

ices of administration generally lead to this appointment at the end of a few years, and formerly the ministers had not the title of excellence until they were thus promoted. But at the recent nomination of M. de Valdez to the marine department, the king ordained that from that time all his ministers should bear that title, even before they became counsellors of state.

As there are still important cases in which the sovereign, modest enough to distrust his own discernment, wishes to receive the advice of those whom he honours with his confidence, he supplies the want of the assemblies of the counsellors of state, by uniting his ministers in a committee.

The administration of the kingdom is divided into six principal departments. The minister of foreign affairs is in many respects the directing minister, and receives, as a mark of distinction, the title of secretary of state. The minister  
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of war has but a circumscribed authority. He is president of the council of war, which is rather a tribunal than a board of administration ; but the inspectors of the infantry, and those of the cavalry, dragoons, and provincial regiments, draw up a statement of whatever relates to the corps of which they have the direction, and the minister at war has only to present the memorials they give in to the king.

The marine minister has no associates. The chiefs of the three departments, and the inspectors of the marine are named by the king on the representation of the minister ; the marine ordinances prepared by him alone require only the sanction of the sovereign.

The minister of finances should properly be under the inspection of the superintendant general of that department ; but these two offices were some time since united, and will probably be so continued ; the separation of them  
would

would multiply without necessity the springs of government, and the interests of the state require they should be simplified as much as permanent forms, those sacred bulwarks of justice and property, will admit. Besides, when the sovereign believes he has found in a subject the capacity and integrity required for the administration of his finances, why should he put over him other inspectors than his own conscience, and the zealous wish to justify so flattering a choice? The animadversion of a censor could, in such a case, produce nothing but divisions and mistrust, which would operate to the disadvantage of the service. The event has justified these reflections, in the persons of three ministers who have governed the finances of Charles III. These ministers are, besides, by their office, presidents of the council of finance.

The minister of the Indies has the most extensive department in all the monarchy, for in him is centered the civil, military, ecclesiastical and financial government

vernment of Spanish America, and it may be said, that in the whole political world there is no minister whose department comprehends so many different objects. Had Augustus committed to one single minister the government of the whole Roman empire, his power would only have extended to a small part of modern Europe, the coasts of Africa, and some provinces of Asia; for the Roman empire at the time it was most extensive, was not to be compared to that immense country which, from the north of California, stretches to the streights of Magellan, and forms the dominions of the Spanish monarch in America, and the department of the minister of the Indies?

The minister *of favour and justice* has his department in the judiciary and ecclesiastical affairs; but his authority is circumscribed by the great chamber (*Camara*) of the council of Castile, of which we shall treat in another place; and with respect to the nomination to benefices by the intervention of the king's

king's confessor. The latter, however, is not constitutional, but depends upon the will of the monarch, and the confidence with which he honours the director of his conscience.

These six offices are usually filled by six different persons ; but until the year 1776, the same minister held those of the marine and the Indies, which are so connected, that the good of the nation will, perhaps, require them to be again united. They are at present separate ; Don Joseph de Galvez possesses that of the Indies, which was conferred upon him in the year above-mentioned. Europe and America may judge whether or not this administration has been successful, and whether the active genius of the minister has contributed to render flourishing the most extensive colony that ever a mother country had under its dominion. Don Antonio de Valdez has presided over the marine department since the year 1783, and began his

his administration under the most happy auspices. At the death of Don Miguel de Mufquiz, who was minister at war and of the finances, these two departments were confided to Don Pedro de Lerena, intendant of the four kingdoms of Andalusia. I quitted Spain about that time, and have not since had an opportunity of learning the public opinion of the new minister.

The department for foreign affairs since the resignation of the marquis of Grimaldi has been in the possession of the count of Florida Blanca, whose talents were displayed at Rome under the pontificate of Clement XIV, and in the most delicate circumstances. He has since united to this department that of favour and justice, the superintendency of the post-stages, with that of the royal roads and public magazines. I have been assured that nothing was wanting to this respectable minister but better health to qualify him for the great

great task he has imposed upon himself.

