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During the absence of our party from Macao, a brisk traffic had been carrying on with the Chinese, for our sea-otter skins, the value of which augmented every day. One of our sailors disposed of his stock alone, for eight hundred dollars; and a few of the best skins, which were clean, and had been carefully preserved, produced a hundred and twenty dollars each.

A very ludicrous alteration took place in the dress of all our crew, in consequence of the barter which the Chinese had carried on with us for our sea-otter skins. On our arrival in the 'Tyra, not only the sailors, but likewise the younger officers were extremely ragged in their apparel; for, as the voyage had now exceeded, almost by a year, the time it was at first supposed we should continue at sea, the far greater part of our original stock of European clothes had long ago worn out, or repaired and patched up with skins, and the different manufactures we had met with in the course of the expedition. There were now mixed with the gayest silks and cottons that China could produce.

On Tuesday the 11th of January, 1780, two fallors belonging to the Resolution, went off with a six-oared cutter; and though the most diligent search was made, both that and the succeeding day, we never could gain any intelligence of her. It was imagined that these seamen had been seduced by the hopes of acquiring a fortune if they should return to the Fur Islands.

We unmoored on the 12th of January, at twelve o'clock, and settled the guns, which, on board the Discovery, amounted at this time to ten; so that her people, by means of four additional ports, could fight seven on a side. In the Resolution likewise, the number of guns had been augmented from twelve to sixteen; and, in each of our vessels, a strong barricade had been carried round the upper works and all other precautions taken to give our inconsiderable force a respectable appearance.

We considered it as our duty to furnish ourselves with these means of defence, though there was some reason to believe, that they had, in a great measure, been rendered superfluous by the generosity of our enemies. Captain King had been informed at Canton, that, in the public prints, which had last arrived from Great Britain, mention was made of instructions having been found on board all the French ships of war, that had been taken in Europe, importing, that their commanders, if they should happen to fall in with the ships which had fallen from England under the command of Captain Cook, should suffer them to proceed unmolested on their voyage. It was also reported that the American Congress had given similar orders to the vessels employed in their service. This intelligence being farther confirmed by the private letters of some of the supercargoes, Captain Gore deemed it incumbent on him, in return for the liberal exceptions which our enemies had made in our favour, to refrain from embracing any opportunities of capture, which these might afford, and to maintain the strictest neutrality during the whole of his voyage.