

bably I should never have written an account of my journey: but perhaps I ought to ask, would this have been a loss to the public? As soon as I found myself at the bottom, a robust and experienced waggoner came down and fastening me to his girdle by the cord which had nearly been fatal to me, accompanied me in my perpendicular ascent. I made it with as much confidence as safety; and arriving like truth from the bottom of my well, I remarked in the faces of those who had assisted me, more fear than I myself had felt.

Another interesting excursion which I made from Valencia was to Murviedro. This city is built upon a part of the ground upon which old Saguntum formerly stood.

Murviedro is distant four leagues from Valencia, upon the road to Barcelona. This road crosses one of the most fertile and variegated districts in the kingdom of Valencia. I stopped twice by the

way ; once to see San Miguel de los Reyes, a convent of Franciscans, the cloisters of which greatly resemble those of the Escorial, and appear to have had the same architect ; and afterwards to visit the Carthusian monastery of Porta Coeli, one of the three in the environs of Madrid. The predilection of the Carthusian monks, for this country, would alone be sufficient to give an idea of its beauty and fertility. Nothing can be more delightful than the situation of the Carthusian monastery I visited. Every thing breaths abundance, and preserves a calm in the mind. It is impossible to consider as the God of vengeance, whose anger is to be appeased by austerities and self-denial, the Supreme Being who pours down his benefactions in such profusion around this habitation. Those who reside in it, seem only to be inspired with peaceful sentiments. I entered some of their cells, which are remarkable for their neatness and elegant simplicity ; it appeared to me that a good conscience, enjoying its own purity, ought rather to reside

reside there than repentance drinking her own tears. I visited the church-yard of the monks; modestly surrounded by palm trees, which shade their tombs; while rose bushes are planted on the outside as if they were intended to prevent their remains from infecting the air which is respired in this peaceful asylum. I regretted that, as in this place, death was not every where presented under less hideous forms, and deprived of the images which render it so frightful. Why, said I to myself, should this inevitable passage be strewn over with funereal objects and surrounded with horrors? Why should we not rather aid mortals to pass through it, if not with joy, at least with serenity? Far then be removed from the bed of death every thing which may terrify survivors! Let us enjoy without excess, and consequently without remorse, the good things which the earth produces; and when the organized dust, which for a few moments is animated by the breath of life, is required of us by that common mother of mankind, let it serve

to fertilise her entrails, and, if it be possible, to beautify her surface.

With these reflections I set off to Murviedro. Two leagues from it, the castles by which it is commanded, presented themselves to view. Having Livy in my pocket, I sought for the description of the famous siege the citizens of Saguntum sustained against Hannibal. I doubted not but the walls were the remains of the ramparts from which these courageous people so long repelled the Carthaginian hero. I afterwards learned that these castles were the work of the Moors. They had built upon the heights on which they are situated, seven fortresses that communicated with each other by subterraneous passages, some of which are still almost entire. It appears that the ground upon which they stand was not a part of old Saguntum, and that this city, built half way up the eminence, extended on the other side into the plain approaching the sea. Livy says, it was not a thousand paces from it: if he was exact in his

his



his calculation, the opinion I adopted is well founded: for in that case Saguntum must have extended far beyond the present confines of Murviedro, which is at the distance of a league from the sea. In support of this opinion it was remarked to me, that at the foot of the eminence many Carthaginian and Roman antiquities had been discovered. We still find, in Murviedro, stones with Phœnician or Latin inscriptions, and the latter are numerous. Some of them are inserted in the walls, and there are five of them, remarkably well preserved, to be seen in the walls of a church. Those on the side of the mountain appear to have been unintentionally carried thither by the Moors, in common with other stones for building. Thus, in the walls of their ancient fortresses, we find a statue of white marble without a head, and some stones with inscriptions placed in an inverted position by the hands of ignorance.