The stability of ministers is one of the most remarkable particularities of the court of Spain. The monarch, who in disposing of these eminent places, consults public opinion, has hitherto had the rare happiness of never having his approbation dishonoured by the event. For which reason his ministers, without abandoning themselves to indolence, which this security might naturally produce, ardently labour to justify his confidence, and lose not that time which to them is so precious, in watching the latent springs of intrigue, and disconcerting its secret machinations. They have the courage to form vast projects, because they know that death only can prevent their execution, and are certain of finding a constant support in the benevolence of the monarch. Nothing diverts them from their principal object. Pleasures do not abound at the Spanish court ; there are no theatrical represen-

tations of any kind; the amusement of the sovereign and the princes is confined to the chace. This is a great inconvenience to the idlers about the court, but very advantageous to public affairs. Ministers may there dedicate their whole time to their business, and give frequent audiences. I have often greatly admired the simple and regular life they lead; walking is almost the only amusement they permit themselves. Nothing less than the esteem of the nation and the love of public good can recompense them for so intirely renouncing the greater part of the pleasures of life. I never was intimate with any of them, but according to what I have heard, they feel no regret at the self-denial which their situations require. Their principal society consists of their clerks, who habitually eat at their table. This reciprocal constraint has some particular inconveniences, but there results from it a greater union between the heads and the subalterns, and more unanimity in the conduct of affairs. Those who dispatch  
them



them under the eye of the minister are not, in fact, merely clerks; they may rather be compared to the principals of our offices. To be appointed to these places, it is necessary to have given proofs of talents in some confidential employment. There are undoubtedly abuses in the public offices of the court of Spain as well as in all others; orders are there eluded, and perhaps traiterously divulged as in other countries; but in general, corruption is very rare, and persons in office are polite and obliging; this is the unanimous opinion of those who have had any connections or business with them.

It may reasonably be supposed that with the few resources which the court of Spain presents, it consists only of those who are confined there by their places. At St. Ildefonso it is almost deserted, so that the royal personages are for the most part reduced to the society of those whose services require their attendance. The princess of Asturias

herself, whose obliging manners, wit and graces irresistably charm all those who approach her, passes most of her time in private, where she has few other pleasures than those of music and conversation. The prince, her husband, has a taste for music and most of the fine arts; he patronizes that of painting in particular, and not satisfied with the master-pieces with which the palace of the king his father is furnished, he is making a collection of the best paintings of different schools, in which he is assisted by two of his valets de chambres, one a Frenchman, the other an Italian. Some years ago, on the vague expression of a wish, which was taken notice of by one of them, Louis XVI, sent him two fine paintings by Vernet. The prince has become so partial to the productions of the pencil of that master, that in the escurial there is a little cabinet of which all the pannels are finished by the hand of this great painter.

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The apartments of the palace of St. Ildefonso are, if I may so speak, hung with paintings. Those of the first royal anti-chamber are flattering to a French observer; he there passes in review, as in an historical gallery, first an elegant portrait of Louis XIV, by Rigaud; and next that of Louis XV. when a child; those of the regent, the duke of Vendome, the last duke of Parma, of the house of Farnese and his duchess, as also those of Charles III, when he went to take possession of the kingdom of Naples, and Philip V, on his arrival in Spain; the latter of which made a great impression on me as well as many other persons by the mild and noble countenance which resembles that of the count d'Artois. It is rather surprising that this portrait should be placed near that of the archduke. It might be imagined by this singular union that at the termination of the quarrel of these two princes, the archduke had sent to his fortunate rival, his portrait, as a pledge of their reconciliation, and that it was placed in a pa-

lace, in which the duke, whose likeness it was, had conceived the hope of ascending the throne. The chamber adjoining is that in which the king dines. It has a view of one of the finest cascades in the garden, which is surrounded by double walls of verdure. The nearest trees shade the balcony, and their shadows gently wave on the pannels within. This room is also decorated with several paintings, among which are some by Murillo and Solimena. I mean not to enumerate all those in the adjoining apartments. I shall only observe, that according to connoisseurs there is a fine one of St. Sebastian, by Guido; an excellent copy of a Magdalen by the same master; and a Flemish family by Rubens, in which we see the strongest expression. There is also a picture by Poussin, but it is placed so high that I could not distinguish the subject; two heads by Mengs, a small piece by Amiconi, in which three beautiful angels of rather too faint a white, hold the sacred winding sheet unfolded; the portraits of the  
princes

princes of Conde and M. de Turenne, upon the same canvass, by Vandyck; with several other pieces of a smaller size to be seen in the king's cabinet. There are also a considerable number in the apartments of the prince and princess of Asturias. Among others are three of larger dimensions in their dining-room, which represent the three principal periods of the life of Job. In that of the Infanta Maria-Josepha is a Roman charity so striking as to excite universal admiration; the colouring is highly finished, and in the heads there is a nobleness and propriety which inspires equal admiration and respect. In the drawing-room of the princess there is one painting, singular from its extraordinary size, and the number of figures it contains. By their odd dresses, so little resembling those of the age, the artist may be supposed a Fleming. It presents all the various circumstances of the report at which Herod, to please his daughter, ordered John the Baptist to be beheaded. It is natural to imagine that

the painter intended by this allegory to perpetuate a remembrance of the death of the unfortunate Don Carlos: this is one of those old traditions which time has rendered sacred, and of which the age and origin are equally unknown. I shall not farther enlarge this long list, which will convey no information to connoisseurs, and is insufficient for the ignorant. Those of our readers who wish for a more complete one may consult two journeys into Spain not long since given to the public, one by Mr. Twiss, and the other by Mr. Swinburn\*.

