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Account of the Merino sheep, and their treatment in Spain.

The following observations on the management of Merino sheep, the breeding of which has, within a few years past, occupied the attention of the most distinguished agriculturists in the British empire, were originally written in Spanish, by an English gentlemen many years resident in Spain, for his own private use. Having recently returned to his native country, he translated them in compliance with the wishes of some of his friends, and they are here presented to the public in his own language. The value of such a communication, derived from so authentic a source, will be duly appreciated by every practical farmer.

There are two sorts of sheep in Spain; some have coarse wool, and are never removed out of the province to which they belong; the others, after spending the summer in the northern mountains, descend in winter to the milder regions of Estremadura and Andalusia, and are distributed into districts therein.—These are the Merino sheep, of which there are computed to be about four or five millions, as stated underneath:

The Duke of Infantado's flock contains about	40,000
The Countess del Campo de Alonse Negretti	30,000
The Paular Convent	30,000
The Escurial Convent	30,000
The Convent of Guadaloupe	30,000
The Marquis Perales	30,000
The Duke of Bejar	30,000
Ten flocks, containing about 20,000 each, belonging to sundry persons	200,000
All the other flocks in the kingdom taken collectively, about	3,800,000
	4,220,000

The word *Merino* is Spanish; it signifies governor of a small province, and likewise him who has the care of the pasture of cattle in general. The Merino mayor is always a person of rank, and appointed by the king:—the Duke of Infantado is the present Merino mayor. The mayors have a separate jurisdiction over the flocks in Estremadura, which is called the Mesta; and there the king is the Merino mayor. Each flock consists of 10,000 sheep, with a mayoral or head shepherd, who must be an active man, well versed in the nature of pasture, as well as the diseases incident to his flock. Under this person there are 50 inferior shepherds, with fifty dogs; five of each to a tribe. The principal shepherd receives about 75 pound English money for his annual wages, and has a fresh horse every year: the inferior servants are paid small annual wages, with an allowance of two pounds of good bread per day for each dog. The places where these sheep are to be seen in the greatest numbers, are in the Montana and in the Molina de Arragon, in the summer; and in the province of Estremadura in the winter. The Molina is to the East, and the Montana to the North of Estremadura, the most elevated part of Spain. Estremadura abounds with aromatic plants, but the Montana is entirely without them. The first care of the shepherd in coming to the spot where the sheep are to spend the summer, is to give the ewes as much salt as they will eat; for this purpose they are provided with 25 quintals of salt (a Spanish quintal contains 110 pounds wt. Spanish, 104 Spanish pounds are equal to 112 English) for every thousand sheep, which is all consumed in less than five months; but they do not eat any salt while on their journey, or during the winter. The method of giving the salt to them is as follows: the shepherd places fifty or sixty flat stones, about five steps distant from each other: he strews some salt on each stone, then leads his flock slowly by them, and every sheep eats at pleasure: this practice is frequently repeated, observing not to let them feed on those days on any spot where there is lime stone. When they have eaten up all the salt, then they are lead to some argillaceous spots, where from the craving they have acquired by eating the salt they devour every thing they meet with, and return to the salt with redoubted ardor. At the end of July, each shepherd distributes the rams among the ewes, five or six rams being sufficient for one hundred ewes: these rams are taken from the flocks and kept apart, and after a proper time are again separated from the ewes. The rams give a greater quantity of wool, though not so fine as the ewes; for the fleece of the rams will weigh 25 pounds, and it requires five fleeces of the ewe to produce the same. The disproportion of their ages is known by their teeth; those of the rams not failing before their 8th year, whilst the ewes, from delicacy of frame, or other causes, lose their teeth after five years. About the middle of September they are marked, which is done by rubbing their loins with ochre [these earths are of various colors, such as red, yellow, blue, green and black.] It is said that the earth incorporates with the grease of the wool, and forms a kind of varnish, which protects them from the inclemency of the weather: others pretend that the pressure of the ochre keeps the wool short, and prevents its being of an ordinary quality: others again imagine that the ochre acts as an absorbent, and sucks up the excess of transpiration, which would render the wool ordinary and short.

