

INTRODUCTION.

IN the year 1670 a charter was granted by Charles the Second to the Hudson's Bay Company, whose first governor was Prince Rupert, by which the Company was allowed the exclusive privilege of establishing trading factories on the shores of that noble bay and its tributary rivers. Owing to this charter, the fur-trade, which forms an important and extensive branch of American commerce, was for a long period monopolised by the Company; but, from the peculiar nature of its constitution, little progress was made by its officers in extending its trading posts, or exploring the interior, until the year 1770, when Mr. Hearne was sent on an expedition to the Arctic Sea, for an account of which I beg to refer the reader to that gentleman's simple and interesting narrative.

While Canada belonged to France the Cana-