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that all their fears were groundless, and that their Tabooing
their provisions, the vessels they eat out of, their houses &c
were all a delusion - That there was no such thing in
Europe - That I was not afraid to eat any thing, nor to
sleep in any house, nor to have fire and provisions in the
same house. They said if they did not pay very particular
attention to all that their Priests told them, they would die.
If they went to battle, and neglected any Ceremony, rela-
tive to their food &c and a spear only touched them they would
die immediately. But if they observed the Ceremonies, and a
spear should go through their body they would not die.
I told them that the observance of those things, would have no
effect in preserving their lives in battle: They contended warmly
it would, and one of the Chiefs came forward,
and shewed where a spear had pass'd through his lungs,
and both his blood, and his breath came thro' the orifice of
the wound, and yet he recovered, because he paid attention to
the injunctions of the priest. In answer to this I said
that I had seen a large barbed spear taken out of the body
of a white man at Parramatta, which had been thrown at
him by a Native, and had wounded the intestines so
much, that the food which he eat for a considerable time
came thro' the wound, which the spear had made, and
yet he recovered, and was alive and well when I left
Parramatta, tho' he had never been Tabooed, nor his food, nor
his houses. They expressed their astonishment at this, that
he should recover from such a wound without attending to
similar Ceremonies with themselves, upon the observance
of which, they believed the issue of life or death depends.
I further told them that instances had occurred where
soldiers in battle had been shot thro' the lungs, with a
ball, as the chief had been speared, and nevertheless had
recovered, and yet they were not Tabooed. I asked them,
if the chief had been speared thro' the heart, or thro' the
temples of the head, whether he would have recovered, or
not, admitting he had been Tabooed: he replied he
would not. I then wanted to know of what use their
Tabooing was, as Europeans recovered from similar wounds
without Tabooing. They said that some time ago one of their
tribe went on board a ship, where he eat some provisions,
contrary to their customs, when their God in his anger slew
a great many of them. I inquired in what manner those
who died were affected. They represented their tongues to
be foul, and their whole bodies in a burning heat.