

the two forts, on each side of that passage, with as many men as they could well contain, the greatest part of them armed with pikes and match-lock muskets. These garrisons affected to shew themselves, as much as possible, to the ships, and were doubtless intended to induce Mr. Anson to think more reverently than he had hitherto done of the Chinese military power: for this purpose they were equipped with extraordinary parade, having a great number of colours exposed to view; and a soldier of unusual size, dressed in very sightly armour, stalked about on the parapet, with a battle-axe in his hand, endeavouring to put on as important and martial an air as possible: though some of the observers on board the *Centurion* shrewdly suspected, from the appearance of his armour, that instead of steel, it was composed only of a particular kind of glittering paper.

The *Centurion* and her prize being now without the river of Canton, and consequently upon the point of leaving the Chinese jurisdiction, I beg leave to subjoin a few remarks on the disposition and genius of that celebrated people.

That the Chinese are a very ingenious and industrious people, is sufficiently evinced, from the great number of curious manufactures which are established amongst them, and which are eagerly sought for by the most distant nations; but though skill in the handicraft arts seems to be the most valuable qualification of this people, yet their talents therein are but of a second rate kind; for they are much outdone by the Japanese in those manufactures, which are common to both countries; and they are in numerous instances incapable of rivaling the mechanic dexterity of the Europeans. Indeed, their principal excellency seems to be imitation; and they accordingly labour under that poverty of genius which constantly attends all servile imitators. This is most conspicuous in the works which require great truth and accuracy; as in clocks, watches, fire-arms, &c. for in all these, though they can copy the different parts,