Towards the end of September these Merino flocks begin their march to a warmer climate; the whole of their route has been regulated by laws and customs from times immemorial; they have a free passage through pastures and commons belonging to villages; but as they must go over such cultivated lands as lie in their way, the inhabitants are obliged to leave them an opening ninety paces wide, through which the flocks must pass rapidly, going sometimes 6 or 7 leagues a day, in order to reach open and less inconvenient places, where they may find good pasture, and enjoy some repose. In such open places they seldom exceed two leagues a day, following the shepherd and grazing as they go along. Their whole journey, from the Montana to the interior parts of Estremadura may be about 155 leagues, which they perform in about 40 days being equal to 11 or 12 English miles per day.

The first care of the shepherd is to lead them to the same pasture in which they have lived the winter before and in which the greatest part of them were brought forth: this is no difficult task, for if they were not to conduct them they would discover the grounds exactly, by the sensibility of their olfactory organs, to be different from the contiguous places; or, were the shepherds so inclined, they would find it no easy matter to make them go farther.

The next business is to order and regulate the folds, which are made by fixing stakes, fastened with ropes one to the other, to prevent their escape and being devoured by the wolves, for which also the dogs are stationed without as guards. The shepherds build themselves huts with stakes and boughs; for the raising of which huts, as well as to supply them with fuel, they are allowed to lop or cut off a branch from every tree that grows convenient to them: this law in their favor, is the real cause; so many trees being rotten and hallow in the places frequented by these flocks of sheep.

A little before the ewes arrive at their winter quarters, is the time of their yeaning or bringing forth their young, when the shepherd must be particularly careful of them. The barren ewes are separated from breeders, and placed in a less advantageous spot reserving the best pasture for the most fruitful, removing them in proportion to their forwardness; the last lambs are put into the richest pasture, that they may improve the sooner, and acquire sufficient strength to perform their journey along with the early lambs.

In March the shepherds have four different operations to perform with their lambs that were yeaned in the winter: the first is, to cut of their tails five fingers below the rump, for cleanliness: the second is, to mark them on the nose with a hot iron; the third is, to saw off the tips of their horns, in order that they may not hurt one another in their frolics: fourthly, and finally, they castrate such lambs as are doomed for bell-wethers to walk at the head of the tribe; which operation is not executed by incision, but merely by squeezing the scrotum until the spermatic vessels are twisted and decayed.

In April, the time comes for their return to the Montana, which the flock expresses with great eagerness, and shews by various movements and restlessness; for which reasons the shepherds must be very watchful, lest they make their escape; whole flocks having sometimes strayed two or three leagues whilst the shepherd was asleep; and on these occasions they generally take the straightest road back to the place from whense they came.

On May the 1st they begin to shear unless the weather is unfavourable, for the fleeces being usually piled one above the other, would ferment in case of dampness and rot; to avoid which injury, the sheep are kept in covered places, in order to shear them the more conveniently; for this purpose they have buildings that will hold 20,000 sheep at one and the same time, which is the more necessary, as the ewes are so very delicate, that if immediately after shearing they were exposed to the chilling air of the night, they would most certainly perish.

One hundred and fifty men are employed to shear 1,000 sheep; each man is computed to shear 8 per day; but if rams, only 5; not merely on account of their bulk, and the greater quantity of wool on them, but from their extreme fickleness of temper, and the great difficulty to keep them quiet: the ram being so exasperated, that he is ready to strangle himself when he finds he is tied fast. To prevent his hurting himself, they endeavour, by fair means and caresses, to keep him in temper; and with much soothing, and having ewes placed near him so that he can plainly see them, they at last engage him to stand quiet, and voluntarily suffer them to proceed and shear him. On the shearing day, the ewes are shut up in a large court, and from thence conducted into a sudatory, which is a narrow place, constructed for the purpose, where they are kept as close as possible, to make them perspire freely in order to soften their wool and make it yield with more ease to the shears. This management is peculiarly useful with respect to the ram, whose wool is more stubborn and more difficult to be cut. The fleece is divided into three sorts and qualities:

The back and belly produce superfine wool.

The neck and sides produce fine wool.

The breasts, shoulders and thighs produce the coarse wool.

