

those, belonging to the Prince of Peace, have been captured and sold by the Junta, and some of the Duke de Infantado, whose flocks produce the finest fleeces, have in like manner been seized by the French.

These flocks produce but little benefit to the proprietors; the wool being sold so low as six pence or eight pence per pound: the aroba, of twenty-five pounds weight, is reduced to ten pounds by washing, and it pays a duty on exportation of about eight pence per pound, which produces a considerable revenue. The quantity usually exported is about forty thousand bags, weighing on an average two hundred and fifty pounds each.

The history of these sheep, and the laws and regulations by which the flocks are governed, is so interesting, that I shall give you an abstract of the best accounts of them that I have been able to obtain. The Merino flocks travel every year from the northern mountains where they pass the summers, to the richer pastures and warmer climate of the south of Spain, particularly to La Mancha, Estremadura, and Andalusia. These flocks, commonly called trashumantes, amount in the whole to about five millions of sheep. Each flock is composed of ten thousand, which are under the guidance of a superior called the mayoral, a man skilled in the nature of pastures, and in the diseases and modes of curing the sheep. This person has fifty shepherds under his command, and an equal number of dogs; each shepherd is daily supplied with two pounds of bread, and the same quantity, though of a coarser kind, is allowed to his dog. The wages of the mayoral are commonly one hundred doubloons annually, and he is besides provided with a horse. The shepherds are of different