

1788.
16 Nov.
Shipping. reason for sending the Sirius to the Cape. You will, sir, please to inform their Lordships that the Fishburn is now ready for sea. The Golden Grove sailed for Norfolk Island the 2nd of October. Both ships will sail for England as soon as that ship returns.

Population of Norfolk Island. I thought it necessary to keep the Supply, tender, here in the absence of the Sirius, which was my reason for sending the Golden Grove to Norfolk Island; and I ordered the master of the Supply on board that ship, as he is acquainted with the island, where the landing is difficult. Eighteen months' provisions and stores, with a petty officer, one sergeant, one corporal, five privates, two seamen, twenty-one men, and eleven women convicts, were sent in the Golden Grove. These make the number of people on Norfolk Island sixty-one,* and more will be sent in the course of the summer.

The natives. The natives now avoid us more than they did when we first landed, and which I impute to the robberies committed on them by the convicts, who steal their spears and fuzgigs, which they frequently leave in their huts when they go out a-fishing, and which the people belonging to the transports purchase, though every possible precaution has been taken to prevent it. This the natives revenge by attacking any stragler they meet, and one convict has been killed since the Sirius sailed.

Store-ship wanted. The advantages attending a ship of the line as a store-ship in this harbour I have observed in my former letters. Such ship might bring a considerable quantity of black cattle from the Cape. as I presume she would have few guns on board. One or two small vessels of thirty or forty tons would, likewise, be employed to great advantage, and which I beg leave to submit to their Lordships' consideration. The necessity of a regular supply of provisions has been, likewise, pointed out in my former letters, as the resources this country affords at present are very trifling.

Soldier missing. A marine has been lately missing, and it is doubtful whether he lost his way in the woods and was killed by the natives, or whether he died in a fit, he being subject to fits.

Reef discovered. The Golden Grove returned from Norfolk Island the 10th instant, having landed the provisions and people. In her return they fell in with a dangerous reef, on which the sea broke very high. The south end of the reef only was seen, which, by Mr. Blackburn's account (the master of the Supply), is in the latitude of 29° 25' S., longitude 159° 59' E.† It extended from N.E. by N. to north, but the weather did not permit him to examine how far it extends to the northward. They were, when the bearings were taken, four leagues from it, with light airs of wind. It shall be examined in the course of the summer.

* Note 77. † Note 82.