I could not but walk with a kind of reverence over this ground, trodden in turns by Carthaginians, Romans, Goths, Moors and Spaniards, all of whom had here distinguished themselves either by their valour or their industry. I compared the different states through which it had passed under these different masters. It has undoubtedly been the scene of greater splendor and magnificence, but are not the riches of Nature with which it is covered, the olive and mulberry trees, the vines, the verdure which decorates it from the confines of Murviedro to the sea, and on every other side as far as the eye can reach, with the industry of the inhabitants which converts all these productions into profit, as valuable in the eye of the philosopher as the exploits of the warlike inhabitants of Saguntum, and the magnificence which the Romans formerly displayed within its walls? For the city having been punished for its brave defence by a total destruction, was afterwards rebuilt by the Romans, who made it one of their *municipia*, and one of the  
the

the most splendid cities they possessed out of Italy. At this period was erected the monument of which the mutilated remains still prove the power and opulence of Saguntum during the last ages of the Roman republic. Among other temples there was one consecrated to Bacchus, some remains of which are seen to the left, when, returning from Valencia, we arrive at the entrance of Murviedro. The mosaic pavement was preserved until the present century: but the negligence of those to whom the care of it was entrusted, had nearly suffered this precious relic of antiquity to be lost to the world, when what remained of it was removed to the library of the archbishop, where it is still to be seen.

The foundation of the ancient Circus of Saguntum is still discoverable, upon which walls, serving as an inclosure to a long continuation of orchards, have been built. A part of it yet remains above ground, in which the masonry of the Romans is clearly discernible. This Circus,

as it is easy to perceive, was adjoining to a small river, which was the chord of the segment formed by the Circus. The bed only of the river now remains. It cannot be doubted but that, when the mock sea fights, called *Naumachie*, were here exhibited, this bed was filled by the tributes of neighbouring canals which still exist.

But of all that remains of old Saguntum, nothing is in so good preservation as the theatre. The examination of this noble monument cannot but be extremely pleasing to a real lover of antiquity. My guide was the curate of one of the churches of Murviedro, a man equally polite and well informed on the subject in question. He acknowledged, that all he was going to advance was taken from a dissertation by a learned Spanish Dean of the last century, named *Marti*. Mr. Peyron has given an extract of this performance in his *Essais sur l'Espagne*, and I must refer those who wish to form an accurate idea of an ancient Roman theatre

theatre to the extract. I shall confine myself to the following particulars, which appeared to me the most interesting:

The theatre is sufficiently well preserved for us plainly to distinguish the manner in which the spectators were distributed at these dramatic representations. The different seats which the citizens occupied, each class according to its rank, are distinctly seen. At the bottom, in the place of our orchestra are the seats for the magistrates; next those for the equestrian order, and last of all those for the body of the people. The two door ways at which the magistrates entered still remain; also two higher up, exclusively reserved for the equestrian order; and almost at the top of the amphitheatre, which continues without interruption from top to bottom, the two galleries by which the multitude withdrew, and for that reason, called by the ancients, *vomitoria*; lastly, the four or five highest rows of seats

were

were destined to lictors and courtesans, who entered without either door or staircase. As this theatre is built on the declivity of a mountain, the ground rises in proportion with the benches; so that on which ever side the people entered they found themselves almost on a level with the place they were to occupy. Those of the lictors and courtesans are still in good preservation; and the semicircular roof of the whole edifice is entire. On the outside, a part of the plinth which terminates it yet remains, as also the projecting stones, in which were inserted the bars to which was fastened the great curtain, sufficiently large to cover the whole assembly, and drawn to keep off rain and the sun; for except in this case the whole audience was exposed to the open air. The care of the Romans to avoid tumult, either on entering the theatre or quitting it, and every kind of accident, appears to have been admirable. It is manifest that in such a theatre, all of stone, without a foot of timber, accidents from fire were not to be feared.

We

We have just seen that the whole assembly was seated and defended from the injuries of the air. Every means was taken to prevent disorder. The places of the judges are clearly discernible towards the right side of the amphitheatre. If any turbulent spectator drew upon himself their animadversion, they had lictors at hand to seize him; these conducted him into a private chamber, between which and the judges seats there was a communication by a little staircase; he was there interrogated, and, if found culpable, was confined in a prison, under the chamber, until the exhibition was concluded.

