

1788.
28 Sept.

Free settlers
required.

Your Lordship will, I hope, judge it expedient to send out settlers, to whom a certain number of convicts may be given; they, my Lord, will be interested in cultivating the lands, and when a few carpenters and bricklayers are sent out who will act as overseers, and have some little interest in the labour of the convicts who are under their care, a great deal of labour will be done by them who are employed on the public works. I have in a former letter mentioned that a couple of decked vessels of 30 or 40 tons burthen,* if sent out in frames, and two or three good shipwrights, would be of great service.

Observations
on the natives.

The natives, though very friendly whenever they are met by two or three people who are armed, still continue to attack any of the convicts when they meet them in the woods, and two or three have been lately wounded by them. I have been with a small party to examine the land between the harbour and Broken Bay; we went as far as Pittwater, and saw several of the natives, but none came near us. There are several hundred acres of land free from timber, and very proper for cultivation, when a small settlement can be made on the coast. On our return to the boats near the mouth of the harbour, we found about sixty of the natives, men, women, and children, with whom we stayed some hours; they were friendly, but, as I have ever found them, since they find we intend to remain, they appeared best pleased when we were leaving them, though I gave them many useful articles; and it is not possible to say whether it was from fear or contempt that they do not come amongst us. I have already had the honor of informing your Lordship of the little we know of these people. Most of the women, and all the female children I saw had lost two joints from the little finger of the left hand, and two women were scarred on the shoulders like the men, the first I had seen. The women, when we first came on the beach, were in their canoes fishing, which is their constant employment, the men chiefly employing themselves in making canoes, spears, fizegigs, &c.

The day before we returned, the boat that was waiting for us, near the harbour's mouth, saw about two hundred men, who assembled in two parties, and who, after some time, drew up opposite to each other, and from each party men advanced singly and threw their spears, guarding themselves at the same time with their shields. I suppose this to have been no more than an exercise, for the women belonging to both parties remained together on the beach; though towards the end of the combat they are said to have run up and down, uttering violent shrieks

* Note 71.