



gle that it becomes really awful. Two rows of arches rise majestically one above the other, and the spectator feels some impression of fear in comparing their slender base with their amazing height. Its solidity, which has braved upwards of sixteen centuries, seems inexplicable on closely observing the simplicity of its construction. It is composed of square stones, placed one upon another, without any exterior appearance of cement, though we cannot now be certain whether they were really united without this aid, by being cut and placed with peculiar art, or whether the cement has been destroyed by time. It is with regret we see wretched houses reared against the pillars of the arcades, seeking in these durable ruins, a support for their weakness; and, in return for this benefit, degrading a monument which even time has respected; but these scarcely rise to a third of the height of the aqueduct, and serve, at least, to give an appearance of a greater projection to

its awful mafs. A fmall ill-built convent has been erected behind the angle which forms the two branches. But what nation has not been guilty of like profanations? Let thofe of my countrymen, whofe indignation may be excited by this, remember the amphitheatre at Nîmes.

It is needlefs to obferve that the houfes near which this beneficent aqueduct paffes, lay it under contribution on paying a certain duty, and that it was of the greateft utility to the houfes, formerly much more numerous than at prefent, in which the wools of Segovia were washed and dyed.

The wools, however, have loft nothing of their goodnefs. The beft in Spain are thofe of the diftricts of Segovia, thofe of the country of Buytrago, feven or eight leagues eaft of Segovia, thofe of Pedraza to the north; and towards the Douro, thofe of Avilla and Leon. The accounts which I received in Spain during

during the eighteen years I resided in that kingdom, enabled me to form a judgment of Spanish wool. I shall only present my reader with the most interesting results of my enquiries.

In the first place, it is an almost universal opinion, although combated by several well informed persons, that the wools of Spain do not so much owe their fineness and quality to the temperature of the climate or the nature of the soil on which the sheep are bred, as the custom of driving the flocks to different parts of the country. Two observations, well supported, will, perhaps, be sufficient to invalidate this opinion. The first is, that in Estramadura there are flocks of sheep which are never driven to any other place, yet there is no sensible difference between their wool and that of those which are almost constantly in motion; the second is, that even in the environs of Segovia, there are small flocks which are never driven thence, and

their wool is as fine as that of those which are. I have been assured by the people of this district, that of the twenty arrobes of fine wool grown there, near a third was produced by the stationary flocks. Whence therefore is derived the custom, so troublesome in various respects, of driving several millions of sheep all over Spain*? From that which causes, propagates and establishes abuses, from the private interest of the great, which, in Spain, gave birth to the ruinous privileges of the Mesta. This is a company of great proprietors

* In the sixteenth century the travelling sheep were estimated at seven millions: under Philip the Third, the number was diminished to two millions and a half. Ustariz, who wrote at the beginning of this century, made it amount to four millions. The general opinion is, that at present it does not exceed five millions. If to this number the eight millions of stationary sheep be added, it will make nearly thirteen million of animals, all managed contrary to the true interests of Spain, for the advantage of a few individuals. For the proprietors of stationary flocks also have privileges, which greatly resemble those of the members of the Mesta,

of

of flocks, composed of rich religious communities, grandees of Spain, and opulent individuals, who find their account in feeding their sheep at the expence of the public in every season of the year, and who, by impolitic laws and regulations, have given sanction to a custom which necessity first established.

The mountains of Soria and Segovia, condemned to sterility by the climate, soil, and the steepness of their sides, were formerly the asylum of some neighbouring flocks. At the approach of winter the place was no longer tenable. The sheep sought, in the circumjacent plains, more temperate air. Their masters soon changed this permission into a right, and united themselves by an association. This company in time became augmented by the addition of others, who, having acquired flocks, were desirous of enjoying the same privileges. The theatre was extended in proportion as the actors became more

numerous, and, by degrees, the periodical excursions of the flocks were extended to the plains of Estremadura, where the climate was more temperate and pasturage in plenty.

When the abuse began to appear intolerable, it had already taken deep root, and affected the interest of the most powerful citizens. The consequence is, that for more than a century, there has been a continued struggle between the company of the Mesta on one part, and the lovers of public good on the other. If a traveller passes through Spain in the month of October, when the sheep *trashumantes* *, arrive in great numbers in and about the plains of Estremadura and Andalusia; or in the month of May, when they return towards the mountains of old Castile; let him be informed that these animals have the right of pasturage on every common in their way, that the laws annex a breadth

* The Spanish name for the travelling sheep.

of ninety varas * to the road by which they pass; that the pastures which are reserved for them in Estremadura are rented at a very moderate rate, and that the proprietors have for a long time vainly solicited an augmentation of price; and if he be a Frenchman and pretend to the least philosophy, he will not fail to exclaim against such absurdities and barbarous ignorance, forgetting that in his own country, a Spanish traveller would have reason to be still more surprised at the multiplicity of our customs, at the strange and complex administration of our finances, and at the shameful inequality which subsists between the taxes and privileges of two neighbouring provinces, one of which pays an enormous price for salt, at the same time that the other obtains it at a very trifling expence.