Let us now descend to the gallery, which occupies all the front on the side towards the gardens. Here are also some paintings, and among others, two good copies, one from Raphael, the other from Giulio Romano, and two or three

\* These two Englishmen, who have lately written upon Spain, are not in equal repute in their own country. Mr. Swinburn, known by other travels, displays in his work considerable taste and learning, and is preferred to Mr. Twiss.

pretty heads in Mosaic ; but what is most valuable is a considerable number of antiques, most of which were purchased in Italy by Philip V, and formerly made a part of the cabinet of queen Christina. Those which most engaged my attention were a cylindrical altar, on which the procession of Silenus is sculptured in bas relief ; a colossal Cleopatra ; a statue of Jupiter wielding his thunder, several Venuses of the size of the human figure ; eight muses a little mutilated, in which modern and unskilful hands have endeavoured to repair the injuries of time ; and of which the drapery is remarkable for its lightness ; two groups which are banished to a corner, as if they were ashamed to retrace the unimproving fictions of mythology ; two of the adulterous amours of Jupiter, in the pious abodes of catholic kings, a Leda and a Ganymede, who cares without suspicion the immodest birds, whose figure the god had assumed ; and a small figure of Seneca seated and wrapped in his mantle. But the antique sculptures which more particularly merit the  
attention

attention of connoisseurs, and the sight of which alone is sufficient to recompence the fatigues of a journey to Spain are the young fawn carrying a kid and the group of Castor and Pollux, two original master-pieces of antiquity in perfect preservation, copies of which, in marble, stone, and plaister are every where found by the side of those of the Venus de Medicis, the Laocoon, the Apollo Belvidere, and the Farnesian Hercules.

In an apartment in the gallery the finest marbles of Spain, in columns, vases, and busts, seem to vie with the productions transmitted to us from antiquity; yet notwithstanding the excellence of those modern performances they only serve to render the superiority of the venerable remains of antiquity still more apparent. A small corridor, adjoining to the gallery, contains in piles every thing for which no place could be found in the latter, Egyptian statues, fragments of columns, bas-reliefs, busts  
and



and other antiques, consigned to dust, destructive insects, and whatever anticipates the ravages of time. It is to be regretted, that a court whose sovereigns know so well how to value and encourage the arts, should not have chosen a more convenient place in which these precious monuments might be preserved from the destruction by which they are threatened.

Without the castle of St. Ildefonso, proofs of the vigilance of the monarch, and his taste for useful establishments, appear on every side. His prime minister, worthy of seconding the beneficent views of his master, remarked to him that the country round St. Ildefonso contained numbers of poor people, women and children, who through want of employment were reduced to lead an idle life, which might sow the seeds of every kind of vice; the monarch immediately established, not far from his palace, a manufacture in which these persons, until then incapable of ren-

rendering themselves useful, weave and prepare linens of different qualities. The edifice which contains them rose, as if by magic, at the command of the sovereign. In 1781, it had not been thought of. A manufacturer at Leon had the mortification of seeing government stop in its progress a considerable manufactory, which had been confided to his direction. He was ordered to St. Ildefonso, and before the month of August 1783. there were upwards of twenty looms employed in the new manufactory, and two great machines for pressing and washing the linen; this however is but a trifle, compared to what Spain has done, and has yet to do before she can become independent of foreigners with respect to these articles. Nature has, in this particular, been as kind to her as in all others; she derived advantages from it at the period of her greatest splendor. The Spaniards manufactured all kinds of household linen, and did not import from their neighbours a third of what they do at pre-

present. They are now in the way of regaining those advantages, being convinced that Arragon is proper for the cultivation of hemp and flax.

In Biscay these already flourish, and in Asturia, Old Castile, and particularly in the kingdom of Granada, of which the hemp and flax are preferable to those which Spain is still obliged to procure from the north for the use of her navy, people begin seriously to meditate similar establishments. But Galicia is the only province in which the manufacture of linens is in any very advanced state. This province produces linen for every kind of use, sufficient for its own consumption, and even sends some to Madrid and into Andalusia. Let not foreign merchants, however, who send linen to Spain be alarmed; were all the provinces immediately to follow the example of that of Galicia, her vast colonies would, for a long time, afford an almost inexhaustible market for the  
linens

linens of Brittany, Silesia, Switzerland and Ireland.

