

The encouragement of Agriculture appears to be the sole mean which enables these countries to maintain so vast a mass of population. In China, it is stated, that the whole surface of the country is dedicated to the production of food for man alone, that even the steepest mountains are brought into cultivation; they are cut into terraces, and the water that runs at their feet is raised by chain-pumps, worked each by two men, from terrace to terrace, to irrigate them; and steep and barren places are not suffered to run waste, but are planted with pines and larches.\* A similar account is given of the state of agriculture in Japan, where attention to it is enjoined by the laws, as one of the most essential duties; and if any one leaves his land uncultivated, his more active neighbour may take possession of it. In both these countries, no article that can possibly be used as manure is wasted, so that the soil and crops have every possible attention of this kind.† Malte-Brun has given a very interesting account of the honours paid by the Emperor of China and his court to agriculture: who annually, in the beginning of March, after adoring the God of Heaven, and invoking his blessing on his labour, and on that of his whole people, himself, laying aside his imperial robes, holding a plough, opens several furrows, and is succeeded by his chief mandarins, who, in succession, follow the example of the prince.‡ Some allowance, probably, must be made for too warm colouring in these statements, as most of them must have been derived from the report of the natives, yet there seems no doubt with respect to their general accuracy. What an example is here set by nations which we are accustomed to consider as far behind ourselves in every art of life: how vast a portion of our own

\* Macartney, *Embass.* iii. 386. Malte-Brun, *Asia*, 560.

† Thumb. *Japan*, iv. 82. Malte-Brun, 561.

‡ Malte-Brun, 561.