* The Spanish *vara* is to the ell of France as 5 to 7; ninety *varas* therefore make about forty toises or fathoms.

The Spaniard would exclaim, from his post-chaise, What little progress has this vain and trifling nation made in the art of government! Why are not the laws, weights and measures the same in every part of the kingdom? Why do not its ministers establish a general and equal impost; which might so easily be effected? A single word from them would be sufficient. On the other hand, the Frenchman would ask, Why the too great number of sheep was not diminished, or at least circumscribed within more narrow bounds? Alas! my dear fellow-citizen, fatigue not your imagination in seeking the means of delivering our allies from the ill consequences of this error. Well informed people of that nation (for of such there are many, notwithstanding what you may say or think to the contrary) have considered this subject before you. Read what has lately been written upon it by the Count de Campomanes, Don Antonio Ponz, and before them by Arriquibar, Lernela, Ustariz, and the laughing philosopher Cervantes,

Cervantes; who, under the veil of pleafantry, has given fuch wife leffons to mankind, and more efpecially to his fellow-citizens. But that which to you appears fo eafy to eradicate is connected with many circumftances with which you are unacquainted. Without repeating what we have faid concerning the influence of perfons of wealth and power, who in every country have at all times been the greateft obftacles to ufeful reforms, let us confider the reafon why the feeding of fheep is preferred to agriculture. Within the laft hundred years the value of wool has doubled, whilft grain, the cultivation of which requires fo much labour and is fo precarious, has fcarcely rifen at all in price. Ten thoufand head of fheep produce *communibus annis*, two thoufand arrobes or five hundred weight of wool: If we eftimate the arrobe of wool at a hundred rials, or twenty-five livres, thefe ten thoufand fheep will produce fifty thoufand livres, (above two thoufand pounds) from which, indeed the expence of feeding, that of travelling, the rent of
their

their winter pastures, shepherds wages, and other trifling expences, must be deducted, but which leaves a neat produce sufficiently considerable to render this kind of property very valuable. With respect to the custom of making the sheep travel, it must be observed, that besides its being sanctioned by the laws, and having acquired by long custom the nature of a property, several circumstances conspire not only to excuse it, but even, perhaps, to render it necessary. The number of sheep must be diminished, or some of them must wander. Those which during the fine season of the year, feed upon the mountains of Segovia, Soria, Cuenca and Buytrago, would in winter perish with hunger; and where can a better asylum be found for them than in Estramadura, a province badly peopled, not rich, and where pasturage is the only resource?

How would it be possible besides to persuade the proprietors of flocks voluntarily to renounce a property easily managed,
and

and of which the almost certain produce finds an inexhaustible market in manufacturing countries, where the wools of Spain are so eagerly bought up? It must however be allowed that the Spaniards might still reap greater advantage from this commerce. The French, Dutch, and English go to Bilboa and Saint Ander in search of the wools of Segovia and Leon. They do not even leave to the natives the commission upon the sales. They purchase the wool from the shepherds, and get it washed at their own expence. Of a million of arrobes *, which Spain annually gathers of fine wool, more than five hundred thousand are exported washed, and a lesser quantity in the greafe. The duties upon this exportation, which it has not hitherto been thought proper to limit, are cal-

* The arrobe is twenty-five pounds. The middle price of the best wools is from twenty-three to twenty-four livres (20s.) the arrobe in the greafe, upon which a duty of five livres ten sols (4s. 7d.) is paid on exportation. The washed arrobe pays double the sum.

culated at about five millions of livres (about two hundred thousand pounds) another reason for not hastily endeavouring to remedy the abuses complained of by the patriots. Such a resource is not too easily to be abandoned, without having an equivalent at hand. But the government is using means to render the exportation of wool more profitable to the revenue, and to employ a greater quantity of it in the country. All common wools, of which the exportation is prohibited, are, and have for some time been, worked up in Spain to cloath the soldiers and lower classes of people.

