

Hon^d Sir

TM 11/1/40

Canton April 22, 1807.

All our attention has been absorbed for these last two months by a Contestation between the Super cargoes & ~~the~~ the Mandarins respecting delivering up a man for having killed a Chinese. I enclose you a short account of the matter. You will see it I suppose, amply detailed in the papers. It has stoped all business & all diversion. But for that, the fleet would have been dispatched, & we should have been down at Malacca long ago. We expect now to be off in a few days. I wrote to you at first arriving at Canton, & told you how agreeably I am situated — every thing goes on to my hearty content. — I was last week at an entertainment given by one of the Chinese Securitys of merchants, as they are called. A sumptuous Dinner, & comedies & tragedies acting all the while; interspersed with juggling & conjuring. The tumbling was far superior to any thing I have seen; astonishing feats of strength & activity. the men might make their fortune in Europe. prodigious somersets — turning in the air, &

alighting with the feet on a man's shoulder,
desperate jumps, & incredible velocity —
the Conjuring the same as in Europe. The
comedies well acted and entertaining to me.
I wish I could give you an account of the
dinner, but tis beyond me. — I began upon
a basin of birds-nest soup — then sharks
fins — then fishes now stewed in — ah I
am lost. — We drank King George's health &
then the health of Kia-Ling, Emperor of
China. The music, the decorations, the hall
we sat in (about 40 guests) altogether curious.

A deal more may be learned at Canton than
I was aware of. The Europeans here know
nothing of what is every day before their
eyes — for want of speaking the Language,
which is so difficult as to weary the patience
of all those who do not come here purposely
to study it. — The Europeans are in a
very degraded & disgraceful situation here.
All the merchants, that visit China are
aware of it, & I never heard one but what
allowed it — but you good people of England
have no notion of the except of our humiliations.
As when a child goes to an apple stall to buy
fruit, he only signifies his wants, & leaving
the old woman to transact the exchange, &
holds out his imbecil fist with the money she
demands, & even if made angry can only stutter

while she smiles, ^{contemptuously,} so we at Canton put
ourselves into the hands of the Chinese. —
We have not a single European servant here,
except a nominal steward & butler. Every
thing we eat & drink is prepared & bought
& dooped & served up by Chinese — we are as
babies under nurses — we can't stir a step with-
out asking leave. — To be sure we have a great
contempt for the Chinese, as they have for us. we
have ~~our~~ ^{our} revenge there — but they are the masters,
nobody denying that — what is become of the pride &
domineering spirit we show every where else (except
in Japan) these are not my observations alone, but
those of every Purser & Officer in the fleet.

And see what Perouse says in that part of his
voyage which treats of Chacao (1st Volume) —
I have no patience with this blustering & huffing
in India & licking the dust here — I had rather
see the same insolence throughout — for insolence is
better than meanness. When some thousand years
hence the history of it is written, & the spirit of it
all appears to be only a few tons of shrivelled
leaves to make a grateful infusion — they'll hardly
believe it! You must not say any thing of this to
the directors — When you write, acknowledge
the letters you have received from me; they
ought to be many. — We have news from
England down to the middle of August; we had
rumors of a peace — but they seem subsided.
Yours for I am Thos Manning

Dr Sir

Inclosed I send you your son Thomas,
aut. of the late affray at Canton which ^{are}
no doubt you will find Interesting — I just
on the point of embarking on a short voyage
to S. America — will therefore be deprived
of the power of forwarding your letters to China
but if you will take the trouble to send them
to Mr Young No 35 Abchurch Lane, a very par-
- ticular friend of mine, who transacts my
business during my absence, he will take
care they shall be forwarded by the earliest
conveyance,

I remain
Dr Sir

Ms

J. Crabtree

Feb 25. 1808.



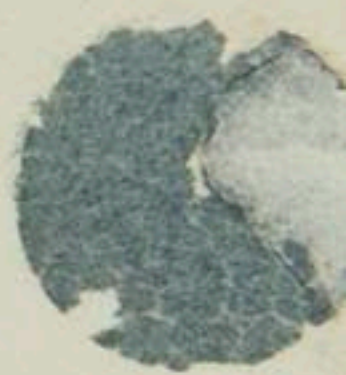
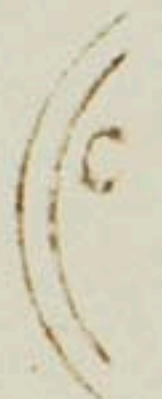
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From Mr Coal Tree

My account of the Foxy at Canton

The Rev Mr Manning

Yr
Drs
New York.



On the 24 of February an affray took place between the Chinese Mob on one part, to the amount of some hundreds, & fifty two Sailors of the Neptune (On Buchanan) on the other.