I did not take the dimensions of this noble monument; but my guide supposed it, according to the estimate of dean Marti, capable of containing nine thousand persons; and this appeared to me credible. But what seemed to me but little so was, that the actors should, in the open air, have been able to make themselves heard by so numerous an audi-

audience. I wished to assure myself of this, and placing a boy where the stage formerly was, but of which no traces remain, whilst I was at the top of the amphitheatre, made him repeat phrases, of which I lost not a word. I have said no traces of the stage remain; in fact, beyond the amphitheatre, of which some of the benches towards the center are sensibly decayed, scarcely any vestiges of the place occupied by the actors are to be found. The ground about the theatre offers nothing but a few trees and decayed buildings. The front of the ancient stage, which, in our modern theatres, may be compared to the space in which the foot-lights are placed, has been converted into an alley of mulberry trees; and ropes are now made on that ground where formerly the verses of Terence were recited to a Roman audience. This comparison caused me to reflect for an instant on the vicissitude of human affairs: man, said I, seems to wish to recompence himself for the frailty and shortness of his existence



istence by raising monuments, which remain whilst ages and generations arise and pass away: we might suppose them capable of braving the ravages of years; but Time, jealous of his imprescriptible rights, beats down, overturns, and annihilates these pretended immortal edifices. The stars in the celestial canopy, ever perfect, ever incorruptible, shine only on their ruins; and men will soon disagree about the place they have occupied: the stars themselves, which by their immensity and duration awe our imagination, as our eyes are dazzled by their splendour, will one day be extinguished by the voice of that Eternal Being, who alone will survive our works and his own creation.

Before I quit the theatre of Saguntum, I must observe, that no care is taken to preserve this valuable monument. A sort of keeper has his habitation there, which he extends or changes as is most convenient to himself, by pulling down whatever incommodes him. A few poor families

milies build within it wretched huts, for which the Romans, almost twenty centuries ago, prepared walls and ceilings. Never was time better assisted in its ravages. Had count Caylus or Winkelmann been witnesses to these sacrileges, they would have watered this barbarous earth with their tears; but antiquity appears not to have one enthusiastical admirer within a hundred leagues round Murviedro. I must, however, do justice to the ingenious idea of the corregidor of Murviedro, notwithstanding it would appear to us, who are accustomed to the circumscribed limits of our modern theatres, too vast and gigantic. This magistrate raising up, if I may so speak, the remains of a Roman theatre, last year restored it for some hours to its ancient use, by causing a Spanish piece to be represented within its walls.

From the theatre of Saguntum we climb rather than walk up to the ancient fortresses of the Moors, which  
crown

crown the enclosure; upon the platform  
 on the summit, is an humble hermitage,  
 the inhabitant of which enjoys one of  
 the finest prospects in Spain. It com-  
 mands the rich plain which separates  
 Murviedro from Valencia. From the  
 hermitage we see the steeples of this  
 capital rising through the orchards,  
 by which it is surrounded. Before us we  
 view, in perspective, a considerable part  
 of the Mediterranean, the shores of  
 which are covered with vineyards, olive  
 and mulberry trees from Murviedro to  
 the edges of its banks: on the left a  
 chain of hills bounds the horizon and  
 insensibly diminishes to a level with the  
 sea, leaving no interval but that formed  
 by the road to Barcelona.

Satisfied with admiring, I descended  
 to Murviedro. The servant of our oblig-  
 ing guide there waited for us, and had  
 prepared a plentiful dinner, to which  
 all the productions of the neighbouring  
 country had contributed. Sufficiency,  
 though without luxury or elegance, dis-  
 played

played itself in all his rustic apartments. I remarked that one of the steps which led to them was a stone from among those with antique inscriptions in the ruins of ancient Saguntum; monuments never intended to be trodden under foot by the ignorant modern inhabitants of that city. Even they, however, applauded the happy idea of the corregidor; and their sacrileges are expiated.