Fine wools are also made into cloth in several places, but no where better than at Guadalaxara, the manufactures of which I visited towards the end of the year 1783. I observed with some surprize that the art of manufacturing wool had in several respects made a considerable progress. I say with surprize, because I had so often heard it asserted, that the Spaniards understood nothing of the matter;

ter; that they knew neither how to card, spin, weave, dye, mill nor calendar; that their cloths were of a bad texture and wore very badly; and that the price was exorbitant. How many prejudices of the same nature vanish upon impartial and careful examination! I shall state but one fact to prove, that what is said of the bad quality of the cloths of Spain is not universally true, and that the Spaniards are in a fair way of wiping off all similar reproaches. I was shewn at Guadalaxara pieces of scarlet cloth, which for colour and quality, appeared to me worthy to be compared to the best cloths of Julien. These are worth thirty-nine livres (1 l. 12s. 6d.) an ell in the town where they are made, and according to the tarif in the manufacture of Guadalaxara, I observed that the price of the finest scarlet was no more than from thirty to thirty-one livres (25s. to 25s. 10d.) an ell. On comparing other articles of the tarif, the same difference appeared between the price of Spanish cloths and those of France, but to the advan-

advantage of the former. What appears more surprizing is, that the manufactures for the king's account were regulated with but little oeconomy, and that of Guadalaxara with still less. Since I was there some alteration has been made, which will improve the operations, and be the means of reducing the price of the productions. This, however, was one of the most complete manufactories any where to be met with ; it contained, within a small space, all the instruments and machines necessary for making cloth, except the thin smooth paste-board which is put between the folds of a piece of cloth before it goes into the press ; this was imported from England, the rest was the production of the place, not even excepting the shears with which cloths are shorn. There were eighty looms for the cloths of the first quality, properly called cloths of *San Fernando*, from the place where they were first manufactured ; a hundred for those of the second quality, and five hundred and six for serges, with which the Spaniards
hope

hope to do in time without those of England *. These looms, contained in two buildings, employed three thousand eight hundred and twenty-five persons, all paid by the king †, besides near forty thousand dispersed over the countries of Mancha and the Castiles, who spun the wool intended to be manufactured at Guadaluaxara. The oeconomical administration excepted, I am of opinion that it would be difficult to find a manufacture better established. The city, wherein it is carried on, forms a striking contrast with those in the neighbourhood. I saw not one beggar or idle person among the fifteen or sixteen thousand inhabitants it contains. Such is the advantage of manufactures, and especially those of cloth;

* It was calculated at the time here referred to, that Spain annually paid to England two millions sterling for woollen articles alone.

† His catholic majesty furnished from his treasury, for the support of this manufactory, a hundred and fifty thousand livres a month; an exorbitant sum, which possibly might not be returned by the sale of the cloths.

that they afford many trifling employments of which children and the aged and infirm are capable. These are aids which the arts offer to weak or suffering humanity, to those whom nature seemed to have condemned to inutility and a burdensome languor. We must, however relate the whole truth ; the Spaniards in general confess themselves inferior in the arts of dying and milling their cloths ; but as they possess the first materials, as well for manufacturing as for dying, a few persons skilled in these two arts would be sufficient to carry several of their manufactures to the greatest perfection, and the present government neglects no means to procure them.

Guadalaxara is also the only place in Spain where the famous cloths of Vigonia are made ; a valuable commodity which the rest of the globe must envy Spanish America *. As this kind of
cloth

* The wool is obtained from the province of Buenos-

cloth is not yet much in use, the manufacture of it is not regularly continued. It is difficult even to procure a few ells of it, without having given for them a previous order of some months. Some of this cloth also is made for the king of Spain, who makes presents of it to different sovereigns. In 1782, his majesty sent twenty pieces to the grand seignior, immediately after the treaty which he had just concluded with the Port. They were very well received; and it was said, on this occasion, that Spain would not be sorry to give the Turks an inclination for their cloths. Manufacturing nations were a little alarmed at this, but perhaps without much reason. The Spanish government is too wise to undertake to rival these nations in such a commerce, until it is enabled, from its manufactures, to supply the twenty millions of subjects in its own dominions. Spain knows how far she yet is from

Buenos-Ayres and from Peru; that of the first is longer, but the other is more filky.

such a state of prosperity. The manufactory of Guadalaxara finds in that of Briffuega, at four leagues distance, a kind of assistant. The latter contains a hundred looms, all employed in weaving cloths of the first quality.

Segovia, which has ever been famous for the goodness of its wool, was formerly not less so for the number and perfection of its manufactures. It is fallen from its ancient splendour to a degree afflicting to every friend of his country. In 1785, the number of looms did not exceed two hundred and fifty.

