

partly of smoothing its surface. How different the history of the paper that is daily fabricated in any of the large manufactories of this country; and how little would its origin and numerous changes of state be conjectured from its present appearance! Heaps of linen rags of every colour, when indeed that colour can be distinguished through the dirt which adheres to them, are brought from almost every quarter of Europe; each rag having probably been part of some article of dress, which, as it grew viler by use, passed from a more to a less respectable possessor; till it at length became the tattered and threadbare covering of the poorest mendicant.

From such a material is the finest paper made: and, in the commencement of the process, each individual rag undergoes an examination with respect to its size, and is cut into two or more pieces according to that size. Separate heaps are then mechanically shaken together, and sifted, in order to clear them from adhering dust: they are subsequently washed, mechanically divided into small shreds, bleached, then thrown into vats of water, and there reduced to a fine pulp by the application of powerful machinery. This pulp, by very delicate yet simple means, is kept in a state of close and equable diffusion over an even surface, and is made to pass between successive pairs of smooth metallic