— Some of the Sailors having given offense to certain Chinese, they were besieged in their factory by a power of the rabble, who pelted the building with stones & rubbish, which they showered in with redoubled violence whenever the gates were opened to let anyone in or out.

After a long forbearance, & many wounds received, seeing no end to this intolerable nuisance, which hindered all passing on the quay, & interrupted all business, the men were let out — forth they rushed, stick in hand — away & led the Chinese (one sailor with a

stick will turn you a hundred of 'em) — Jack after them, cracking each crown he could overtake.

Scores of them plunged into the river, ^{& scrambled up to the boats} to avoid Johnny's

fury. I was standing in the Company's Veranda at the time, with several supercargoes & others, & thought

the scene very diverting, — especially to see the Chinese run violently down steep places into the water, as if

the Devil was in them. ^{They were chased away like hogs out of a garden.} The place was cleared

in the twinkling of a tip staff — there was one man left on the ground, who pretended to be sorely hurt,

but a few Dollars set him on his legs again, & he has complained no more. — Next day the business was forgotten

as it were. but on the 27th there were rumors of a man being dead. Mouqua, the security Merchant for

the Neptune, was spoken to, but treated it as idle talk, observing that the man who had been left awhile on the Quay

was alive & well, & that ~~too~~ too much time had elapsed for any new complaint to be reasonably made. — Soon

afterwards he comes to Mr Roberts with a different face —

full of dismay, announcing that a man is dead in the City,
that the mandarins have investigated the affair, & determined
that his death is in consequence of a blow received from some
sailor of the Neptune on the 2nd; & that the matter has
gone too far to be made up. — Then come out the Edicts,
requiring the Murderer to be given up. But the English
had no clue whatever towards finding out the man,
nor even towards discovering whether the blow was given
by an Englishman. — Why not buy a stone from a
Chinese man? why not by some other European present?
Why not by one of the 16 Americans who had just been
dining with the English sailors? why not by his
own Doctor? &c. &c. — The man had walked home
immediately, without complaining, legally, or in any manner
to us — the body is not produced to us — no evidence — no
detail, except that a little child says he saw a man in
European clothes strike the deceased. —

The English refuse or to speak more properly, explain
the impossibility of complying with the demand. —
The Neptune's Landing stop — Useless Conferences between
the mandarins, the Committee & Capⁿ Robles. — Landing
of all the Ships stop — Sailors examined by a committee
of Captains, & No light gained. Conference succeeds
conference; they (the mandarins) ring the changes upon
"give up the man" we upon "Who is the man?"
We invite them to find him out ^{themselves} by examining
~~themselves~~ either at the ships or at the factory at Canton,
but refusing to give up the sailors into their hands
pour ~~etre~~ ^{est} ~~mis~~ ^{la} question. Whatever may be
pleaded in favor of torturing men to make them confess to
what they are conscious of (& I was taught to think even this
damnable, & I imagined that all Englishmen agreed in that sentiment,
till the Irish rebellion ^{set me right} ~~undecided me~~) it surely is infamous
to torture a man in order to make him depose to what he
is ignorant of, & to confess to what he is unconscious of! And the
Mandarins know as well as we — I have heard their countrymen
admit it — that the man who really struck the blow, is in

all probably unaware that his hand rather than any other should have been an instrument of death. - Well 18 days after the first offer of having the men up to be examined by the mandarins in the factory, they accept it. An Edict for that purpose is issued. - the 52 men are brought up, with 20 Marines from the Lyon to guard them. - A space in the bottom of one of the English factories is fitted up by the Chinese as a court of justice - very commodiously & decorously, and here I must say that in no country are the forms of justice better regulated & kept up than here. ^{They appoint a day} ~~A day is appointed~~ we assemble - wait - no Mandarins come - another day the same - at last they get over their difficulties. - the court is opened in a very striking manner. 1st Solemn & lofty words by a ^{herald} - then a lengthened resounding cry of hou...!! (meaning tyger) from a long avenue of attendants - then a loud sonorous & awful clangor of Gongs. - But what is the examination that succeeds? in one word, **NO SENSE!** - Each man is asked to say that he is guilty or to accuse some of his companions. Each man refuses, & denies having had any hand in the riot - To hear these ragga-muffins speak they were all as gentle as lambs that day - O yes, they would not hurt a Chinese ^{man} for the world. Lying & denying was the order of the day; - we certainly did not share in this business in the article of English Sailor - The true Factor I admire. I have seen him at Canton, & only two days before this unfortunate fray, I recognised the character among the crew of some other ship (not the Neptune) whom I was observing at my leisure from a window, as they were strolling about the Quay. I was amused & highly affected by various traits I witnessed of his hearty & generous nature. I had heard their conduct here severely censured, & represented as shameful & brutal by the Merchants. During our voyage & since, & I had certainly entertained prejudices against them. I was delighted therefore to find occasion to change my opinion, & this change I immediately recorded as a sort of protest against the unfair representations I had listened to. But the Neptune men are a bad crew - & not entitled to the name of English sailors - there are exceptions among them, no doubt; but as one who has seen the crew, will reproach me I believe for having called them Ragga-muffins.