Near the new established manufacture for articles of necessity, there is one of luxury, begun in the reign of Philip V. this is a manufacture of looking-glasses, the only one of the kind in Spain. It was at first only a common glass manufactory, which still exists, and produces tolerably good bottles, and white glass extremely well cut. I purchased some on which cyphers, letters, and pleasing landscapes are ingeniously engraved. This was the first step towards a far more enlarged undertaking. The looking glass manufactory of St. Ildefonso may be compared with the finest establishments of the kind; drawings of it may be seen in the plates of the French Encyclopédie. The edifice is spacious and well contrived; it contains two furnaces and twenty ovens, in which the glass gradually cools after having been run. They make glasses of all dimensions, from common squares to those

those of the greatest size. They are not so clear, and are perhaps less polished than those of Venice and St. Gobin; but no manufacture has yet produced them of such large dimensions. The operation of casting them is performed with much precision. The count d'Artois had the curiosity to be present at it; the glass run in his presence was, as well as I can remember, a hundred and thirty inches long by sixty-five wide, and I was assured that there were others which exceeded it in size. They are chipped in a long gallery joining to the manufactory, and at the distance of a quarter of a league there is a machine put in motion by water, which gives them their last polish; they are afterwards taken to Madrid, where they are silvered. The king has some of the finest to decorate his apartments; of others he makes presents to the courts most intimately connected with that of Spain.

In 1783, his majesty added some of these glasses to the presents he sent to  
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the Ottoman court, with which he had just concluded a treaty. It cannot but be highly pleasing to an enlarged and philosophical mind to reflect that, notwithstanding the prejudices of religion and politics which formerly divided nations, the arts have established between them an exchange of articles of luxury throughout all Europe, and that the beauties of the seraglio may admire themselves in glasses fabricated at St. Ildefonso, whilst Turkey carpets cover the floors of French apartments. The rest of the produce of the manufactory of St. Ildefonso is sold at Madrid, and in the provinces, for the king's account; but it may easily be imagined that the profits are too small to reimburse the expences of so extensive an establishment, which, except the article of wood, is so distant from all the raw materials it employs. Situated as it is, far inland, surrounded by lofty mountains, and at a considerable distance from any navigable river, it ought certainly to be numbered among the establishments.

blishments of luxury which prosper near the throne, and contribute to add to its splendor.

I was at St. Ildefonso during the whole time the count d'Artois remained there. The count, as well as all the persons who accompanied him, appeared extremely sensible of the polite reception they met with; and the court, notwithstanding the natural gravity of its disposition, seemed pleased to see one of the greatest ornaments of that of France submit to Spanish etiquette, to the regular and little varied manner of life habitual to the sovereign, and rendering, with the cordial warmth of a respective and affectionate nephew, his duties to the king his uncle; sometimes partaking with him the peaceful recreation of fishing and the pleasures of the chace, which, for the monarch of Spain, are almost as silent as the former, and quietly passing the remainder of his time with the amiable nobility of his suite, either in the palace of the

or in the hotel of the French ambassador. The court remarked, with equal satisfaction, the intimate connection formed between two august princes, already of almost equal rank, and who mutually to love only wanted to be acquainted; two princes worthy of each other by their frankness and loyalty, one the heir to the crown of Spain, and the other the second support of that of France. This attachment which reflected benevolence upon those who surrounded them, would have been sufficient to have destroyed the prejudices of the prince of Asturias (if ever he had any) against a nation of which he had not till then been able to judge under such favourable circumstances. After this agreeable interview, he must have believed, that our superficial exterior might possibly conceal estimable qualities, and that the elegance of our manners excludes none of the virtues which subdue the heart and give new lustre to the graces. I flatter myself that the meeting in which the two  
princes



princes had an opportunity of forming a judgment of each other, will still more contribute to the glory and happiness of the house of Bourbon, by strengthening the ties by which its two branches should be united. We perhaps do not sufficiently consider the influence which the personal attachment of two princes destined to reign, or to be continually near the throne, must have upon the happiness of nations. How many bloody wars would have been prevented, had sovereigns, or their ministers, been known to each other personally, and not merely by the false light of political negotiation and intrigue. Ambition, that unnatural and violent ebullition of the mind, before which the happiness it pursues perpetually flies, would undoubtedly yield to milder passions, more analogous to the natural goodness of the human heart; and the effects of that universal benevolence which is increased and propagated by being exercised would frequently triumph over the frigid calculations of cabinets.

