

This resemblance to our court, observed at St. Ildefonso, which makes a Frenchman recollect Versailles, is like a diminutive shade in painting, and smoothes the passage from one court to the other, so that when arrived at St. Ildefonso, you are tempted to believe that you are but half the distance by which they are separated.

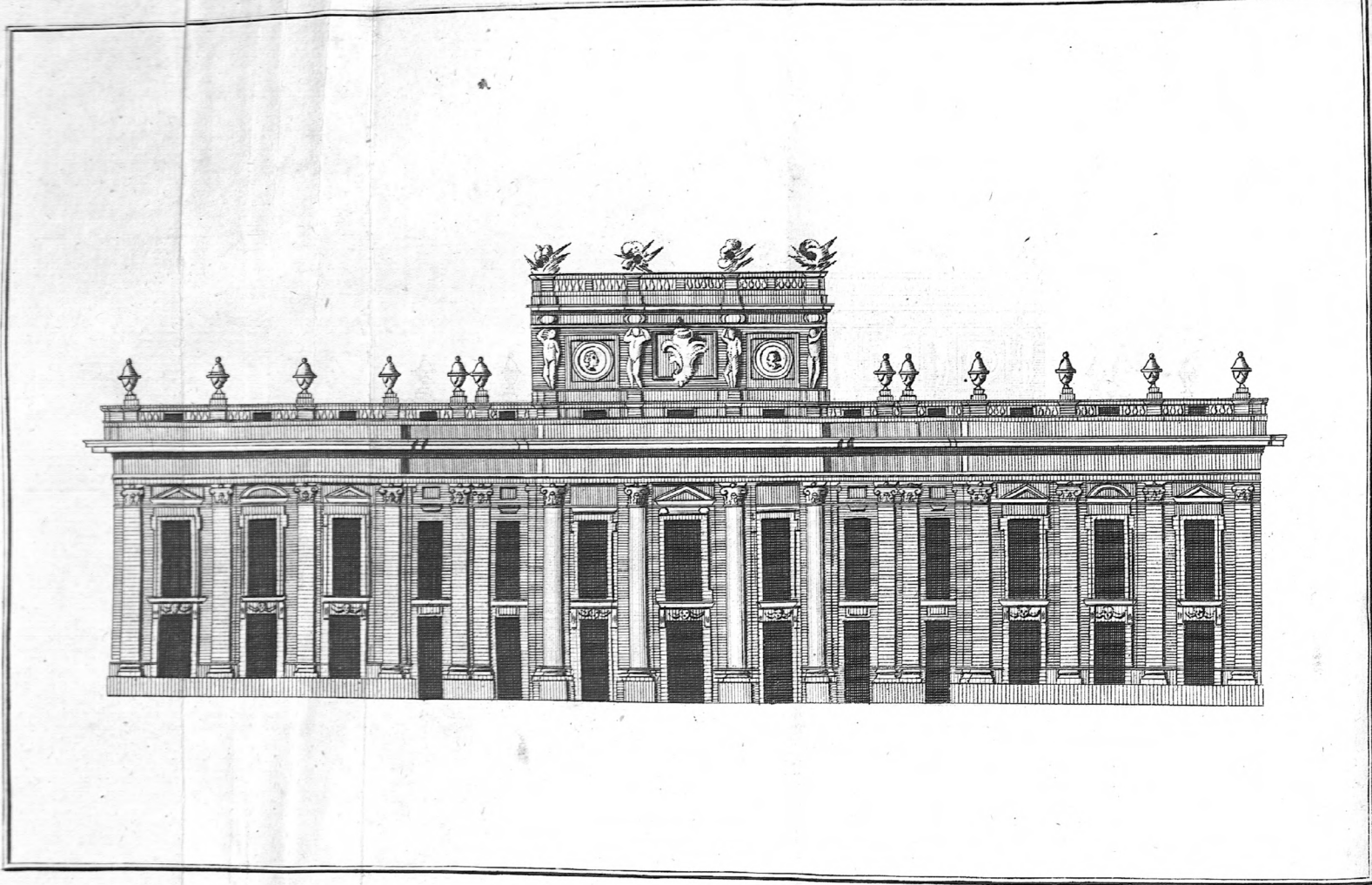
The proofs of the predilection which Philip V. had for this place of royal residence have survived him. His remains are deposited in a chapel within the castle. I visited this mausoleum, which has something awful in its simplicity.