The wine of the environs of Murviedro is strong and well tasted; but most of it is converted into brandy, which is put into barrels on the spot. These are sent to a small port about a league from Murviedro, where they are there shipped for the North, or for Spanish America, which for some years past has afforded a considerable market for the brandies of the coast of Valencia.

In the evening I returned to Valencia, whence I departed two days after, and I must confess with great regret:

I had

I had there found what might well engage a curious traveller to remain much longer; instruction and pleasure. My visit to Saguntum and the manufactures did not prevent me from assisting at great dinners, country parties, concerts, and balls; and, notwithstanding the austerity of the prelate, at a private play represented by some of the first nobility, who in this capital are so blind to their own interest as to be the slaves of vanity by excluding merchants from their society. They are punished for this by the insipid life they in general lead; to shake off which, in some measure, they conceived the design of representing a Spanish tragedy. The count de Carlet was the only person among this somewhat too supercilious nobility, to whom I had recommendations. The count is a nobleman of Valencia, has travelled much, and in foreign countries acquired a taste for the fine arts. He procured me the pleasure of passing an hour at this representation. I saw there the people of quality of

Valencia, and perceived it was much to be regretted that several of the fair sex were not more frequently seen, and in a narrower circle. I cannot omit mentioning, with the utmost respect, the countess of Lumierez, and the two mademoiselles de Mascarell.

In returning from Valencia to Madrid I would not take the road by which I had come. There was another, longer by seven leagues, but much less rugged and difficult. As it was not the post road, and as that mode of travelling had besides been inconvenient to me, I hired one of the little cabriolets, called *Calezin*, so much in vogue in that country, and which, even in the streets of Valencia, perform the same service as our hackney-coaches. I took my place in this humble carriage, after dining with the count of Carlet. His guests, as well as himself, shewed me, until the last moment, the most flattering politeness. I was accompanied to the distance of half a league from the city by five or six persons,

persons, one of whom was the king's lieutenant, M. de Cortes, an old man, equally amiable and respectable, who appeared to have honoured me with a distinguished place in his esteem, and seemed much affected when he took his leave. I continued to take the road to San-Felipe, still enchanted with the beauties Nature has so prodigally bestowed on this favoured country, and delighted with the kindness and cordiality of its inhabitants.

For six leagues I crossed the richest country imaginable, by one of the best roads in Spain. The three last leagues to San-Felipe, are less agreeable than the former, but the nurseries of mulberry and olive plants, interspersed with fields of rice, continue to the environs of the city.

I did not arrive at San-Felipe until one o'clock in the morning, which obliged me to pass the remainder of the night upon the boards in the kitchen,

surrounded by dogs and cats, and stung by insects. I shortened this disagreeable night as much as possible, and at four o'clock was ready to pursue my journey; but, before I departed, I had time sufficient to visit the city, known in the war of the Spanish succession by the name of *Xativa*. The city and suburbs occupy a considerable space; yet the inhabitants amount not to more than ten thousand. It is built on the declivity of a mountain, at the foot of two castles, which form an amphitheatre. This situation accounts for the long resistance made by *Xativa* to the arms of Philip V. for which it was punished by the loss of its name and privileges. Among the churches of San-Felipe there is one intirely new, which has a better appearance than many cathedrals. San-Felipe has also a great number of fountains that would embellish even the most considerable cities.

I now took leave of fine roads and rich countries, and soon travelled between



tween uncultivated and depopulated hills, seeing nothing either to the right or left but a little hemp and corn. After three leagues of unequal road, by turns over stones and a greasy soil which the least rain dissolves, I arrived at the *Venta del Puerto*, a miserable village, fourteen leagues from Valencia, and upon the confines of the kingdom of Murcia, which I had heard so much extolled. From this point the view is confined on all sides by sterile mountains, crossed by the road to Almanza. After having travelled half a league, I discovered this place, at the extremity of a vast plain, famous for the victory which insured the throne to Philip V. This plain is well cultivated, and its fertility seems to increase as we approach Almanza. It produces corn and hemp. There is a tradition at Almanza, that the years immediately succeeding the battle, which has received its name from that place, were extremely fertile; a sad compensation for the destruction the victory had occasioned to the human species.

