

freshness of the meadows, of the forest-crowned hills, and the peaceful dwellings of men, with the somber picture of the tombs of his forefathers. The sacrifices which he offers in obedience to the rites prescribed by Confucius, and the pious remembrance of the departed monarchs and warriors, form the principal objects of this remarkable poem. A long enumeration of the wild plants and animals that are natives of the region is wearisome, like every other didactic work; but the blending of the visible impressions produced by the landscape, which serves, as it were, for the back-ground of the picture, with the exalted objects of the ideal world, with the fulfillment of religious duties, together with the mention of great historical events, gives a peculiar character to the whole composition. The feeling of adoration for mountains, which was so deeply rooted among the Chinese, leads Kien-long to give a careful delineation of the physiognomy of inanimate nature, for which the Greeks and Romans evinced so little feeling. The form of the separate trees, the character of their ramification, the direction of the branches, and the form of the foliage, are all dwelt on with special predilection.*

If I have not yielded to the distaste for Chinese literature, which is, unfortunately, disappearing too slowly from among us, and if I have dwelt too long on the consideration of the delineations of nature met with in the works of a cotemporary of Frederic the Great, I am so much the more bound to ascend seven and a half centuries further back into the annals of time, in order to refer to the poem of the *Garden*, by See-ma-kuang, a celebrated statesman. The pleasure grounds described in this poem are certainly much crowded by buildings in the fashion of the old Italian villas, but the minister likewise celebrates a hermitage, which is situated among rocks and surrounded by high fir-trees. He extols the open view over the broad river Kiang, crowded with vessels, and expects, with contentment, the arrival of friends, who will read their verses to him, since they will also listen to his compositions.† See-ma-kuang wrote about the year 1086, when, in Germany, poetry was in the hands of a rude clergy, and was not even clothed in the garb of the national tongue.

At this period, and probably five hundred years earlier, the inhabitants of China, of Eastern India, and Japan, were al-

* *Eloge de la Ville de Moukden*, Poème composé par l'Empereur Kien-long, traduit par le P. Amiot, 1770, p. 18, 22-25, 37, 63-68, 73-87 104, and 120.

† *Mémoires concernant les Chinois*, t. ii., p. 643-650.