

OF THE ENVIRONS OF VALENCIA.

AFTER leaving Morviedro, on our way to Segorbia, we perceive to the right a kind of circular boundary, which incloses a valley in which are a great number of villages; the principal are Almenara, Benecalaf, Faura, Canet, and Benediten.

We afterwards arrive at Torres Torres, a small town which some writers pretend was the ancient *Turdeta*, the capital of *Turdetania*; if this be true, the hatred its inhabitants swore against those of Saguntum, and which was revenged by the Romans, may be said still to exist in all its force, for were they not subjects to the same prince, they would be in a state of perpetual warfare. Their disputes and antipathy arise from the waters which serve to overflow the country in dry seasons, and who knows, says the Abbé Ponz, but their ancient quarrels had the same foundation?

Further on upon the road we come to a cluster of mountains, in the bosom of which is a celebrated chapel, called the chapel of *Nuestra Señora de la Cueva Santa* (our lady of the holy grotto). The concourse of people at this chapel is incredible, especially on the 8th of September, which is the festival. The image of the Virgin is placed at the bottom of a deep grotto, to which the devout descend by a wide staircase. The Virgin performs many miracles, and if, as it is said, the image be of plaster, and has been preserved two centuries in that damp place, this is a miracle sufficiently remarkable, because figures made of the same materials are dissolved there in two days. The duties of the chapel are performed by priests, who live in a large house built by the side of the grotto, and which, at the same time, serves for a vicarage and an inn.

Segorbia is two leagues from this solitary chapel. Some of the historians of Spain insist, and others deny, that Segorbia was the ancient *Segobrica*: Diago says, with some appearance of truth, that modern Segorbia was formerly the capital of Celtiberia, and that it is the city mentioned in inscriptions and ancient coins. In its present state it contains not more than from five to six thousand inhabitants. It is surrounded by well cultivated gardens; the climate is mild, and the country abounds in every kind of fruit.

The Jesuits had a college in Segorbia; their house has been converted into an episcopal seminary. The tomb of Peter Miralles, the founder of the college, is to the right of the great altar. Miralles left Bexis, the place of his birth, when he was very young, and after serving his sovereign with much reputation and success, both in Europe and the Indies, returned very rich to his country, with the intention of employing an hundred and sixty thousand piastres, about six hundred and some thousand livres (twenty-six thousand pounds) in founding a college, an asylum for poor orphans, and a convent of reformed Augustin monks: he had at first resolved to make these foundations in Bexis, but his countrymen, for some reason now unknown, opposed him in his design. His statue of stucco, as large as life, and in a kneeling posture, is upon the urn which contains his ashes; and round it the principal actions of his life are represented in six bas-reliefs. The whole work is very well executed.

The greatest curiosity in Segorbia is the fountain; which even at its source furnishes water sufficient to turn two mill wheels, and water all the neighbouring country. The water is wholesome, clear, and well tasted; it does not breed either reptiles or flies, and becomes not corrupt by being kept; but its most remarkable property is that of petrifying the roots and branches of

the trees which grow by its side, and even the channels through which it passes. It is necessary to observe, that the greater or lesser quantity of the strong sediment it deposits, which then becomes hard and may be compared to the pumice stone, is in proportion as its course is more or less rapid. Notwithstanding this, the inhabitants of Segorbia are not more subject to the stone and gravel than those of any other part of the world.

Xerica is two leagues from Segorbia, and situated upon the banks of the Palencia, at the foot of a mountain, upon which are the remains of a castle which appears to have been formerly a place of great strength. The chief productions of the neighbouring country are wine, wheat, and Indian corn, and the soil abounds in excellent pasturage for cattle. This city has been the subject of many disputes among antiquarians; some asserting that it was the ancient Ociserda or Eto-besa; others that it was called Laxata, afterwards Laxeta, which at length became Xerica.

There are a few fragments of Roman inscriptions in Xerica and in Vivel, which is at the distance of half a league, but they appeared to be less deserving of attention, and not more likely to please the greatest lovers of antiquity than a modest inscription, which is modern, and found on the bridge over the Palencia, between Segorbia and Xerica.

