which no signs appear.—Clay for making bricks is in plenty, and a considerable number of them burned and ready for use.

In enumerating the public buildings, I find I have been so remiss as to omit an observatory, which is erected at a small distance from the encampments. It is nearly completed, and when fitted up with the telescopes and other astronomical instruments sent out by the Board of Longitude, will afford a desirable retreat from the listlessness of a camp evening at Port Jackson. One of the principal reasons which induced the Board to grant this apparatus was, for the purpose of enabling Lieut. Dawes, of the marines, (to whose care it is intrusted) to make observations on a comet which is shortly expected to appear in the southern hemisphere. The latitude of the observatory, from the result of more than three hundred observations, is fixed at $33^{\circ} 52' 30''$ south, and the longitude at $151^{\circ} 16' 30''$ east of Greenwich. The latitude of the south head, which forms the entrance of the harbour, $33^{\circ} 51'$, and that of the north head opposite to it at $33^{\circ} 49' 45''$ south.

Since landing here our military force has suffered a diminution of only three persons, a serjeant and two privates. Of the convicts, fifty-four have perished, including the executions. Amidst the causes of this mortality, excessive toil and a scarcity of food are not to be numbered, as the reader will easily conceive, when informed, that they have the same allowance of provisions as every officer and soldier in the garrison; and are indulged by being exempted from labour every Saturday afternoon and Sunday. On the latter of those days they are expected to attend

divine service, which is performed either within one of the store-houses, or under a great tree in the open air, until a church can be built.

Amidst our public labours, that no fortified post, or place of security, is yet begun, may be a matter of surprise.—Were an emergency in the night to happen, it is not easy to say what might not take place before troops, scattered about an extensive encampment, could be formed, so as to act. An event that happened a few evenings since, may, perhaps be the means of forwarding this necessary work: In the dead of night the centinels on the eastern side of the cove were alarmed by the voices of the indians, talking near their posts. The soldiers on this occasion acted with their usual firmness, and without creating a disturbance, acquainted the officer of the guard with the circumstance, who immediately took every precaution to prevent an attack, and at the same time gave orders that no molestation, while they continued peaceable, should be offered them. From the darkness of the night, and the distance they kept at, it was not easy to ascertain their number, but, from the sound of the voices and other circumstances, it was calculated at near thirty. To their intentions in honouring us with this visit (the only one we have had from them in the last five months) we are strangers, though most probably it was with a view to pilfer, or to ascertain in what security we slept, and the precautions we used in the night. When the bells of the ships in the harbour struck the hour of the night, and the centinels called out on their posts 'All's well,' they observed a dead silence, and continued it for some minutes, tho' talking with the greatest earnestness and vociferation but the moment before. After having remained a considerable time they departed without interchanging a syllable with our people.

The author of this narrative would subject himself to the charge of presumption, were he to aim at developing the intentions of Government in forming this settlement; but without giving offence, or incurring reproach, he hopes his opinion on the probability of advantage to be drawn from hence by Great-Britain, may be fairly made known.

If only a receptacle for convicts be intended, this place stands unequalled from the situation, extent, and nature of the country. When viewed in a commercial light, I fear its insignificance will appear very striking. The New Zealand hemp, of which so many sanguine expectations were formed, is not a native of the soil; and Norfolk Island, where we made sure