The conquerors and the conquered, heaped upon each other on the field of battle, fattened the soil, the scene of their victory or defeat, and increased, by their death, the fertility of the country they had ravaged during their lives. About the distance of a cannon shot, on this side Almanza, is a socle, which is ascended by a few steps, and bears upon its four sides Latin and Spanish inscriptions, relative to the victory gained by the Marshal Berwick. Above the socle rises a little pyramid, upon which was formerly an armed lion. As the pyramid is placed close by the side of the great road, the people of Valencia had continually before their eyes an upbraiding token of their rebellion, and, with stones, beat down the lion which still seemed to threaten them. The small statue the pyramid now bears, was substituted to the lion. To eternise a victory like that of Almanza, a more magnificent monument would be to be wished for.

Almanza is only a spacious village with wide streets, and low but handsome houses. Its industry is confined to the weavers, who indeed are numerous: the hemp grown in the neighbourhood is not sufficient for their employment. To the north of the village are the ruins of an old inhabited castle, and to the west, at about a quarter of a league from Almanza, is an irregular mountain, of such a shape, that at a distance the traveller is inclined to take it for an enormous intrenchment.

The roads which lead from Almanza are bad, across a stony country, wild, and covered with heath; this is another not very pleasing part of the kingdom of Murcia. For about a league the road runs by the side of a wood of *Cascarrales*, large trees, the fruit of which is a long husk, full of a kind of coagulated juice, and given as a treat to the cattle of the country. A little farther on I crossed a wood of green oaks, (*Encinas*) which produce the *bellotta* or acorn,

acorn, a fruit formerly precious to our ancestors, and which, in the present age, is not too vulgar for the delicate taste of the Spanish ladies. It is true the acorn of these green oaks sensibly differs from that of the common oak (*Robles*). It is lesser, and has a taste a good deal like that of a hazel nut. The other kind of acorn, which in Spain has the same bitterness as in other countries, is employed for the same purpose as elsewhere.

Two leagues from the little village Del villar, is the *Venta del Rincon*, a solitary inn, but tolerably good, although situated in a barren soil. A league farther on we perceive Chinchilla, a town on a barren eminence, but which commands the spacious and fertile plains of la Mancha. As we approach Albacete the soil gives sufficient indications that they are near. This town, situated thirty leagues from Valencia and Alicant, is a quarter for cavalry, and has in its environs fields of wheat, barley and some pastures.

About

About half a league from it is a tolerably handsome aqueduct, the road leading to which is the favorite walk of the inhabitants.

Albacete covers a considerable space of ground; it is a place much frequented by travellers, and especially by people in business. Its industry is exercised on the iron and steel brought thither from Alicant. The manufactures of Albacete will not for a long time be prejudicial to the hard-ware of France and England; but they are at least sufficient to banish from the city idleness and poverty, and to give to the inhabitants an appearance of opulence and activity, which pleases the eye of the traveller, fatigued with crossing a barren and wretched country.

From Albacete, after having passed through two extensive villages, La Gineta and La Roa, I arrived at Minalla, another large village, so unprovided that I found nothing I could purchase to eat, not  
even

even bread; of which each individual bakes as much as is sufficient for his own wants, and has none to sell. The nine leagues of road from Albacete to Minalla lie across a vast plain which, not being well cultivated, produces only a little corn and some saffron. The inhabitants, however, though in all other respects without industry or activity, feed numbers of those impure animals proscribed by the law of Moses, and which poetry dares not name without a periphrasis.