JOANNES A MVNATONES
 EPS. SEGOBRICENSIS VIATO
 RVM PERICVLIS PROS
 PICIENS HVNC PONTEM
 A FVNDAMENTIS EREXIT
 ANNO 1570.

The road from Xerica to Vivel runs by the side of gardens delightfully shaded. The town of Vivel is situated on the Palencia; it is said to have formerly been a city of Celtiberia, called *Bel-Sinum*, and afterwards *Vicarium* which by corruption is now become Vivel: at present it does not contain more than three hundred inhabitants, who are all employed in the cultivation of their lands, which are well watered and fertile. Escolano and Diago give several inscriptions found in the town; some of these afford reason to conjecture, that different branches of the family of Porcia were established in this part of Spain, and that they went thither with M. Portius Cato. In others we find the names of Agricola, Domitian, Emilius, and the family of Cornelia.

Two leagues from Vivel we arrive at Bexis, a considerable town situated upon a little eminence, and surrounded by high mountains. The country

is watered by a river called Toro, from the name of the village near which it has its source; it is the same river which falls into the sea near Morviedro; in one part of it, for the distance of two or three leagues, it furnishes excellent trout. Several antiquarians place at Bexis an ancient city named *Bergis*. The present town is the chief place among the towns, villages, and hamlets belonging to the order of Calatrava.

After leaving Bexis, the road descends into a deep valley and becomes delightful; it lies through the bosom of mountains covered with pines, verdure, and aromatic plants; the vine also is cultivated there in situations properly exposed to the sun. The Canalen rolls its waters through this delightful abode, and the road afterwards crosses the mountains, the highest of which is called la Vellida. From the top of this mountain the eye takes in an immense country, a vast extent of sea, the city of Valencia, and the plains by which it is surrounded. Canales, a little village, where the ice, so necessary to the people of Valencia is deposited, is but a little distance from la Vellida.

The road from Canales descends for the space of a league, and in a deep bottom we discover Andilla. This town merits celebrity on account of the fine paintings contained in its church. The great altar is ornamented with ten Corinthian columns of the most just proportions, and between

which are several bas-reliefs representing the mysteries of the incarnation of Christ: the crown is composed of several angels, who hold the different instruments of his death. The altar is shut in by great doors, which are more to be admired than any thing contained in the church. They were painted by Ribalta, whilst his great abilities retained their full vigour. The subjects are taken from the scriptures, and executed in the most striking and masterly manner; the correctness, colouring, and composition of these paintings are not to be surpassed.

The inhabitants of Andilla have great merit in having preserved the sepreious productions, instead of imitating those of several other villages who, to decorate their churches after the modern manner, have destroyed several master-pieces of art. The former, however, are blameable for having uselessly expended a sum of money for the purpose of building a high tower by the side of their church; since, considering the situation of their village, which is entirely surrounded by very high mountains, had they raised their tower to four times the height it has, it would never have been seen at a distance, nor could any thing have been discovered from it; this luxury is besides shameful in two hundred inhabitants at the bottom of a deep valley: the money might undoubtedly have been better employed.

From Andilla the road almost continually ascends for two leagues, at the end of which we arrive at Alcublas, and, after passing over a plain of four leagues, at Liria. This city was famous in antiquity; it is universally allowed to have been the ancient *Edeta*, built by the first inhabitants of Spain. A stone with some Roman characters was discovered in 1759, near the public fountain. Don Joseph Rios, vicar of Cullera, explained the characters in the following manner, in a dissertation full of erudition.

Templum Nympharum Q. Sertorius Euporistus Sertorianus & sertoria festa à solo, ita uti sculptum est, in honorem edetanorum & patronorum suorum :

And lower down,
Sua pecuniâ fecerunt.

Liria is situated between two little mountains, and contains about sixteen hundred inhabitants, most of whom are employed in agriculture; the front of their church exhibits some fine architecture: Martin de Olindo was the architect.

The Carthusian monastery of *Portaceli* is two leagues from Liria, and Valencia four from the monastery.

VALENCIA.

