

labor of the savage. With views of this kind, small parties have been dispatched, at different times, from the year 1774 until the year 1793, to examine the rivers of the west: at the period last mentioned, one of those parties, under the direction of Alexander M'Kensie, penetrated even to the Western Ocean, thereby greatly adding to their stock of useful knowledge in that branch of commerce, which they have not failed duly to appreciate. Notwithstanding the great difficulties which the British furriers encounter, from the embarrassment of their commerce by their different systems of exclusive privilege, these companies find it a source of vast profit, far exceeding any thing known in the United States; this too, when the merchandise is so much advanced in price, from the distance and the numerous obstructions. The enhanced value of the articles, and their difficulties in transporting them, may be fully understood, when it is known the tract of transport is equal to three or four thousand miles, through more than sixty lakes, some of them very considerable in extent, and numerous rivers; and the means of transportation are bark canoes. Furthermore, these waters are interrupted in at least an hundred places by falls and rapids, along which the trader has to carry his merchandise on his back, and over an hundred and thirty carrying places, from twenty or thirty yards in extent to thirteen miles, where both canoe and cargo have to be conveyed by the same means.

These are some of the obstructions which the North West Company encounters; yet their exports from Quebec alone are valued at more than a million of dollars annually, without reference to those brought to the United States, and shipped from New York and Philadelphia direct to China, rather than incur the cost and delay in procuring them a passage to London, and thence to India, in the ships of the East India Company. Indeed, it appears that many of the goods of that company, destined for this trade, particularly on the coast of the Pacific, are shipped to Boston and immediately reshipped in American vessels for the benefit of drawback. These vessels are sometimes employed to make a voyage for them from the mouth of Columbia to Canton. To illustrate more fully the increasing value of this trade, it is only necessary to observe, that from Quebec in 1803, there was exported the skins of six hundred and fifty thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine quadrupeds, ninety-three thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight of which were of the beaver: since that time they have extended their trade beyond the Rocky Mountains, and have, as has already been observed, established themselves at the mouth of Columbia; the amount of their export from that port cannot be ascertained, but it is thought to be of great value. The Hudson's Bay Company is believed to be considerable, and, from a state of former depression, is fast becoming the rival of the other, but for several years past have withdrawn their traders from the west side of the Rocky mountains: they have fewer difficulties to overcome in arriving at the highest point of navigation than the North West Company; their route is through the Hudson's Bay, the Nelson river, to Lake Winnipie; thence, by passing other lakes, they ascend the Red