

and his mother, supposing they should have an inclination to stop and rest themselves there for a few moments.

In the city was another sight still finer in its kind, than that I have been describing. From the western gate, by which the court was to make its entrance to the gate of the palace, there were nothing but superb buildings, peristyles*, pavilions, colonnades, galleries, amphitheatres, with trophies, and other works of Chinese architecture, all equally splendid. These embellished with festoons, garlands, and many other ornaments of a similar kind, which being composed of the finest silk of different colours, afforded a charming sight. Gilding, mock diamonds, and other stones of the same kind, glittered on all sides. A large quantity of mirrors† made of metal highly polished, greatly added to the show. Their construction and arrangement, by multiplying objects on all sides, and re-assembling them in miniature, formed every thing that could enchant the eyes.

These brilliant edifices were interrupted from time to time by artificial mountains and valleys, made in imitation of nature, which one would have taken for agreeable deserts and for real places of delightful solitude. They had contrived brooks and fountains, had planted trees and thickets, and stuck on deer, to which they had given attitudes so natural, that one would have said they were alive. Upon the summits or declivities of some of these mountains, were seen Bonzaries or Chinese convents with their little temples and idols, to which they had made little paths. In other places they had made orchards and gardens. In the greatest part of these were seen vines with their tendrils and clusters, in different degrees of maturity. In others were planted all sorts of trees, so as to exhibit the fruits and flowers of the four seasons of the year. They were not to be distinguished from the true ones; although they were only artificial.

This was not all. In diverse places by which the procession was to pass, they had distributed lakes, meres and reservoirs, with their several kinds of fish and aquatic fowls. In other places they had set children disguised like apes and other animals, who acted the several parts assigned them. As these were clothed in the very skins of the animals they were to represent, the deception was complete. Other children were made to resemble birds and fowls,

and acted their parts upon pillars or lofty poles. These poles and pillars were covered with pieces of silk, which concealed men underneath, whose business it was to put the children stationed above in motion. In other places they had laid fruits of an enormous size, in which they had enclosed children. These fruits opened, from time to time, so far as to shew the spectators what they contained. I am not able to inform you, whether there was any symbolical meaning in all this, or whether it was merely the production of a whimsical and extravagant fancy. The bands of music, the companies of comedians, jugglers, and others, were placed at intervals, all along the side of the river; and endeavoured every one, according to his ability, his skill, and his address, to do something which might please, if not the Emperor and his mother, at least some of the grantees of their retinue, into whose service they might hope to be admitted.

The mandarines of each tribunal had a particular building which they had caused to be erected, and embellished at their own expence. The same had the governors of each province, the princes of the blood, and the other grantees of the empire. The variety of lanterns and their arrangement formed an appearance, which merits a description apart: but as you have described to you on many occasions, the Chinese lanterns, the manner in which they are made, and the ornaments with which they are decorated, I shall refer you to those books wherein they are mentioned.

When once these works began to be brought to some degree of perfection, very strict orders were issued out, that no person of any quality or condition soever should presume to smoke tobacco in the streets so newly ornamented. This precaution appeared necessary to prevent any accident which might have happened from fire. The police or good government that was observed upon this occasion, as well as during the whole preparations of this festival, appeared to be admirable. Some weeks before the day of ceremony, a regulation was made; that the streets (which are here extremely wide) should be divided into three parts; in order that foot passengers, and those on horseback, the comers and goers, in a word that prodigious multitude of people, which was then assembled in the capital; might all enjoy this fine sight at their ease. The middle of the street, which was much larger than the two

* A peristyle is a circular range of pillars. Any series of pillars is a colonnade.

† The Chinese mirrors are not of glass but polished metal.