The most considerable of its manufactories was that of Ortiz, established in 1779, under the name of The Royal Manufactory; the king allows a certain sum to be employed in it. Ortiz furnished employment, in 1785, for three thousand persons in Segovia and the environs, and had sixty-three looms at work, in which cloths of every quality, from pieces, which according to the ordinances, contain

tain two thousand threads, to those of four thousand, were manufactured. The idleness of the inhabitants of that city was the only obstacle to an industry which might otherwise have been considerable, the privileges by which the minister wished to encourage the first undertakings are not burthensome to the rest of the manufacturers. They all fell in competition at a price by no means exorbitant. The dearest cloths in the month of September, 1785, cost no more than ninety rials a vara, which is nearly thirty-one livres ten sols (26s. 3d.) an ell.

Ideas may be formed of every thing relative to the Spanish sheep and their precious spoils, without going far from Segovia.

It is in the neighbouring mountains that a part of the wandering sheep feed during the fine season. They leave them in the month of October, pass over those which separate the two Castiles, cross New Castile and disperse themselves in

the plains of Estramadura and Andalusia. For some years past those of the two Castiles, which are within reach of the Sierra-Morena, go thither to pass the winter; which, in that part of Spain, is more mild: the length of their day's journey is in proportion to the pasture they meet with. They travel in flocks from a thousand to twelve hundred in number, under the conduct of two shepherds; one of whom is called the *Mayor*, the other the *Zagal*. When arrived at the place of their destination, they are distributed in the pastures previously assigned them. They return in the month of April; and whether it be habit or natural instinct that draws them towards the climate, which at this season becomes most proper for them, the inquietude which they manifest might, in case of need, serve as an almanack to their conductors.

While on their return, in the month of May, they are shorn, an operation of considerable magnitude in Spain, because

cause there it is performed in great buildings contrived so as to receive whole flocks of forty, fifty and sometimes sixty thousand sheep*. The harvest and vintage in corn and wine countries are not seasons of greater festivity. The sheep-sheering is a time of rejoicing, both to the owner and workmen. The latter are divided into classes, each of which has its distinct employment. A hundred and twenty-five workmen are necessary to every thousand sheep. Each sheep produces four sorts of wool, more or less fine according to the part from whence it is taken. In the neighbourhood of Se-

* Each flock, belonging to one proprietor, is called a *cavana*, which is pronounced *cavanya*; they take the name of their proprietors. The most numerous *cavanas* are those of Bejar and Nigretti, each of which consist of sixty thousand sheep. In that of the Escorial, one of the most famous, there are fifty thousand. Prejudice or custom gives a preference to the wool of one *cavana* to that of another. Thus, for instance, no wools, except those of the *cavanas* of Nigretti, the Escorial and Paular, are made use of at Guadalaxara.

govia there are several shearing houses (*Esquileos*). One of the most remarkable is that of Iturvieta.

When the shearing is finished, the wool is made up in bags and sent to the sea ports, where it is shipped without any other preparation, or to the washing or scowering places in different parts of Castile. There are several in the district of Segovia. I particularly examined one of the most considerable, that of Ortijosa, three leagues from St. Ildefonso. I was there convinced that this operation, imperfect as it appears at first sight, because foreign manufacturers repeat it before they make use of the wool, sufficiently answers the intention, which is to preserve the wool, so that it shall not be possible for the longest voyage to alter its quality.

All the wool used in the royal manufactory of Guadalaxara is scowered in this quarter. The quantity annually scowered here is about forty thousand arrobes

arobes (or five hundred ton) which by this operation is reduced to the half. The situation could not have been better chosen; it is very spacious, and forms a kind of basin, the inner divisions of which are meadows, on an easy declivity, which terminate in a common center, and are open to the rays of the sun in every direction.

The wool is carried thither in the state it was when taken from the sheep: each fleece is as it was first made up. In this form it is given to the *Apartadores*, who divide it into three heaps of different qualities. They are so accustomed to this business, which requires a long apprenticeship, that they can tell, at first sight, from what part of the animal each flock of wool has been taken. These three sorts thus separated are extended upon wooden hurdles, where they are spread, beaten and cleaned from the dust and dirt adhering to them; they are afterwards taken to the washing place.

As soon as the water in the great copper is on the point of boiling, it is let out by two great spigots that open or shut certain pipes by which it is conveyed into three square wells, lined with hewn stone, and about three or four feet deep. The hot water falls upon a bed of wool, which covers the bottom of the well. The wool thus disposed is turned in every direction by three men. Each sort of wool is washed separately; and, according to its fineness, requires the water to be more or less heated.