The appearance of the tomb which contains an illustrious person, always excites serious reflection. What then must be the impression made by that of a prince, whose reign holds so distinguished a place in modern history, and forms the epocha of the last exploits of Louis XIV, and of his greatest

disasters ; of a prince for whose interests Europe was agitated by three wars within less than half a century ; and whom the conquest of the greatest monarchy in the world could not render happy. At least the gloomy melancholy which obscured the last years of his life, proved that the most brilliant successes of ambition are ever followed by satiety and languor. What a subject for philosophical reflections upon the vanity of human greatness !

After having indulged my mind with these at the foot of the tomb of Philip, I went to visit the enchanting abode which he prepared for himself in the midst of a solitary wood, and in the bosom of steep mountains. There is nothing magnificent in the palace, particularly in its exterior appearance. The front on the side of the garden is of the Corinthian order, and not destitute of elegance. Here are the king's apartments, which look upon a parterre surrounded with vases and marble statues





PALACE of SAINT ILDEFONSO seen from the GARDENS.

tues, and a cascade which, for the richness of its decorations, may be compared with the finest of the kind.

The purity and clearness of the water is indeed incomparable. Philip V, could not, in this respect, be better served by nature. From the mountains which shade the palace, descend several rivulets, which supply the reservoirs. These waters answer the double purpose of supplying numerous fountains, and of diffusing life and verdure through the magnificent gardens, the sight of which alone is a sufficient recompense for a journey into Spain. They are on the inside a league in circumference. The inequality of the ground affords every moment new points of view. The principal alleys answer to different summits of neighbouring mountains; and one in particular produces the most agreeable effect. It is terminated at one end by the grand front of the palace. From this point are seen, at one view, five fountains, ornamented with elegant

groups, rising into an amphitheatre, above which appear the summits of lofty mountains. The most elevated of these groups is that of Andromeda fastened to a rock. When seen at a little distance it is perhaps defective, because the rock appears too diminutive by the side of the monster which threatens Andromeda; and of Perseus, by whom it is attacked; but the whole contributes to the beauty of the view. The most remarkable of the five groups is that of Neptune.

Genius presided at the composition and in the choice of the situation; the deity of the ocean appears erect, surrounded by his marine court. His attitude, his threatening countenance, and the manner of holding his trident, announce that he has just imposed silence on the mutinous waves; and the calm which reigns in the basin, defended from every wind by the triple wall of verdure, by which it is surrounded, seem to indicate that he has not issued his
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commands in vain. Often have I seated myself, with Virgil in my hand, by the side of this silent water, under the shade of the verdant foliage, nor ever did I fail to recollect the famous *Quos Ego!*

There are other fountains worthy of the attention of the curious; such as that of Latona, where the limpid sheaves, some perpendicularly, and others in every direction, fall from the hoarse throats of the Lycian peasants, half transformed into frogs, and spouting them forth in such abundance, that the statue of the Goddess disappears under the wide mantle of liquid crystal; that also of Diana in the bath, surrounded by her nymphs; in the twinkling of an eye all the chaste court is hidden beneath the waters; the spectator imagines he hears the whistling of aquatic birds, and the roaring of lions from the place whence this momentary deluge escapes by a hundred canals. The fountain of Fame is formed by a single

jet-d'eau, which rises a hundred and thirty feet, exhibiting to the distance of several leagues round the triumph of art over nature, and falls in a gentle shower upon the gazing spectators. There are some situations in the gardens of St. Ildefonso, whence the eye takes in the whole of the greater part of these fountains, and where the ear is delighted with the harmony of their murmurs. The traveller who wishes to charm all his senses at once, must take his station on the high flat ground in front of the king's apartment. In the thick part of the foliage are contrived two large arbours, from the top of which are seen twenty crystal columns rising into the air to the height of the surrounding trees, mixing their resplendent whiteness with the verdure of the foliage, uniting their confused noise to the rustling of the branches, and refreshing and embalming the air; if the traveller here experience no pleasing sensations, let him return home, he is utterly incapable of

of feeling either the beauties of art or nature.