MORE has been written upon Valencia than upon any other city in the kingdom of Spain; Escolano, Viciano, Beuter, Esclapes, and Diago, all of the kingdom of Valencia, have left annals and histories of that capital, and I am not surprised at what they have done; Valencia was, for a long time, the city in which a greater number of books were printed than any other in all Spain.

Its ancient name is unknown; but, it is said to have been taken and fortified by Scipio, destroyed by Pompey, and rebuilt by Sertorius. It was taken from the Romans by the Goths, and from the latter by the Moors, who, at twice, possessed it two hundred and thirty-nine years; for it was taken 1094 by the famous Cid-Rui-Diaz de Vivar, and bore, during four years, the name of Valencia of the Cid. The Moors retook it, but it was finally conquered in 1238, by

the king Don Jayme, and embellished as well as enlarged by Don Pedro IV. king of Arragon. It is about half a league in circumference, and the walls are built for ornament rather than defence.

Mariana the historian says, that in Valencia cheerfulness enters at the doors and windows; the description he gives of this city is in many respects devoid of truth, and such that the author proves himself more a poet than an historian. Several geographers who have had implicit faith in Mariana, have even exaggerated his account of Valencia, and said, the houses here are all palaces, on which account the name of *Bella* was given to the city, an epithet difficult to reconcile with narrow, crooked, and unpaved streets, impassable after rain; and in which there are but two or three houses built with taste, and a few churches distinguished by their architecture. In a word, it is a city built by the Moors, who, for reasons of policy, jealousy or religion, associating but seldom with each other, and shut up with their women, considered streets as nothing more than necessary paths, little capable of embellishment, and gave their whole attention to the interior of their houses, which were airy and spacious, but in general inconvenient and badly distributed. Besides, the luxury of carriages had not yet been introduced. But the

Spaniards, since their conquest of the kingdom, might easily have remedied a defect which at present is so considerable, and not have followed in their new buildings the injudicious plan traced by the Moors.

Burjasot, a village a league from Valencia, stands on an estate belonging to the college of Corpus Christi in that city.

Escolano derives the name of Burjasot from the Arabic words *borg* which signifies *tower*, and *sot* rendered by *wood*, whence the word *soto*, which in Castilian means the same thing. In the middle of the wood that surrounded Burjasot was an oak, which with its branches covered as much ground as a man with a yoke of oxen could plough in a day; the branches, fourteen in number, each of which would have made a great tree, were eighty paces diameter. They were supported by pillars, which gave to the inclosure the appearance of a rural cloister. Escolano saw this tree and gave a description of it. In 1670, it was thrown down by lightning.

Burjasot still presents monuments much more important, and which the city of Valencia takes great care to keep in repair; these are the public subterraneous granaries, constructed by the Romans, and mentioned by Columella, Pliny, Varro, and Suidas, who call them *Silos*, or

Siros,* and which in the Valencian language are now called *las Sichas* or *Siches de San Roque*.

The monument of Frances l'Advenant, the most famous actress Spain ever had, is in the old church of Burjasot. She died a few years since at the age of twenty-two, by the excess of her debaucheries: her epitaph, written by a priest, one of her friends, is silent upon this head.

*O mors, quàm amara est
memoria tua !*

* Sed id genus horrei quod scripsimus, nisi sit in sicca positione, quamvis granum robustissimum corrumpit situ: qui si nullus adsit possunt etiam defossa frumenta servari, sicut transmarinis quibusdam provinciis ubi puteorum in modum, quos appellant *Siros*, exhausta humus, editos à se fructus recipit. Columel. lib. 1. cap. 6. n^o. 15.

Quidam granaria habent sub terris, speluncas quas vocant *Seiros*, ut in Cappadocia ac Thracia; alii, ut in Hispania citeriore puteos, ut in agro Carthaginensi et Oscensi. Varro de Re Rust. lib. 1 cap. 57.

Suidas, tom. ii. p. 734 and 744.

Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. 18. cap. 30.

Quint. Curt. lib. 7. cap. 4. n^o. 24, &c.

