Soon after the Embassador, and the gentlemen of his suite, had returned to their respective yachts, a magnificent repast, with wine, fruit, and sweetmeats, was sent to them on the part of the Viceroy, as at Ta-coo, together with presents of tea, silk, and muslins. Tho of no considerable value, those presents were accompanied with such obliging expressions and compliments, that they were received in the manner which was thought would be most satisfactory to the donor. He likewise sent a plentiful dinner and presents to the soldiers, musicians, artificers, and servants, of the Embassy.

Among other instances of his attention to the Embassador, a temporary theatre was erected opposite to his Excellency’s yacht. The outside was adorned with a variety of brilliant and lively colours, by the proper distribution of which, and sometimes by their contrast, it is the particular object of an art among the Chinese to produce a gay and pleasing effect. The inside of the theatre was managed, in regard to decorations, with equal success; and the company of actors successively exhibited, during the whole day, several different pantomimes and historical dramas. The performers were habited in the ancient dresses of the Chinese at the period when the personages represented were supposed to have lived. The dialogue was spoken in a kind of recitative. accompanied by a variety of musical instruments: and each pause was filled up by a loud crash, in which the loo bore no inconsiderable part. The band of music was placed in full view, immediately behind the stage, which was broad, but by no means deep. Each character announced, on his first entrance, what part he was about to perform, and where the scene of action lay. Unity of place was apparently preserved, for there was no change of scene during the representation of one piece. Female characters were performed by boys or eunuchs.

One of the dramas, particularly, attracted the attention of those who recollected scenes, somewhat similar, upon the English stage. The piece represented an emperor of China and his empress living in supreme felicity, when, on a sudden, his subjects revolt, a civil war ensues, battles are fought, and at last the arch-rebel, who was a general of cavalry, overcomes his sovereign, kills him with his own hand, and routes the imperial army. The captive empress then appears upon the stage in all the agonies of despair naturally resulting from the loss of her husband and of her dignity, as well as the apprehension for that of her honour. Whilst she is tearing her hair and rending the skies with her complaints, the conqueror enters, approaches her with respect. addresses her in a gentle tone, soothes her sorrows with his compassion, talks of love and adoration, and like Richard the Third, with lady Anne, in Shakspeare, prevails, in less than half an hour, on the Chinese princess to dry up her tears, to forget her deceased consort, and yield to a consoling wooer. The piece concludes with the nuptials, and a grand procession. One of the principal scenes is represented in Plate 30 of the folio volume.