The reader may here imagine my enthusiasm too extravagant. He is mistaken; let him follow me to the great reservoir of abundant and limpid waters. He will have to climb for some minutes, but will not regret the trouble he has taken. Let us suppose ourselves arrived at the long and narrow alley which takes up the whole of the upper part of the gardens; proceed to the middle, and turn your face toward the castle. To the vast horizon around you, no other boundaries are discovered but those which limit the human sight; these alone prevent you from discovering the Pyrenees. Observe the steeple which seems but a point in the immense extent: you will perhaps imagine it to be that of the parish church of St. Ildefonso; but, in reality, it is the cathedral of Segovia, at two leagues distance. The gardens, through which you have passed, become narrower to the eye. You

suppose yourself close to the royal habitation; the alleys, fountains, and parterres have all disappeared; you see but one road which, in the form of a vessel, upon the prow of which you seem to stand, has its stern on the top of the palace. Afterward turn and take a view of the little lake behind you, of which the irregular borders do not, like what we call our English gardens, merely ape the disorder of Nature. Nature herself has traced them, except on the side where you stand. This straight alley is united at each end to the curve which surrounds the reservoir. The waters, which stream in abundance from the sides of the mountain in front, meet in this reservoir, and thence descend by a thousand invisible tubes, to other reservoirs, whence they are spouted in columns or sheets upon the flowery soil to which they were strangers. The birds, drawn by their clearness, come to skim and agitate their crystal. The image of the tufted woods which surround them is reflected from their immoveable

moveable surface, as is also that of some simple and rural houses, thrown, as by accident, into this delightful picture, which Lorrain would have imitated, but, perhaps, could not have imagined. The opposite bank is obscured by thick shades. Some hollows overshadowed by arching trees, seem to be the asylums of the Naiades. Disturb them not by indiscreet loquacity, but silently admire and meditate.

It is impossible, however, not to go to the source of these waters; let us follow the meandering of their course, and observe the winding paths which there terminate, after appearing and disappearing at intervals through the copse. Let us listen to the bubbling of the rivulets which, from time to time, escape from our sight, and hasten to the rendezvous assigned them by the descendants of Louis XIV. They formerly lost themselves in the valleys, where they quenched the thirst of the humble inhabitants, but are now consecrated to
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the pleasures of kings. Ascending the back of the pyramidal mountain, behind which their source is concealed, we arrive at the wall which confines a part of them in the garden, and which was hidden by the trees; nothing however, ought here to recall to mind, exclusive property and slavery. Woods, waters, and the majestic solitude of mountains, which are at a distance from the tumult of courts and cities, are the property of every man.

Beyond this wall, which forms the exterior enclosure of the gardens, is an empty and flat ground, where the infant Don Louis brother to the king, chose a place which he consecrated to cultivation. Farther on the mountain becomes more steep, and is covered with trees to its summit. Let us now return; as we seek amusement and not fatigue. We will follow the course of the waters, they descend in bubbling streams from one level of the gardens to the other. In their course, in one place they

they water the feet of the trees, in others they cross an alley to nourish more slowly the plants of a parterre. From the basin of Andromeda they run between two rows of trees in the form of a canal, the too sudden inclination of which is taken off by cascades and windings. They receive and carry with them from the gardens the rivulets, which, after having played amongst the gods and nymphs, and moistened the throats of the swans, tritons and lions, humbly descend under ground, and run on into the bosom of the neighbouring meadows, where they fulfill purposes less brilliant but more useful.

