

the feast of the laborers. The younger Cyrus planted many trees with his own hands, which would not be a subject of encomium, if the intention did not place the amusement in the most respectable light. Even at this day the Emperor of China, on a particular festival, holds the plough, that he may set the example to his subjects: a ceremony, which, as it certainly produces the best effects, is perhaps more worthy of the throne than all those that are intended to display the pride of royalty." Agriculture has always been encouraged in China by the Government. Every year, from time immemorial, a grand festival is celebrated in its honor in all the principal towns of the empire, and the Emperor himself, on this occasion, works in a field in the environs of Pekin. In the ancient Imperial ordinances, we find the following precept:—"If there is a man who does not labor, a woman who does not spin, some one suffers from cold or hunger in the country." None of the Chinese reformers have forgotten the noble maxim; many of them have been celebrated by the zeal with which they have put it in practice. Among this number is quoted an emperor of the family of Pung. Faithful to the spirit which had constantly inspired his predecessors, this monarch caused an infinity of the monasteries of the Bonzes to be destroyed. Another, the Emperor Yong-Ching, who reigned at the end of the last century, ordered the governors of the provinces to send him every year the name of the peasant who had rendered himself noticed by his application to farming and his good conduct. This diligent laborer was raised to the rank of mandarin of the eighth order, a distinction which gave him a right much envied in China, that of taking tea with the governor and remaining seated in his presence. On his death, great honors were rendered him, and his name was inscribed with pomp in the hall of his ancestors. This wise policy has not only resulted in augmenting the number of farmers in China, but nowhere are they more esteemed, and they rank much higher than the mechanics and merchants of the city.

Dr. William Rutherford, in his "View of Ancient History," (vol. 1, page 125,) says:—"It was one great object of government, in all the eastern empires, to encourage population and agriculture. The original law of the Creator, 'increase, multiply, and replenish the earth,' has never been forgotten in Asia, where, in modern as in ancient times, a numerous progeny is looked upon as the chief blessing which heaven can bestow. The monarch distributed rewards annually to such as had many children. To render population a blessing, it is necessary that the earth should produce sufficient nourish-

ment for its inhabitants. The fine climate and fertile soil of Asia invited its possessors to avail themselves of this bounty of nature. To make agriculture flourish became an object of public attention, and of imperial munificence. The Satraps, whose provinces were best cultivated, enjoyed most of the royal favor; and superintendents were appointed to inspect their rural labors and economy. Hence the public works and canals at Babylon, similar to those in Egypt, to assist the fertility of the earth. In such reputation was husbandry held, that precepts concerning it entered into their books of religion. The saint, according to Zoroaster, was to plant useful trees, to destroy noxious animals, to convey water to the dry lands, and to follow the labours of agriculture. "He who sows the ground with care and diligence," says the Zendavesta, acquires a greater stock of religious merit than he could gain by fasting and sacrifices." In the spring of every year a festival was celebrated, designed to represent the primitive equality and the present connexion of mankind. The monarch of the East, exchanging the splendour of his throne for more genuine greatness, freely mingled with the humblest but most useful of his subjects. On that day the husbandmen were admitted, without distinction, to the table of the King and his satraps. The sovereign accepted their petitions, enquired into their grievances, and conversed with them on equal terms. "From your labours," said he, "we receive our subsistence; you derive your tranquility from our vigilance; since, therefore, we are mutually necessary to each other, let us live together like brothers, in concord and love." As agriculture, the true and permanent source of wealth and prosperity, was thus honoured and encouraged in Asia, the mode in which the sovereigns raised their revenues was not oppressive to their subjects.

In Greece, owing to its situation and soil, agriculture did not receive such care and attention as in other countries. But says the Abbe Millot:—"As the Greeks increased in knowledge, they quickly became sensible of the importance of agriculture, to which they had shown great dislike, before they became thoroughly acquainted with the benefits of society. It is agriculture which peoples and supports kingdoms, and procures for them their most solid riches. It is upon agriculture that the happiness of nations situated in a fertile soil depends. Plenty of natural productions procures other wealth, or prevents the people from being sensible of the want of it. Without the fruits of the earth all other riches are but a useless burden, and we sometimes see the fable of Midas by woeful experience realized. It was for that reason that the sages of

antiquity, particularly Xenophon, applied to the study of this subject, with which they ought to have been still better acquainted; their lessons being limited to the common practice of their own times. Socrates, the wisest philosopher of antiquity, said:—"Agriculture is an employment the most worthy of the application of man; the most ancient and the most suitable to his nature. It is the common nurse of all persons in every age and condition of life, it is the source of health, strength, plenty and riches; and of a thousand sober delights and honest pleasures. It is the mistress and school of sobriety, temperance, justice, religion, and, in short, of all virtues, civil and military."

War and agriculture were the two chief employments of the Romans. Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, a celebrated dictator, was taken from the plough to command the Roman armies. After having accomplished the desire of his friends, set the affairs of the state in order, and instituted good laws, he resigned his office, and retired to his farm. The senators commonly resided in the country, and cultivated the ground with their own hands; and the noblest families derived their surnames from cultivating particular kinds of grain. To be a good husbandman was accounted the highest praise; and whoever neglected his ground, or cultivated it improperly, was liable to the animadversion of the censors. That the Romans were very attentive to every part of husbandry, appears from the writers on that subject, Cato, Varro, Pliny, Columella, Palladius, &c. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and others, have written pastoral poems. Celsus, the physician, as well as others, wrote on agriculture.

Thus we see what agriculture was thought of in ancient times; how it was encouraged, fostered, developed and promoted by every possible means; how the tillers of the soil took an enthusiastic and permanent interest in their peaceful and prosperous vocation; how kings, generals, commanders, consuls, dictators, philosophers, sages, poets, and men in the highest rank in arms, in arts and literature, devoted their talents and energies to the practice of this most ancient and honorable occupation; how the governments and kingdom of antiquity assisted and encouraged the husbandman, and made his calling an honorable, a dignified and remunerative employment.

These kingdoms and empires have passed away; but agriculture, from the creation of the world down to the present day, has maintained its position, its dignity, its attractiveness, its usefulness and its interest amidst the wreck of nations and the incessant change going on amongst the kingdoms and empires of the world.

"Agriculture is the most healthful,