A qui jace
 Francisca
 l'Advenant
 de edad de veinte y dos annos
 y ocho dias, immortal
 por su agudissimo
 talento, y admi-
 racion unica en
 su profession, mu-
 rio en onze de abril 1772,
 dando especiales
 muestras de fer-
 vorosa contri-
 cion; ruegen a Dios
 por ella

Dum proceres,
 primi,
 summi lacrymiantur
 et imi;
 post vitam fumus,
 Pulvis ꝛ E umbra
 sumus.*

* *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee!* Here lies Frances l'Advenant, aged twenty-two years and eight days, immortal by her rare talents, and the greatest prodigy of her profession. She died 11 April, 1772, after having shewn marks of the most fervent contrition. Pray to God for her.

Whilst the great, the rich, the powerful, and the people shall regret her loss and shed tears at her fate, let us not forget, that, after this life, we are but smoke, shadows, and dust.

From *Burjasot* the excellent figs, called at Marseilles *Figues Bourjasotes*, derive their name, and not from Alexander VI. of Borgia, archbishop of Valencia before he was pope, as Ménage pretends in his Italian etymologies under the word *Fico Brogiotto*: it is true they were transplanted to Italy by this luxurious pope, and there made known by him to the nice palates of that country.

A few years ago a stone with the following inscription was found in the Guadalaviar, in the environs of Valencia :

SODALICIUM
VERNARVM
COLENTES ISID:::

It is placed upon the road not far from where it was discovered: and has above it another stone, in the center of which is a crown of laurel, a cornucopia, and the following characters as a legend:

CO. IV. IT. VALENIA^r

After placing the two stones, the following inscription was put over them—Siste, antiquitatis amator: diu socii in alveo sepulti lapides A. D. MDCCLIV. inventi, sequenti in hunc proximio-

rem locum positi, dic ubi, dic quando primùm erecti.

Most of the historians who have written upon Valencia maintain it to have been the first city in Spain, in which the art of printing was known; and in the supposition that it was not introduced into that kingdom before the year 1474, they mention a Sallust printed at Valencia in 1475, and a Latin dictionary, intitled *Comprehensorium*, at the end of which is read as follows: *Præsens hujus comprehensorii præclarum opus Valentiae impressum anno MCCCCLXXV. Die vero XXIII mensis februarii finit feliciter.* This work is in the library of *Don Gregory Mayans*, who resides at Valencia, and who has one of the most valuable collections of books in the kingdom. He may be called the Nestor of Spanish literature. Although eighty years of age, most of his time is devoted to letters, and thus the last moments of a life, celebrated by a great number of works, are consecrated to the instruction of his countrymen. Voltaire has justly given him the title of famous. Dr. Robertson consulted him upon his history of America, and he maintains a correspondence with all the learned men in Europe. He gives the most polite reception to visitors, and was pleased to place me in the number of those whom he honours with his friendship. I was not less satisfied with his

brother Don Antonio Mayans, a man well acquainted with the antiquities of Spain, and who, among other works, has given the history of Elche, formerly *Ilici*.

During my stay at Valencia, I was present at the celebration of a feast given by the society *de la Real Maestranza*, on the birth-day of Charles III. This name is given at Valencia, Granada, Seville, Zamora, and some other cities, to a society composed of some of the first nobility of the country. The *Maestrantes*, in different cities, have a very rich uniform, and enjoy, by grant from his majesty, several honourable privileges. They march to the field under his banners, and are followed by several companies composed of their vassals. This presents an image of the feudal system.

ROAD FROM VALENCIA TO ALICANT.

