

of the duties in dispute, to take out the men from the Centurion's prize, and to destroy her, and then to proceed down the river, through the Bocca Tigris, with the Centurion alone, and to remain without that entrance till he received further orders from Mr. Anson:

These necessary steps being taken, which were not unknown to the Chinese, it would seem as if their deliberations were in some sort perplexed thereby. It is reasonable to imagine that they were in general very desirous of getting the duties to be paid them, not perhaps solely in consideration of the amount of those duties, but to keep up their reputation for address and subtlety, and to avoid the imputation of receding from claims on which they had already so frequently insisted. However, as they now foresaw that they had no other method of succeeding than by violence, and that even against this the Commodore was prepared, they were at last disposed, I conceive, to let the affair drop rather than entangle themselves in a hostile measure, which they found would only expose them to the risk of having the whole navigation of their port destroyed without any certain prospect of gaining their point.

But, though there is reason to conclude that these were their thoughts at that time, yet they could not depart at once from the evasive conduct to which they had hitherto adhered; for when the Commodore, on the morning of the 1st of October, was preparing to set out for Canton, his linguist came to him from the Mandarin, who attended the ship, to tell him that a letter had been received from the Viceroy of Canton, desiring the Commodore to put off his going thither for two or three days. The reality of this message was not then questioned; but in the afternoon of the same day, another linguist came on board, who with much seeming fright told Mr. Anson that the Viceroy had expected him up that day, that the council was assembled, and the troops had been under arms to receive him, and that the Viceroy was highly offended at the disappointment, and had sent the Commo-