

prevent the convicts from straggling, and the natives having been robbed and ill-treated, now attack those they meet unarmed.

1790.
12 Feb.

Not succeeding in my endeavours to persuade some of the natives to come and live with us, I ordered one to be taken by force, which was what I would gladly have avoided, as I knew it must alarm them; but not a native had come near the settlement for many months, and it was absolutely necessary that we should attain their language, or teach them ours, that the means of redress might be pointed out to them if they are injured, and to reconcile them by showing the many advantages they would enjoy by mixing with us. A young man, who appeared to be about twenty-four years of age, was taken the latter end of December [1788], and unfortunately died of the small-pox in May [1789], when he was perfectly reconciled to his situation, and appeared so sensible of the advantages he enjoyed that, fully persuaded he would not leave us, I had for some time freed him from all restraint. He had lived with me for the last two months, and his behaviour gave good reason for showing a more favourable opinion of the people of this country than what has been drawn from the report made by those who formerly touched on this coast.

The natives.

Whether the small-pox,* which has proved fatal to great numbers of the natives, is a disorder to which they were subject before any Europeans visited this country, or whether it was brought by the French ships, we have not yet attained sufficient knowledge of the language to determine. It never appeared on board any of the ships in our passage, nor in the settlement, until some time after numbers of the natives had been seen dead with the disorder in different parts of the harbour, and two men, with a boy of about eight years of age and a girl of eleven, had been brought to the hospital, in the small-pox.

Small-pox.

Both the men died, but the boy and girl recovered. These people were brought up the middle and the latter end of April, and the small-pox never appeared in the settlement until the 2nd of May, when a man belonging to the Supply was seized with the disorder and died a few days afterwards; nor has it ever appeared in the settlement except on that man and the native who caught the disorder from the children.

In addition to the loss of provisions which we had sustained by the rats, a very considerable quantity of flour, rice, &c., had been lost and damaged in the passage by the badness of the casks and by a quantity of oil and tar having been put on board of the store-ships.

Loss of provisions.

Although there could be little doubt but that supplies would arrive before the provisions we had in store were expended, it was necessary to guard against accident. I therefore directed