

But, independent of these, there is a work just published, called, "A Personal Narrative of the Discovery of the North-West Passage," by Alexander Armstrong, M.D., R.N., 1857, in which the author, who cannot have any interest in speaking against the Company, makes allusion to it in such a way as to deserve attention. At page 151, speaking of an Esquimaux tribe they met, that did not trade with the Hudson's Bay Company, in consequence of their people having introduced spirits amongst them, he says: "Through this channel all their trade is carried on with the Russians *and not with the Company*, in whose territory they reside. The reason they assigned for not doing so when questioned was, that some of the Indians had been killed by fire-water (spirits), which some traders had given them to drink, and they feared they might be treated in the same way. This statement is given as nearly as possible in the words in which it was uttered; and, if such a practice exist, it is reprehensible in the highest degree."

At page 163, allusion is again made to the introduction of spirits, and he states: "This was the second time we had heard a similar story, since entering the Hudson's Bay Company's territories," At page 177, speaking of another tribe they met, he says: "They repeated the accusation of the fire-water having been given in barter, and its fatal results. On enquiring as to the value of a Silver Fox Skin, and the amount it realised in barter, they confirmed a story we had heard from the women the day previous, that for three of those precious Skins, they had got from the traders cooking utensils, which we estimated at eight shillings and sixpence.* I may mention

* On enquiry, it appears that the Hudson's Bay Company have two Public Sales of Furs in London every year, during the Spring and Autumn months, and at their Sale last March they sold 909 Black or Silver Fox Skins, at an average price of £17 2s. 1d.; some of them brought as high as £49 10s. each. Assuming, therefore, that Dr. Armstrong's account is correct; at that Sale they obtained £51 6s. 3d. for some trumpery cooking utensils, which only cost them 8s. 6d.—this is a profit of 11,973½ per cent., or nearly 120 times more than the first cost. The total amount of that Sale alone, came to fully £242,900. This statement the Company cannot deny.