We must not quit these magnificent gardens without stopping at a place which appears to promise much but produces not any very great effect. This is the square of the eight allies, *Plaza de las ocho calles*. In the center is the group of Pandora, the only one which is of whitened stone, all the others are of white marble or lead painted of a bronze colour.

colour. Eight alleys answer to this center, and each is terminated by a fountain. Plats of verdure fill up the intervals between the alleys, and each has an altar under a portico of white marble by the side of a basin sacred to some god or goddess. These eight altars, placed at equal distances and decorated, among other jets-d'eau, have two which rise in the form of tapers on each side of their divinities. This cold regularity displeas'd Philip V. who a little before his death, when visiting the gardens, made some severe reproaches to the inventor upon the subject. Philip had not the pleasure of completely enjoying what he had created; death surpris'd him when the works he had begun were but half finish'd. The undertaking was however the most expensive one of his reign. The finances of Spain, so deranged under the princes of the house of Austria, thanks to the wise calculations of Orry, to the subsidies of France, and still more to the courageous efforts of the faithful Castilians, would have been sufficient

sufficient for three long and ruinous wars, and for all the operations of a monarchy which Philip V. had conquered and formed anew, as well as to have resisted the shocks of ambition and political intrigue; but they sunk beneath the expensive efforts of magnificence.

It is singular that the castle and gardens of St. Ildefonso should have cost about forty-five millions of piastres, precisely the sum in which Philip died indebted. This enormous expence will appear credible when it is known that the situation of the royal palace was at the beginning of this century the sloping top of a pile of rocks; that it was necessary to dig and hew out the stones, and in several places to level the rock; to cut out of its sides a passage for a hundred different canals, to carry vegetative earth to every place in which it was intended to substitute cultivation for sterility, and to work a mine to clear a passage to the roots of the numerous trees which are there planted. All these efforts

efforts were crowned with success. In the orchards, kitchen gardens and parterres there are but few flowers, espaliers or plants which do not thrive; but the trees naturally of a lofty growth, and which consequently must strike their roots deep into the earth, already prove the insufficiency of art when it attempts to struggle against nature. Many of them languish with withered trunks and with difficulty keep life in their almost naked branches. Every year it is necessary to call in the aid of gun-powder to make new beds for those which are to supply their place; and none of them are covered with that tufted foliage which belongs only to those that grow in a natural soil. In a word, there are in the groves of St. Ildefonso, marble statues, basons, cascades, limpid waters, verdure and delightful prospects, every thing but that which would be more charming than all the rest, thick shades.

The court of Spain comes hither annually during the heat of the dog days.

It

It arrives towards the end of July and returns at the beginning of October. The situation of St. Ildefonso, upon the declivity of the mountains which separate the two Castiles, and fronting a vast plain where there is no obstacle to the passage of the north wind, renders this abode delightful in summer. The mornings and evenings of the hottest days are agreeably cool. Yet as this palace is upwards of twenty leagues from Madrid *, and half of the road which leads to it crosses the broad tops of mountains, extremely steep in many places, it is much more agreeable to the lovers of the chase and solitude than to others. I arrived there at a time as brilliant for the court of Charles III. as it was flattering to that monarch. He expected the arrival of one of his august nephews, the

* Fourteen Spanish leagues, seventeen and a half to a degree. These fourteen make upwards of twenty of those of France (and above fifty-five English miles). It is a great effort to perform this journey in six hours with mules which are much more swift than our best post-horses.

count d'Artois, who allured by the glory promised to the besiegers of Gibraltar, was going to give new lustre to victory by his presence and share in the laurels. It is well known how abortive these splendid expectations proved by a fatality which renders vain the projects even of kings. The amiable brother of our sovereign, while making every exertion in his power, could only shew his courage and his love for his country. The zealous ardour with which he passed the Pyrenees excited all the enthusiasm of admiration and love. I had the happiness of being every where a witness to it in my journey through Biscay and Castile; he was impatiently expected day after day. Every person I met enquired of me concerning him; and I was joyfully received as one of his fore-runners. The people imagined, because I was a Frenchman, I must know and love him. Since the conquest of Spain by the house of Bourbon, this was the first time that one of the supporters of the ancient throne had approached the new one.

