

the largest of all domestic sheep, and those whose nature has experienced the least degradation. The sheep of Barbary, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, Armenia, &c. have undergone greater changes; they are, relatively speaking, with regard to the human species, improved in some respects, and vitiated in others; but improvement and degeneration are the same thing with regard to Nature, as they both imply an alteration from the original formation. Their coarse hair is changed into fine wool; their tail, loaded with a lump of fat, has become so large and inconvenient a bulk, that the animal drags it along with pain and difficulty; and while thus charged with superfluous matter, and adorned with a beautiful fleece, their strength, agility, and weapons are diminished; for these broad and long-tailed sheep are scarcely half the size of the muflon; they cannot fly from danger, nor make resistance against an enemy; and are in continual need of the care and assistance of man to preserve and multiply their species. The degeneration of the original species is still greater in our climates. Of all the qualities belonging to the muflon, our ewes and rams retain nothing but a small portion of vivacity, and even that yields to the voice of the shepherd. Timidity, weakness, resignation, and stupidity, are the only sorrowful remains of their degraded nature.