The sheep are then brought into another place and marked; those sheep which are without teeth being destined for the slaughter-house, and the healthy sheep are led out to feed and graze, if the weather permit; if not, they are kept within doors until they are gradually accustomed to the open air. When they are permitted to graze quietly, without being hurried or disturbed, they select and prefer the finest grass, never touching the aromatic plants, although they may find them in great plenty; and in case the wild thyme is entangled with the grass they separate it with great dexterity, moving on eagerly to such spots as they find to be without it.—When the shepherd thinks there is a likelihood of rain, he makes proper signals to the dogs to collect the flock and lead them to a place of shelter; on these occasions the sheep, not having time given them to choose their pasture pick up every herb indiscriminately: were they, in feeding to give a preference to aromatic plants, it would be a great misfortune to the owners of bee-hives, as they would destroy the food of the bees, and occasion a decrease and disappointment in the honey and the crops. The sheep are never suffered to move out of their folds until the beams of the sun have exhaled and evaporated the night dews: nor do the shepherds suffer them to drink out of brooks, or out of standing waters, wherein hail has fallen, experience having taught them, that on such occasions they are in danger of losing them all. The wool of Andalusia is coarse, because they never change their place, as is practiced by the Merino flocks, whose wool would likewise degenerate if they were always kept on the same spot; and the wool of Andelusia would improve in quality, were the sheep accustomed to emigrate as the Merino sheep do.

Between 60 and 70,000 bags of washed wool are exported annually out of Spain.

A bag generally weighs 80 Spanish arrobas, of 25 Spanish pounds each arroba, which are equal to 214 English pounds.

Upwards of 30,000 bags of Spanish wool are sent annually to London and to Bristol, which are worth 35l. to 50l. each bag; so that England purchases and manufactures into goods about one half the quantity of this produce of Spanish wool, and her imports in general are of the best and of the finest quality.

This wool, when warehoused in England, is worth from 3s. per pound, to 6s 9d. per pound, ready money; and from 45l. to 55l. per bag.

The wool of Paular, which is the largest fleeces, though not the best in quality, is reserved for the royal manufactures which belong to the king of Spain.

The common dresses as well as the shooting dresses of the royal family of Spain, and the dresses of their attendants, are made of the cloth of Segovia, which is an ancient populous city in Old Castile, where the best woolen cloths made in Spain are all manufactured.

The crown of Spain receives annually, by all the duties, when added together, paid on wool exported, upwards of sixty millions of reals, which are equal to 600,000l. sterling, English money.

Statement of Spanish wool imported into London and into Bristol, during the years 1804, 1805, 1806, and 1807, averaging the year from September to September, in each respective year:

IMPORTED INTO	BAGS.
London, from September, 1804, to September, 1805, . . .	12,372
Bristol, from September, 1804, to September, 1805, ...	23,954
Total number of bags imported one year, ...	36,326
London, from September, 1805, to September, 1806, . . .	10,847
Bristol, from September, 1805, to September, 1806, . . .	25,807
Total number of bags imported in one year, ...	36,654
London, from September, 1806, to September, 1807, . . .	8,125
Bristol, from September, 1806, to September, 1807, . . .	25,793
Total number of bags imported in one year, ...	33,917

FROM THE NEW-HAMPSHIRE PATRIOT.

INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE.

Bennington, July 25, 1810.

RESPECTED SIR,

Once more the season has arrived for the celebration of that auspicious day, when you Sir, at the head of our brave yeomanry—under the benevolent hand of a superintending Providence—led our troops to victory—on the memorable hills of Walloomsack. The people of the adjacent counties have resolved to celebrate it on the consecrated ground. For this purpose they have chosen a large and respectable committee from the surrounding towns. The governors of the the States of New-York and Vermont will be invited, and probably attend. Hundreds of your fellow citizens who fought by your side, and thousands of other republicans will be present on the pleasing occasion. Nothing, sir, can be wanting to make our joys complete but the presence of our venerable friend and commander, whom with American pride we style the *Hero of Bennington.*

In your patriotic address to us of last year we regret that you tell us that the oil is almost extinguished in the lamp, and that age has rendered it impossible for you to attend: although we are again pressed by your fellow citizens to give you an invitation to come and join in the festivities of the day. The toast, sir, which you sent us in 1809, will continue to vibrate with unceasing pleasure in our ears: *Live free or die—death is not the greatest of evils.*

Never,—never, sir, shall we cease to recollect with the most ardent affection the man who made the arrangement, and who at the hazard of his life executed the plan with such decision and success. And while your sword was waving on the high places of the field, the cries of thousands of our distressed fellow citizens like a cloud rolled before the Eternal. Heaven heard—and led you and your brave fellow-citizens, to glory and to victory.