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The Spanish monarch, to whom, in the midst of royal occupations and political cares, the sentiments of nature have ever been dear, expected his nephew with the impatience of a father. In his manner of receiving him the courtiers knew not whether they should most admire his magnificence or the proofs of his affection. The foresight of the sovereign extended to his passing the Pyrenees, and he seemed to have communicated to all his subjects both his joy and impatience. How amiably did the youthful prince return these homages of the heart; and how well was his gratitude seconded by the friends who accompanied him! At Segovia he found the king's guards who conducted him in triumph to the palace, amid the thunder of artillery, the beating of drums and the acclamations of the court and people. An affecting interview succeeded to this ceremonious pomp. The oldest monarch in Europe pressed to his bosom the amiable heir to his name. Tears fell from his eyes; and affection, united with dignity, proved to

every spectator that the habit of greatness deprives not all hearts of tenderness, and that Nature ever has her irresistible claims. The count d'Artois, and those who accompanied him, were lodged in the palace. The whole household was at his command; but care was taken that those about his person should, by their manners and language, recall to his mind a faint idea of the court he had quitted. These attentions had no bounds but that of the desire of leaving a young prince at full liberty, which is far preferable to all the vain homages of ceremony. The king of Spain himself leads a very regular life; some certain employment is assigned to every hour of the day; yet nothing was deranged on account of his nephew's arrival. Hunting, fishing, his devotions and his business with the ministers were all continued as usual. The count d'Artois, on his part, knew how to enjoy the liberty granted him. With the docility of any less illustrious pupil; he submitted himself to the

the care of the count of Montmorin, ambassador of the king his brother.

I saw but little of the count, who was wholly employed in the honourable task imposed upon him; but according to every thing I heard, I judged that it could not be better executed, nor the interest of the king better attended to than by this nobleman. He would have been every where well placed. He was particularly so in Spain, a nation in general little prejudiced in our favour. We have however proved to the Spaniards in his person, that the French also are susceptible of gravity unaccompanied by pedantry, that they may possess wisdom without austerity, dignity without pride, and prudence without timidity. Treated by the Spanish monarch and all his august family, with the greatest kindness and respect he conciliated to himself the confidence of the ministers, the esteem of the great, and the good-will of the people. The national character is somewhat cold, and not

too prodigal of the tokens of its benevolence ; but persons of merit are therefore the more flattered in receiving them ; and I never yet have met with any one who knew the Spaniards intimately without having conceived for them a strong and lasting esteem. There is no court in Europe where the persons of ambassadors are more generally known. In other courts they are seldom communicated with except upon the affairs with which they are charged. At that of Madrid, they are constantly before the eyes of the monarch, especially the family ambassadors. Every morning as soon as the king returns from hunting, or has finished the business which prevents his taking that diversion every day, he receives those of his ministers who have any thing to communicate to him ; these are succeeded by his confessor. After this audience the family ambassadors are introduced ; and in these secret conferences, it is said, the most delicate affairs are frequently discussed. These ambassadors afterwards join those of other courts,

courts, between whom the conversation is generally short.

The king's dinner immediately succeeds, at the end of which the whole *corps diplomatique* is again introduced. After having appeared at the tables of the princes and princeffes, the ambassadors and envoys from foreign courts pass into the cabinet, where the monarch gives them a second audience. These audiences are repeated every day, and at the same hour, especially for the ambassadors of France and Naples, who, as family ambassadors, less frequently permit themselves to be absent from the court than those from other powers. The whole day is passed by the king of Spain with the same regularity and exactness. An hour after dinner he goes with the prince of Asturias to the chace, whence he does not return until the evening. Exact in the duties of a father of a family, as well as in those of a sovereign, he goes to embrace his children, transacts business with one of his ministers, makes

a party with some of the grandees who attend on his person, sups in private, and retires early to bed. At ten o'clock the most profound silence reigns in his palace.