A 2^d & a 3^d ^{examination} ~~Conference~~ succeeded this first; & with no better success. At the end of the 3^d, the Mandarins chose out as a representative of the guilty man, one Edward Sheen (who had confessed that he had been out of the factory that day (to buy cloths) & that he had in his hand a bamboo tobacco-pipe. We understand that he is chosen,

because by means of the tobacco-pipe, they can bring it in an accidental blow - supposed to be in warding off a stone, not seeing that a Chinaman stood near him - a sort of flourish with his tobacco-pipe, & an unlucky back-handed blow!! - I am not exaggerating upon my honor. The grave Chinese Hong merchants give this reason. Every body knows that there was no kind of legitimate reason to select Edward Sheen. but they must find one.

If a man had been given up to them at first, as the probable perpetrator of the deed, he would have been tried for murder, & strangled. If the 52 had been delivered over to them to take into the city & examine, those pretty instruments (which they even brought with them into our factory, as part of their necessary train) would have been set to work, & one or other of the lies they would have squeezed out would have fastened a halter round the neck of some unfortunate fellow, while the refuse lies would probably have served to bring down severe punishment upon several of the others.

The steadiness, the unyielding forbearance of the committee has at length forced the Mandarins to call the accident by a gentler name, & be contented with the slightest kind of punishment - a fine probably. They seem to have had originally no idea that we could have stood out so firm at the hazard of the loss of the passage to g. ships, or the possible ^{stoppage} loss of the trade. The convicted man is detained there under the custody of Mr Roberts, till the Viceroy, who is absent shall have sent his order concerning him. He certainly will not be delivered into the hands of the Chinese, at least not without ample security for his being clemently treated. In the mean time the Alphonse is completing her loading - The other ships are ready for sea, having resumed their loading as soon as the 52 were brought up to Canton & be examined. Thus the matter stands at present.

During the examination of one of the men, the Court informed him (falsely) that the last examined sailor had given positive evidence against him. - Cap. Rolles & Mr Roberts interfered, & stating the truth, admonished the court that they would not stand those tricks.

April 16.

On the 24th of February an affray took place between the Chinese mob on one part, to the amount of some hundreds, & 52 sailors of the Neptune (Capⁿ Murchison) on the other. — Some of the sailors having given offense to certain Chinese, they were besieged in their factory by a power of the rabble, who pelted the building with stones & rubbish, which they showered down with redoubled violence, whenever the gates were opened to let anyone in or out. After a long forbearance, & many wounds received, seeing no end to this intolerable nuisance, which hindered all passing on the quay, and interrupted all business, the men were let out. — forth they sallied, stick in hand — (for, as you know, one sailor with a stick will turn a hundred of them), — Jack after them, cracking each crown he could overtake. Scores of them plounded into the river, & scrambled up to the boats to avoid Johnson's fury. — They were chased away like hogs out of a garden. I was standing at the Company's Veranda at the time, with several supercargoes & others, & thought the scene very diverting — especially to see the Chinese run violently down steep places into the water as if the Devil was in them. The place was cleared in the twinkling of a hip staff. There was one man left on the ground who pretended to be sorely hurt, but a few Dollars set him on his legs again, & he has complained no more. — Next day the business was forgotten, as it were. But on the 27th there were rumors of a man dead. Mougua, the security merchant for the Neptune, was spoken to; but he treated it as idle talk, observing that the man who had been left a while on the quay, was alive & well, & that too much time had elapsed for any ~~new~~ new complaint to be reasonably made. — Soon afterwards he comes to Mr Robert with a different face — full of dismay; announcing that a man is dead in the city, that the Mandarin

have investigated the affair, & determined that his death is in consequence of a blow received from some sailor of the Neptune on the 24th & that the matter has gone too far to be made up. — Then came out the Edicts, requiring the Murderer to be given up. But the English had no clue whatever towards finding out the man, nor even towards discovering whether the blow was given by an English man. Why not by a Hone from a Choramam? Why not by some other European present? Why not by one of the six Americans, who had just been dining with the English Sailors? Why not by his own doctor? As the men had walked home immediately, without complaining, legally, or in any manner to us. The body is not produced to us — no evidence — no detail — except that a little child says he saw a man in European cloths strike the deceased.

The English refuse, or to speak more properly, explain the impossibility of complying with the demand.