I LEFT Valencia about one o'clock on the 22d of January, in a *volante* ;* the weather was extremely fine, the sun clear and very warm, and the country as beautiful as in the month of April. The road at first is good, and passes through several villages, but afterwards becomes such as it probably was at the creation ; sand up to the axletree, and an immense desert full of the high thorny and strong plant which the people of the country call *pita* ; the aloe of America, of which the Spaniards make cordage. The Catalans spin it so finely, that the thread is used in making of blonde. Algemisi is the first town upon this road. The Spanish traveller says, the

* A light open carriage, as I may say, continually blown about by the wind.

façade of the church is in a good taste, the great altar of fine architecture, and that in the inside of the church there are several pieces of sculpture well executed, and some paintings by Ribalta. Alcire, two leagues from Algimesi, is a considerable town, well situated. The Moors call it *Algecira*, which signifies *Island*; and, in fact, it is one, being surrounded by the river Xucar, which you pass over a stone bridge. The country about Alcire produces rice, fruits, and grain: the sugar cane was formerly cultivated there with some success, but since sugar has been brought, cheaper and of a better quality, from America, this cultivation has been neglected.

The road from this town to San Felipe is, in general, tolerably good; sometimes commanded by high and barren mountains, at others crossed by different streams.

Three quarters of a league from San Felipe you pass over the widows' bridge. A mother who had the misfortune to lose her only son in the river over which the bridge is built, caused it to be erected, that the same misfortune might not happen to any mother in future.

San Felipe was called *Setabis* in the time of the Romans; and, when in the possession of the Moors *Xaliva*, a name still given it by the com-

mon people ; it was destroyed at the beginning of this century for having resisted the arms of Philip V.

The castle was formerly the prison of the duke of Calabria.*

Between San Felipe and Mogente, the traveller in less than two hours, twelve times crosses a river called *Barranjo de Mogente* ; the laurel rose, so carefully cultivated in our gardens in France, grows naturally upon its banks. He

* Ferdinand of Arragon, duke of Calabria, eldest son of Don Fadrique of Arragon, king of Naples, born in Andria in 1488. His father having been deprived of his states by Ferdinand V. called the Catholic, and Louis XII. of France ; Ferdinand, who was his presumptive heir, shut himself up with some troops in Tarentesia, where, unable to defend himself long, he was obliged to surrender to the great captain Gonzalo Fernandez, who treated him well and sent him into Spain, whilst his father, mother, and brothers were in France. King Ferdinand imprisoned him in the castle of Xativa, where he remained ten years, after which Charles V. gave him his liberty, and received him at Valladolid, where the court then was ; he married him to the queen Ursula Germaine, widow of his grandfather, daughter to the count de Foix, and niece to Louis XII. he afterwards named him viceroy of Valencia. Having lost his wife, he married Donna Mencia de Mendoza. He died at the age of 66 years and some months, and was interred by the side of his first wife in the church of San Miguel de los Reyes, near Valencia, in a monastery of Jeronimites, which he had founded.

next arrives at Villena, a small town of new Castile.

Not far from Villena is the little village of Biar, called by the Romans *Apiarium*, on account of its excellent honey, which was as white as snow. It is still famous for the same valuable production.

To the left of Villena is Alcoy, a handsome little town, situated upon the river of that name. Iron mines were discovered in the neighbourhood in 1504; but it is more remarkable for a fountain called by the inhabitants *Barchel*; they say, that it throws up an abundance of water during the space of fourteen years; that it afterwards becomes exhausted, and that it runs and dries up periodically. The mountains in the neighbourhood of the village of Contentaina are famous from the great quantity of rare and medicinal plants found upon them.

Altea, rich in wine, silk, flax, and honey, is by the sea-side.

Denia, an ancient city founded by the people of Marseilles in honour of Diana, lies to the north of Altea; it was called by the founders *Artemisium*, from the Greek name of that deity: the Romans gave it the appellation of *Dianeum*, whence the name it now bears. Sertorius made an advantageous use of this place, and it is not long since the inhabitants still called it *Atalaya*.

de Sertorio, the observatory of Sertorius. It stands at the foot of Mount Mongon, and has a commodious harbour; the soil is fertile, and abounds in corn, wine, and almonds.

Between Denia and Altea, the land forms a promontory, called Cape Martin, but the inhabitants of the country still call it Artemus. This cape separates the Gulf of Valencia from that of Alicant.



A L I C A N T.