Let us therefore congratulate our philosophical age, which by extending the taste for travelling even to sovereigns themselves, will by degrees see the prejudices that divide courts and empires vanish, and perhaps destroy the source of wars, which were never longer or more bloody than between sovereigns who saw not each other, but through the illusions of false glory, and between whom no interview ever tempered the bitterness of national hatred.

The stay of the count d'Artois at St. Ildefonso, which has caused and will excuse this digression, continued a fortnight; his highness went afterwards to Madrid. The duke of Bourbon arrived at St. Ildefonso on the day of the count's departure, and remained there twenty-four hours. Though he travelled under the name of the count of Dammartin, the Spanish monarch gave orders that he should be treated as a prince of his family. He was not dazzled by the homage paid to his rank; he was a  
Bourbon

Bourbon to none but the king and his family. To all the rest of the court he was a private individual, whose exterior grace, engaging manners and modesty won every heart. He found the count d'Artois at Madrid; and these two princes visited together the curiosities of the capital, went to the theatre, and were present at a bull-fight.

The Castilians every where flocked about them, and it was easy to perceive that curiosity was not the only motive of the eagerness with which persons of both sexes, all ranks, and every age pressed to see them. I will, on this occasion, relate an anecdote trifling in itself, but which will serve to prove with what circumspection it is necessary to judge concerning a nation with whose language and manners we are not perfectly acquainted. When the princes had visited the palace of Buen-Retiro, their conductors, who knew no language but the Spanish, asked them if they would go and see *la China*. Some

of the attendants to the princes thought they were asked if they were going to China, and laughed at the absurd question. The truth, however, was, that these good people proposed to them to go to the manufactory of porcelain, which in Spanish is called *China*, as stuffs which come from Batavia are called after the Dutch colony of that name, and linens made in Silesia, *Bretagnes*. How many errors in the narratives of travellers arise from similar mistakes!

But leaving the count d'Artois and the duke of Bourbon to continue their journey to the camp of St. Roch, let us now return to St. Ildefonso, the environs of which have still several claims to our attention.

At the distance of a quarter of a league from this royal mansion runs a little river (the Eresma) which serves for the innocent pleasures of the sovereign, and often reflects his image. The banks have on each side a causeway,  
or

or where the ground requires them, there are stone or sod steps. It is enclosed between two piles of rocks, grouped in the most romantic manner. Its limpid waters sometimes run tumultuously over lesser rocks in the bed of the river; or precipitate themselves by natural cascades, sometimes forming small basons which serve as asylums to the trout destined to pass from the hook of his Catholic majesty to his table. In some places this river is separated by little meadows from copses of green oak, with which that part of the country abounds. In others tufted shrubs are seen upon the tops of the rocks, or hang waving from their sides.

Reader, if ever you should reside for some time at St. Ildefonso, and find yourself wearied with the dull magnificence which reigns in the palaces of kings, repair to the banks of the Eresma, there you will find one of the finest English gardens Nature ever formed; nor will you regret those at the distance

of a quarter of a league in which art has displayed all its luxury: and you will return more satisfied with yourself and less desirous of the false enjoyments which pomp procures at an enormous expence.

The court of Spain goes once a year to alarm the Naiades of the Eresma, by the noise of a general deer-hunting. The rendezvous is upon the banks of this little river, about a league from the castle of St. Ildefonso. Some days previous to the arrival of the court, a number of peasants are sent to the neighbouring woods and hills to drive before them the deer with which the country plentifully abounds. The prescribed limits are by degrees narrowed, until the time fixed for rousing the game. The sport then becomes excellent: the deer run in small herds on all sides, seemingly perceiving the danger into which they are driven, after which they face about and endeavour to brave the running fire of musquetry that threatens

threatens them in the rear ; but obeying the impulses of fear, and failing in their attempt, they pass in closer herds through the fatal defile, where the king, his sons, and the other princes, placed in ambuscade, wait their arrival. Their agility now becomes their last resource, and saves the greater number. Out of three or four thousand, and sometimes more, which thus pass in review, about a hundred fall. Some remain dead upon the spot, others carry away with them the mortal wound, and fly to conceal their agony in the thickets. Their bodies, whilst yet in palpitation, are brought and arranged upon the field of battle. These are numbered with a cruel satisfaction, for which a philosopher would reproach himself, but which it is agreed to pardon in hunters. The whole court, the ambassadors and foreign ministers commonly take part in this amusement, which is repeated towards the end of every visit to the Escurial. The counts of Artois and Damartin were invited as they returned  
 from