At half past ten, the Ambassador, attended by all his suite, guards, &c. in full formality, went on shore to pay a visit to the chief mandarin of the city, whole palace is at a small distance from the river, and placed in the center of a very fine garden: it is a lofty edifice, built of brick, with a range of palisadoes in the front, fancifully gilt and painted. The center building has three, and the wings two stories. The outside wall is decorated with paintings, and the roof is coloured with a yellow yarn varnish that produces a very splendid effect. This building contains several interior courts, handsomely paved with broad flat stones.

The Ambassador, and his suite, were entertained with a cold collation, consisting of dishes dressed in the fashion of the country, with tea, fruit, and a great variety of confectionary; a branch of table luxury, which is well understood by the Chinese.

A play was also performed on the occasion, as a particular mark of respect and attention to the distinguished visitor. The theatre is a square building, built principally of wood, and is erected in the front of the mandarin’s palace. The stage, or platform, is surrounded with galleries; and the whole was, on this occasion, decorated with a profusion of ribbons, and silken streamers of various colours. The theatrical exhibitions consisted chiefly of warlike representations; such as imaginary battles, with swords, spears, and lances; which weapons the performers managed with an astonishing activity. The scenes were beautifully gilt and painted, and the dresses of the actors were ornamented in conformity to the enrichments of the scenery. The exhibition was varied also, by several very curious deceptions by slight of hand and theatrical machinery. There was also a display of that species of agility which consists in tumbling, wherein the performers executed their parts with superior address and activity. Some of the actors were dressed in female characters; but I was informed at the time, that they were eunuchs, as the Chinese never suffer their women to appear in such a state of public exhibition as the stage. The performance was also enlivened by a band of music, which consisted entirely of wind instruments: some of them were very long, and resembled a trumpet; others had the appearance of French-horns, and clarinets: the founds of the latter brought to my recollection that of a Scotch bag-pipe; and their music, being destitute both of melody and harmony, was of course, very disagreeable to our cars, which are accustomed to such perfection in those essential points of music. But we had every reason to be satisfied with the entertainment, the circumstances of which were replete with novelty and curious amusement.

The dress of the soldiers was, with their arms and accoutrements, the fame as those which we have already described, except in the colour, which was both white and blue, though equally bound with the same broad red binding: some of them, on the present occasion, were employed, with long whips, to keep off the crowd from pressing on the procession of the Ambassador and his suite.

His Excellency was saluted, both on his arrival and at his departure, with three pieces of small ordnance: and, soon after his return to the vessel the fleet set sail, amidst the greatest concourse of boats and people I ever beheld: – indeed, so great was the crowd of both, that I considered it to be impossible for us to pass on without being the witnesses of considerable mischief. One very old junk that lay at anchor had such a number of people on board it, to see the extraordinary fight of the day, that the sternmost part of the deck yielded to the enormous pressure, and suddenly gave way, when about forty of these curious people fell into the river, and several of them were unfortunately drowned. Some were, indeed, saved by clinging to the ropes which were thrown out to them; though it was very evident to those who witnessed the accident, that curiosity rather than humanity prevailed on the occasion; and that the people were more anxious to get a fight of the foreigners, than to save the lives of their countrymen.