After this first operation, the wool is again spread upon hurdles, to drain off the water, and with it the filth, which it has begun to dissolve. The coarse locks are also separated from the rest, and sold for the benefit of the souls in purgatory; for, in Spain, religion is connected with every thing. The Spaniards mean to sanctify by this association, frequently not a little ridiculous, their occupations, riches, and even their
plea-

pleasures. The motive, however chimerical, is amiable; the design, commendable. Pity it is that as much cannot be said of the means. But let us return to our subject.

The hurdles upon which the wool is spread out, are placed in an interval of three or four feet, which separates the stone-wells from the narrow aqueduct, also of stone, through which runs a stream of cold water. A man placed at the entrance of the aqueduct receives the wool, and throws it in; while five men, who stand by the side below the first man, press and rub it with their feet as it passes, and send it from one to the other. Still lower down are other workmen who stop it in its passage, and throw it on a stone slope, where it drains, while the water runs off into a gutter contrived below the slope. A net, placed at the extremity of the little aqueduct, retains the locks, which, from time to time, are carried away by the rapidity of the current.

When

When the wool is well drained, it is spread upon the declivity of the meadows which we have before-mentioned, and four fine sunny days are scarcely sufficient to dry it thoroughly. When it is quite dry it is put into bags to be carried away. Initial letters upon the bags indicate the sort of wool contained in each; and, besides these, there is a mark which distinguishes the flock by which it was furnished; so that a connoisseur, who saw the bags, would say, that is fine or superfine wool of the Escorial, Negretti, or Bejar flocks.

I make no apology for these details; they may furnish our proprietors of sheep with useful knowledge, as well as give hints to our manufacturers of the use to be made of our wools, or at least inspire them with emulation, and indicate to them the means of improvement. They may moreover serve, in many respects, to vindicate the Spaniards from the charge of idleness and ignorance, which has so frequently been brought

brought against them. Consequently I merely pay a tribute due to justice.

I shall now leave Segovia and its environs, and conduct my reader to the castle of St. Ildefonso, which is only two leagues from it. The high mountains which command it are seen at a great distance, and scarcely has the traveller quitted Segovia before he discovers the castle itself, which the rising or sinking of the road, from time to time, conceals or discovers. Appearances by no means announce the residence of a great court. The country is barren, and a few wretched hamlets, at small distances, give no idea of the enlivening presence of the monarch. Nor would it be suspected, that in that spacious and naked horizon, there were manufactures of various kinds, such as of paper, cloth, and glass, or that the environs of St. Ildefonso were decorated with rivulets, cultivated fields, meadows, and clumps of green oaks; nor, after having seen all these, is it possible to conceive that

that the result should be so poor and dismal. This must first be attributed to the nature of the soil and the situation of that part of Castile, furrounded by mountains, and without roads, canals, or navigable rivers. But it must be more particularly ascribed to the numerous herds of deer which live in peace in this district, and never have their repose disturbed by the royal huntsmen who pass there about three months in the year, and appear more disposed to preserve than to destroy them.

The country, however, becomes more beautiful as we approach St. Ildefonso; a number of rivulets meander through the fresh verdure, and the deer wander in herds in the copses, or bound upon the hills in a security which could not be expected in those timid animals; the tops of a few handsome houses appear above the green oaks; and the group, formed by the castle and the adjoining edifices, crowned by mountains, some naked, others covered to their
sum-

summits with trees and shrubs, presents a very pleasing prospect. At length we arrive at the gate fronting the royal residence, and which is separated from it by a spacious court in form of a glacis.

The whole bears some resemblance to Versailles, which, although imperfect, cannot but be pleasing to a Frenchman. He, at first, imagines that Philip V, who built St. Ildefonso, wished to have about his person such objects as might recall to his recollection the abode which was so dear to him in his early youth. He seems to have had the same intention in establishing his military household.

Of the old guards of the kings of Spain there remains but one company of halbardiers, which may be compared to that of the hundred Swiss. Philip V, established three companies of body guards, each of two hundred men, modelled, with respect to form and cloathing, after those of the French court.

Two

Two regiments, which guard the exterior of the castle, that of the Spanish guards, and the regiment of Walloons, are also perfect copies of our regiments of French and Swiss guards. A company is detached from each of them to do duty wherever the court resides.

The command of each of these six military corps which form the interior and exterior guard of the kings of Spain, is given to the most distinguished persons of the nation. The commander of the halbardiers is always a grandee of Spain. The captain of the Spanish company of body guards is one of the most illustrious families. That of the Italian company is generally an Italian nobleman, and the captain of the Flemish corps is either a noble Fleming, or some stranger of rank. The same rule is observed with respect to the Walloons. The captain of the Spanish guards is always chosen from the most distinguished grandees of Spain.

This