ALICANT was, for a long time, only a small village: Viciano says, that in 1519, there were but six houses upon the ground on which the city now stands; but in 1562 the number amounted to upwards of a thousand. The circumstances which most contributed to this prodigious increase, were the means made use of by the inhabitants to secure themselves from the enterprizes and ravages of the corsairs. They employed a part of their property in making strong fortifications by the sea-side. Several famous pirates, supported by the Moors, then cruized in the Mediterranean; Dragut and Barbarossa spread universal terror. Alicant, become a place of safety, and capable of defence, induced the merchants of Carthagen and the environs to establish themselves there. These

were followed by several other merchants from Milan and Genoa ; and the concourse of natives and strangers soon gave both fame and prosperity to the city.

It is now well built and peopled ; the bay is safe and much frequented ; it is sheltered on the east by Cape de la Huerta, and to the west by Cape Saint Paul and the Island of Tabarca. Vessels anchor about a mile from the mole in six, seven, eight, and ten fathoms of water, and may enter and go out with any wind. The mole is large and commodious, but not yet finished. One of the circumstances which has most contributed to the riches and commerce of Alicant, is the duties of entry being less there than at Valencia and Carthagená ; this diminished the commerce of these two cities in favour of the former, from which all the vessels that carry on the trade between Spain and Italy are fitted out.

The commerce of Alicant consists in barilla, antimony, alum, aniseseed, cummin, and the wine much esteemed in Europe, called *Vino tinto* (tent wine).

Within four leagues of the city there is a kind of reservoir, or cistern, between two mountains, called *El pantano*, in which the water that falls from all the neighbouring mountains is received ; and which, in case of a want of rain, serves to

supply the whole district for a year. The walls of the bason are two hundred feet high; and, at the base, upwards of forty feet thick.

The soil of the whole country between Alicant and Guardamar is entirely saline. Guardamar is said to be the ancient *Alone*, so called on account of the great quantities of salt found in the environs.

These salt pits have been famous in history for two thousand years. The Genoese and the traders from Pisa and the Levant formerly came there to load their vessels, and took great care to insert in their treaties of peace, an article whereby full liberty was granted them to fetch salt from Guardamar.

The bay of Alicant is said to have formerly been the famous gulf of *Ilici*, a Roman colony, now the city of Elche, but the declining state of the port of *Ilici*, and the improvement of that of Alicant, gave to the bay the name it now bears: it begins at Cape St. Martin, and terminates at Cape Palos.

The waters of Bousset, a village within a few leagues of Alicant, are said to be of use in obstructions and venereal cases; people go to drink them in the month of May, but they find there no kind of lodging, and the sick who remain are obliged to have small tenements erected for their accommodation. The rosemary plant thrives so

well in this neighbourhood, that it frequently grows to the height of six feet.

The situation of Alicant is too fine for that part of the coast to have been neglected by strangers who landed in Spain; and it is supposed, not without some reason, that there was formerly a city, of which the name is now unknown, in the environs of the spot on which Alicant now stands. Several fragments of inscriptions, and ruins of columns and statues, found towards that part of the bay called La Cala, support this conjecture. Some intire inscriptions, discovered in the same quarter, have been preserved in the neighbouring country houses; amongst others are the following :

M. VALERIO. SOLANIA
 NO. SEVERO. MVRE
 NAE. F. MAG.
 M. POPILIUS ONYXS
 IIIII. AVG. TEMPLVM. D. S.
 P. R. I. Q. P

Mario Valerio Solaniano Severo, Murencæ familie magister, Marcus Popilius Onyxæ sextum augur, templum, de sua pecunia restituit ipseque posuit.

VARRO. ANN XVIII

H. S. E. S. T. L.

Varro annorum octodecim hic sepultus est : sit terra levis.

DIIS MANIBVS
PRIAMI GENIA
SINPONIACA
AN. XXV.

A seal or signet, of the form following, was found near the same place :

A B A S C A N T I

It had a strong little handle that it might be forcibly pressed : *Abascantus* is said to have been a Roman collector ; and *Beuter* quotes an inscription in which mention is made of a person of that name.

Q. SERTORIUS. Q. LIB.
ABASCANTVS SE VIR AVG.
D. S. P. F. C. IDEM QVE
DEDICAVIT.

The inscriptions and coins discovered in this neighbourhood, prove that the city or colony existed before, and in, the time of the emperors.

