

his stores on board would meet with great difficulty. On the 24th of November, therefore, Mr. Anson sent one of his officers to the Mandarin who commanded the guard of the principal gate of the city of Canton, with a letter directed to the Viceroy. When this letter was delivered to the Mandarin, he received the officer who brought it very civilly, and took down the contents of it in Chinese, and promised that the Viceroy should be immediately acquainted with it; but told the officer it was not necessary he should wait for an answer, because a message would be sent to the Commodore himself.

When Mr. Anson first determined to write this letter, he had been under great difficulties about a proper interpreter, as he was well aware that none of the Chinese usually employed as linguists could be relied on; but he at last prevailed with Mr. Flint, an English gentleman belonging to the factory, who spoke Chinese perfectly well, to accompany his officer. This person, who, upon that occasion, and many others, was of singular service to the Commodore, had been left at Canton, when a youth, by the late Captain Rigby. The leaving him there to learn the Chinese language was a step taken by that captain merely from his own persuasion of the considerable advantages which the East India Company might one day receive from an English interpreter; and the utility of this measure has greatly exceeded all that was expected from it.

Two days after the sending the above-mentioned letter, a fire broke out in the suburbs of Canton. On the first alarm, Mr. Anson went thither with his officers and his boat's crew to aid the Chinese. When he came there, he found that it had begun in a sailor's shed, and that by the slightness of the buildings, and the awkwardness of the Chinese, it was getting head apace. However he perceived that by pulling down some of the adjacent sheds, it might easily be extinguished; and particularly observed, that it was then running along a wooden cornice, which blazed fiercely, and would immediately communicate the