

every assistance in their power. This, however, Mr. King understood would be very inconsiderable, since they were perfectly dependent on the Chinese, even for their daily support. Indeed, the answer that was returned to Mr. King's first request, furnished a sufficient proof of the reduced state of the Portuguese power; for, on his signifying to the major, his desire of proceeding to Canton as soon as possible, the latter acquainted him, that they could not presume to provide a boat for him, till permission had been obtained from the *Hopfo*, or officer of the customs; and that it was necessary to apply, for this purpose, to the Chinese government at Canton.

Captain's King's mortification at so unexpected a delay, could be equalled only by the eager impatience with which he had so long waited for an opportunity of gaining information with regard to European affairs. It not unfrequently happens, that, amidst the ardent pursuit of an object, we neglect the most obvious means of attaining it. This was, indeed, Mr. King's case at present; for he was returning to the ship in a state of great dejection, when the Portuguese officer who accompanied him, asked him, whether he did not intend to visit the English gentlemen at Macao. It is unnecessary to add with what transport Mr. King received the intelligence conveyed to him by this question, as well as with what anxious hopes and fears; what a conflict between curiosity and apprehension, his mind was agitated, as he and his companions walked towards the house of one of their countrymen. The reception they met with was by no means deficient in civility or kindness, though, from the state of agitation they were in, it appeared to them rather cold and formal. In their inquiries, as far as regarded objects of private concern, they obtained, as was indeed to be expected, little or no satisfaction; but the occurrences of a public nature, which had happened since the period of our departure from England, and which now overwhelmed all other feelings, had almost deprived them, for some time, of the power of reflection.