Accept dear general, the expression of our warmest gratitude, and of our highest esteem, and believe us to be your cordial friends.

JONA. ROBINSON, ELEAZER HAWKS, DAVID FRY. } Committee.

The hon. gen. John Stark.

ANSWER.

Derryfield, 20th Sept. 1810.

MY FRIENDS—

Yours of the 25th of July is but just received, inviting me again to partake of the joys of your festival. Had not your letter been stopped in its passage to me, it could have made no difference—for it is now eighty-two years that I have been in wear, and I am worn beyond all hopes of repair. The diseaes and pain attending this last stage of life render many of the surrounding objects, that I once delighted in, indifferent to me.—But if any thing could have excited my pleasure, it would have been the being with you on the 16th of August. A scene like that must have brought to my recollection the principal events of my life. I could not but remember how British tyranny arose, & how it yielded to the untutored bravery of democracy; and particularly, to be upon that fortunate spot with so many brave men who taught the tyrant's tools the *hard lesson.*

In your letter, you praise me extremely for being the fortunate commander of valliant men. To merit the praise of my country, has been a leading motive of my life—for unmeritted praise is but satire. Therefore we should be careful not to bestow too much praise unless we mean to satirize.

You mention being pleased with the toast I gave you last year. I have the best evidence that the people of your rugged country do sincerely accord with such sentiments—for in '77 you displayed evidence by practice. *And I have no doubt, if we had a congress now who had the resolution to express the will of the nation, you would be found as ready as you were then.*

Be assured of my friendship for yourselves and the rest of the inhabitants of Green Mountains, and accept my thanks for your respect.

JOHN STARK.

Hon. Jonathan Robinson, Eleazer Hawks, and David Fry.

LONDON FASHIONS FOR AUGUST.

(From La Belle Assemblee.)

Evening Visiting Dress. A complete lemon coloured sarsnet dress, trimmed with an embroidery of roses; a white lace drapery with train, fastened down the front with topaz snaps; a rich embroidered scarf is thrown carelessly acros the shoulders. Topaz necklace and ear rings. The hair is loose ringlet curls, divided by an ornament comb.—Gloves and shoes of white or lemon coloured kid. A bouquet of natural flowers.

Promenade Walking Dress. A plain cambric round morning dress, made high in the neck, with short train, let round the bottom with two rows of worked trimming. A pelisse of green sarsnet, made to fit the shape, trimmed round with a narrow fancy trimming, cut with two scollops on the left side, on the right with one; fastened on the neck with a gold broach, and confined round the waist with a girdle of the same, with gold clasp. A Lavinia unbleached chip hat, tied down with a broad sarsnet ribband; a small white satin cap is worne underneath, with an artificial rose in front. The hair dressed in full curls. A plaid parasol, with York tan gloves; green silk sandals.

[*From Ackermann's Repository.*]

Ladies' Morning Dress. A white robe of French cambric or jaconet muslin, buttoned in front from the throat to the feet; German cape, and antique cuffs edged with vandyke lace. A plain muslin short pelisse, trimmed with the same. Cottage cap of lace, decorated on one side with a French bow and ends of violet coloured ribbon, and tied across the crown and under the chin with a silk handkerchief of a lemon colour.—Hair in dishevelled curls. Lemon coloured kid slippers and gloves.

Child's Dress. A highland jacket and trowsers, with cambric plaited tucker, slippers of purple or black kid.

Promenade, or Sea-beach costume. A cambric or India muslin frock, with long sleeves, Spanish cuffs, and high front and collar, trimmed with double plaitings of French net. In Arabian vest, or tunic coat, of apple green crape, trimmed round the bottom with two rows of violet floss binding, and tied round the front at regular distances, with bows and ends of violet coloured ribbon. Woodland bonnet of straw or primrose chip, ornamented with violet coloured ribbon. Slippers of green kid. Parasol of Chinese silk, with deep awning. Gloves of primrose kid.

A few days ago, Mr. McDONALD, of the Greyhound Inn, Malmsbury, perished in one of his casks, being suffocated by the impure air: he has left a widow and five children. The cask was only 6 feet 2 inches in depth, and the deceased was 5 feet 10 inches high. A pail of cold water thrown into a foul cask previously to entering it, would effectually preclude any ill effects.