The Captains' Landing Stopt — useless conferences between the Mandarins, the Committee & C^r Rollas. — Landing of all the ships Stopt — Sailors examined by a committee of Captains at Whampoa. no light gained. Conference succeeds conference. They (the M^{ns}) ring the changes upon "Give up the man" We upon "Who is the man" We invite them to find him out themselves by examining either at the ships or at the factory at Canton; but refusing to give up the sailors into their hands nor else mis a la question. Whatever may be pleaded in favor of torturing men to make them confess & what they are conscious of (and I was taught to think even this damnable, & imagined that all English men agreed in that sentiment, till the Irish rebellion got me right) it surely is infamous to torture a man in order to make him depose to facts he is ignorant of, & to confess what he is unconscious of! and the Mandarins know as well as we — I have heard their own country men ~~admit~~ admit it — that the man who really struck the blow, is in all probability unaware that his hand rather than any other should have been an instrument of death. —

Well, 12 days after the 1st offer of having the men brought up to be examined by the Mandarins in the factory, they accept it. An Edict is for that purpose issued & the 52 men are brought up with 20 marines from the lion to guard them. A space in the bottom of one of the English factories is fitted up by the Chinese as a court of justice; very commodiously & decorously. - & here I must say, that in no country are the forms of justice better regulated & kept up than here. They appoint a day we assemble - wait - no Mandarins come - another day the same - at last they get over their difficulties - the court is opened in a very striking manner. 1st solemn & lofty words by a herald - then a lengthened resounding cry of Hou....! (tyger) from a long avenue of attendants - then a loud sonorous & awe-inspiring clangor of Gongs. - But what is the examination that succeeds? In one word, nonsense. - Each man is asked to say that he is guilty, or to accuse some of his companions. Each man refuses, & denies having had any hand in the riot. - To hear these Raggamuffins speak, they were all as gentle as lambs that day! O yes, they would not hurt a Chinaman for the world! Lying & denying was the order of the day - we certainly did not share in this business in the article of English sailors - the true sailor I admire. - I have seen him at Canton, & only two days before this unfortunate fray, I recognized the genuine character among the crew of some other ship (not the Nephene) whom I was observing at my leisure from a window, as they were strolling about the Quay. I was amused & highly affected by various traits I witnessed of his hearty, brave & generous nature. I had heard their conduct ^{here} so severely rebuked & represented as shameful & brutal & nothing else, by various persons during our voyage & since, & I had certainly entertained prejudices against them. I was delighted therefore to find occasion to change their opinions, & this change I immediately recorded as a sort of protest against the unfair representations I had listened to. But the Nephene's men are a bad crew, & not entitled to the name of English sailors - there are exceptions among them, no doubt. But no one who has seen the crew will reproach me, I believe, for having called them raggamuffins.

A 2^d and a 3^d examination succeeded to this first; & with no better success. At the end of the 3^d, the

Mandarin chose out as a representative of the guilty man, one Edward Sheen who had confessed that he had been out of the factory that day (to buy cloths) and that he had in his hand a bamboo-tobacco-pipe. We understand that he is chosen, because by means of the tobacco-pipe they can bring it in an accidental blow — supposed to be given in warding off a stone — not seeing that a Chinese man stood near him — a sort of flourish with his tobacco-pipe, & an unlucky back-handed blow!! I am not exaggerating upon my honor; the grave Chinese Hong Merchants give this reason —

Every body knows that there was no kind of legitimate reason to select Edward Sheen, but they must find one —

If a man had been given up to them at first, as the probable perpetrator of the deed, he would have been tried for murder, & strangled. If the 52 had been delivered over to them to take into the city & examine, those pretty instruments (which they brought with them even into our factory, as part of their necessary train) would have been set to work, & one or other of the lies they would have squeered out, would have fastened a halter round the neck of some unfortunate fellow, while the refuse lies would probably have served to bring down severe punishments upon several of the others.

The steadiness & unyielding forbearance of the Committee has at length forced the Mandarins to call the accident by a gentle name, & to be contented with a slight punishment — a fine probably — Thus the English Honor has been saved without unpleasant consequences. The Chinese seem to have had originally no idea that we could have stood out so firm, at the risk of the loss of the passage to nine ships, & of the possible stoppage of the trade. The convicted man is detained here under the custody of Mr Roberts, till the Viceroy, who is absent, shall have sent his orders respecting him. He certainly will not be delivered into the hands of the Chinese, at least not without ample security for his being clemently treated. In the meantime the nephew is completing her lading. The other ships are ready for sea, having been permitted to resume their lading as soon as the 52 were brought up to Canton to be examined. — Thus the matter stands at present.

During the examination of one of the men, the Court informed him (falsely) that the last examined sailor had given positive evidence against him. Captain Rolles & Mr Roberts interfered; & stating the truth, admonished the Court that they would not stand those tricks. —

16th April. —