ROUTE FROM ALICANT TO MURCIA.

Two leagues from Alicant, the traveller finds a forest of palm-trees ; a kind of tree which has a noble and simple, yet, in general, a melancholy appearance : however, when they are found in such numbers, as in the environs of Elche, their effect is very agreeable. I imagined myself transported to the plains of Alexandria or Grand Cairo : I saw, with a pleasure new to me, the golden and tufted grape and the date suspended by the side of each other ; an horizon infinitely varied, green valleys intersected by a thousand rivulets, and a clear and brilliant sky, which enlivened the scene, and rendered it one of the most interesting I had ever beheld.

Between Alicant and Elche, there are several deep and covered cisterns, the water of which is excellent. They are the precious remains of the religion of the Moors, who neglected no means

of facilitating ablutions and the observance of the salutary precepts of their law. The cisterns are now going to ruin, and in a few years will be totally filled up.

Elche, say antiquarians, is the ancient *Ilici*, a very famous colony, which had the surnames of *Julia*, *Cæsariana*, and *Augusta*; but all the remains of its ancient magnificence are a great number of ruins, and some inscriptions: one of the latter is engraved upon a piece of a jasper column in the convent of *Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia*: the words are:

AUGVSTO DIVI. F.
DECIVS. CELER
DEDICAVIT.

The column was brought from Alcudia, in the environs of Elche; and, by the ruins found near that place, it appears to have been more considerable than the latter.

The following inscription is also found in Elche.

D. M.
VLP. MARIANAE
VIXIT AN. XXX
L. CASSIVS. IVNIANVS
MARITAE*
KARISSIMAE.

* The word *Marita*, instead of *Uxor*, is frequently found in Horace and Ovid.

Elche had formerly a port called *Illicitano*, from its name *Ilici*; it was still resorted to in 1418, but is at present abandoned, and not even a trace of the city to which it belonged is now to be found. The city was undoubtedly distinct from *Ilici*, because *Elche* is a league from the sea. There are yet some remains of a road from Carthagera to the port of *Ilici*, and the natives called it, by tradition, the Roman road.

It is also said, that the road made by the Grecian Hercules, when, after conquering Geryon, near Cadiz, he continued his way to the Pyrenees to go into Gaul and Italy, passed through *Elche*.

This city was early converted to the Christian faith, the name of the first bishop of it was John; there still remains a letter of compliment, written to him by pope Hormisdas in 517; but the see was destroyed by the invasion of the Moors.

Elche was famous in the time of the Arabs: the situation was delightful, the climate mild, and the environs fertile; it was for them a delightful retreat, in which they cultivated arts and letters in the midst of pleasures. It gave birth to several celebrated men, among whom, one of the most distinguished was Isa Ben Mahomed Alabderita, a very pleasing poet; who flourished about the year 913 of our æra.

Mahomed Ben Abdalrhaman enjoyed the

greatest consideration amongst his fellow citizens ; he deserved to be celebrated for his knowledge and piety. The Spaniards have his annals of Spain, and a history of the illustrious men of that kingdom ; he died in 1213.

Abu Abdallah Mahomed Ben Mahomed Ben Hescham, was so wise and just a judge, that the king of Granada, after receiving repeated proofs of his knowledge and equity, gave him full power to govern in his place : he died in this employment in 1304.

Elche was taken from the Moors by Peter the Cruel, in 1363, and has ever since remained under the dominion of the Spaniards ; it belongs to the house of Arcos.

Orihuela, four leagues from Elche, is an ancient and well situated town, surrounded by high mountains, and, like all this coast, enjoys a perpetual spring. The country is so fertile as to have become a proverb : *llueva o no llueva, trigo en Orihuela* ; whether it rains or not, there is always corn in Orihuela.

The Romans called it *Orcetis*, and Ptolemy reckons it among the cities inhabited by the *Bastetani*.

One of the first bishops of this city sent deputies to the second council of Arles, in the fourth century, the time of Constantine the Great. The see was afterwards united to that of Cartha-