This court, so regular in its conduct and simple in its manners, is not however wanting in magnificence. The monarch, who always eats alone, has behind his chair his grand master, his almoner, and the captain of his guards. His table is served by two grandees, one of them places the dishes and the other, upon one knee, gives him the cup. There can be nothing humiliating in this posture, which shocks those who at other times are admitted to the familiarity of the sovereign, because it is sanctioned by habit, and because the principal persons of the kingdom submit to it; besides, is not this homage, at which French vanity is so much offended, rendered also at the courts of Vienna and London, where the authority of the monarch is in so many respects circumscribed?

scribed? At Madrid it is paid to all the persons of the royal family; and the ladies who serve the princeſſes kneel likewise upon one knee, when they present them any thing to drink.

But the magnificence of the court of Spain is more particularly displayed on gala-days. These are of two kinds, the great and lesser galas. The great galas are kept eight times a year, on the birth-days of the king, the prince and princeſs of Asturias, and of the king and queen of Naples: the lesser ones, which are called demi-galas, are in honour of the other princes and princeſſes, deſcendants of Philip V. These only require the courtiers to be dressed a little better than ordinary; but at the grand galas, the greatest luxury of dress is displayed, in which, however, taste does not always preſide. Every person in the service of the court, from the grand master to those who hold the most inconsiderable employments, have a uniform suitable to their places, and

which they wear on these occasions. In the morning of these great days, all those who have any connexion with the court, whether by their military service, their titles, or civil functions, the ecclesiastics, and, for the most part, some monks, pass before the king and the royal family, bending one knee and kissing the monarch's hand. This is a species of loyalty and homage, a renewing of the oath of fidelity. Our brave knights, as proud as we are, but perhaps less vain, disdained not to kneel before him from whom they received their honours. The ceremony of investiture is, at present, accompanied by the same act of submission. What therefore is there mortifying to pride in the homage rendered to the king of Spain, on certain solemn occasions, or when thanks are returned him for some favour? But what is more singular, women, of the greatest distinction, kiss not only the hand of the monarch, but that of all his children, whatever may be their age or sex, and the most charm-

charming duchess prostrates herself before the youngest infant, even when at the breast, and presses, with her lips, the little hand which mechanically receives or refuses the premature homage.

But Spain is not the only country in which ceremony has sanctified customs disfavoured by Nature, or mortifying to gallantry. J. J. Rousseau, when combating, with that energy so natural to him, those who degrade the dignity of man before his fellow creature, remarks that in more courts than one, the whole body of ambassadors go solemnly to pay their compliments to a crowned infant, whose only answer *consists in crying and drivelling*. My philosophy is less rigorous; and I reserve my invectives for subjects of more importance. I will moreover observe, in behalf of Spanish etiquette, that it favours the delicacy of the fair sex. Men kiss hands in public, but the ladies only in the inner apartments. None but the ladies who have employment in the palace, kiss the

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the hands of all the royal family. The others, who are received at court, pay this homage to no one but the queen and the princess of Asturias. This class is composed of all the female grandees of Spain, and ladies of title; which denomination must not be understood in the sense affixed to it in France. It here becomes necessary to treat of the dignities and titles of the court of Spain.

Princes of the blood, so called, have not hitherto been distinguished as such at this court. Next to the Infants and Infantas of Spain, and the sons, grandsons and nephews of the sovereign, immediately come the grandees. These are divided into three classes, differing from each other by such trifling distinctions as are scarcely worth notice. All the grandees of Spain, of whatever class they may be, are covered in presence of the king, and have the title of excellence: in these are comprehended all their prerogatives.

rogatives*. There is no place or employment, however distinguished it may be, which is exclusively attached to their rank, if those of grand-master, and grand-equerry be excepted; as also that of *Sumiller de corps*, which has some relation with the place of grand-chamberlain, and the commission of captain of halbardiers; but there are several others which infallibly lead to the rank of grandee. The band of gentlemen of the chamber to the number of forty, more or less, at the will of the sovereign, is for the most part composed of grandees; but there are also some persons of quality, who, without the former rank, obtain this dignity. It is true that none of the latter are employed immediately about the person of the sovereign, or the heir to the crown, and that the queen and the princesses of Af-

* I pay no attention to the frivolous honours they receive when they pass the guard-room. Some person in waiting strikes his foot against the ground to give notice to the sentinel to rest his arms to them.