

1787.
December.

to procure a freight from thence. An agreement with the East-India Company was accordingly made; our furs were to be sold to their Supercargoes at a fair price, or left in their hands for them to dispose of at a future opportunity, and they were to have a certain per centage on whatever sum of money they might fetch.

No sooner were the skins landed at our factory, than a particular account of them was taken by a set of Merchants belonging to the Customs, and who (I understand) give security to the Emperor for the duty being paid: another account was taken by people employed by Mr. Browne for that purpose.

Our skins being properly assorted, the quantity fixed on to be disposed of by Mr. Browne was 2,552 sea-otter skins, 434 cub, and 34 fox skins.

The remainder of our cargo, which consisted of 1,080 beaver tails, sundry indifferent pieces of beaver skins and cloaks, 110 fur seals, about 150 land beaver, sixty fine cloaks of the earless marmot; together with sundry racoon, fox, lynx, &c. were left to be disposed of by our Captains in the best manner they were able; probably for no other reason than to furnish them with money for their current expences, and no doubt expecting what they had left would be barely sufficient for that purpose.

In regard to the sale of our furs, I should first observe, that there is at Canton a Company of wealthy Merchants, called the Hong-Merchants, with whom our East India Company transact all their business, and purchase from them the whole of the tea and China-ware sent to Great Britain. To these people our furs were offered, with an expectation of their immediately taking them