I went in the evening to Al Provenzio, where I slept. This is a town rather considerable; the cultivation of saffron is the principal employment of the inhabitants. At Al Provenzio I met with a French baker, who was delighted at hearing me speak his own language, which inspired him with sufficient confidence to induce him to make his complaints to me of the persecutions he suffered, and to request me to lay them before the minister. Although he had long been married and established in the country,

try, he never had been able to expiate the crime of being a Frenchman; he was looked upon with a jealous eye, and feverely treated: his great and unpardonable fault was, making better bread than the other bakers. Thus, in every situation, envy accompanies and embitters success. I administered to the poor baker all the consolation my humanity could suggest: and, for a few comforting words and vague promises of using my credit in his favour, I received his benedictions and the effusions of his gratitude.

Beyond Al Provenzio the soil becomes better; I crossed well cultivated lands, and passed through two villages. Pedronera, in which there is a manufactory of saltpetre, and La Mota well situated in no very deep valley. This village is commanded by an eminence upon which are twelve windmills, which appear as if ranged in order of battle. According to their position, relative to the two villages, Quintanar and El Toboso, which owe all their renown to the immortal

tal

tal Cervantes, I doubted not but these windmills were those on which Don Quixote made his first essay in chivalry. I surveyed the extensive plains which had been the scene of his adventures. I was only a league from El Toboso, the birth place of the fair Dulcinea ; and by making a little circuit, might pass through this village, which the lively pen of Cervantes has almost nearly rendered equal in fame to the greatest cities history has celebrated. I seemed to see the shades of this great man, and of his hero wandering in these fields. To have gone out of the way about half a league would have completely gratified my curiosity ; but my conductor, who was but little versed in literature, and like la Fontaine's stag, *not accustomed to read*, did not partake of my curiosity : I was obliged to content myself with discovering, from the great road, the steeple of El Toboso, the little wood in which Don Quixote waited for the tender interview to be procured him by his faithful squire, and the house in  
which



which Dulicinea received his amorous message.

Full of the ideas which these romantic plains called to my recollection, I passed through Quentavar, and arrived at Corral, a large village within nine leagues of Aranjuez.

It was to this place that one of the fine roads of Spain, for which the kingdom is indebted to the Count de Florida Blanca, had been brought, and which has since been further continued. No road can be more straight, solid, or better formed. It begins at Aranjuez, and, crossing Ocana, advances into la Mancha, within sixteen leagues of the capital. Thence to Madrid the road is as fine as any in Europe; but this barren, naked and ill peopled country yet remains to be rendered flourishing; the industry of the inhabitants, crowded together in the great villages, at least three leagues from each other, without so much as a hamlet, farm or thicket, in the interval which separates

separates them, is yet to be excited; and commodious asylums to be built for travellers, who in crossing the extended and burning plains, frequently stand in need of shade, refreshment, and repose. These conveniences are wanting on all the roads in Spain: to furnish them is a task worthy of the intelligent zeal of the Count de Florida Blanca, who has for several years past dedicated the leisure of peace to this beneficent purpose.

At the time of my return from Valencia, this minister was seriously employed in establishing stage carriages. Until then, the only manner of travelling expeditiously was on post horses; and those whose age, sex or situation would not permit them to travel in this dangerous manner, were obliged to be slowly dragged in the carriages of the country, drawn by six mules, the only animals used here to draw. These carriages, called *colleras*, go eight or, at most, ten leagues a day, so that the journey from Cadiz to Bayonne, a distance of an hundred leagues, took

up

up at least three weeks. The Count de Florida Blanca perceived that one means of giving new life to the country, was to render communication more speedy and easy. He therefore conceived the project of making roads, building inns, and establishing post horses. The expences and difficulties of the late war retarded the execution of the plan; and, even since the re-establishment of the peace, it has been but slowly and gradually executed\*. The four principal roads, those from Madrid to Cadiz, to Barcelona, to the frontiers of France, and to Portugal, were first attended to by the minister; and among these that which established a communication between the two most eminent cities in the kingdom required the preference; for which reason, the first cares of the Count de Florida Blanca were

\* I have been informed that, since my departure from Spain, there are diligences established on some of the principal roads, among others, from Bayonne to Madrid, by which means the journey may be performed in six days.

dedicated