VIOLA. See Βοτανυ.

Viola, or Tenor Violin. A bow-instrument of the violin kind, intermediate in size and pitch between the violin and the violoncello. It has four strings, of which the third and fourth are covered with silvered copper wire. It is tuned C, G, D, A, reckoning upwards, and is an octave higher in pitch than the violoncello, and a fifth lower than the violin. See article Music.

Viola, or Alto Viola, an instrument of the violin kind, larger than an ordinary violin, and furnished with four gut strings, the third and fourth of these being covered with silver-plated copper wire. It originated from the *viola di braccio,* one of the ancient set of viols used in concerts. The English call it the tenor-violin, or simply the tenor. Its name of alto-viola is derived from its music being writ­ten in the alto-clef on the third line of the stave. It is tuned C, G, D, A, an octave above the violoncello. For its compass, and use in orchestra, &c., see Music.

Viola d'Amore, an instrument no longer in use, but of which the tone and effect are said to have been very sweet and singular. It was played with a bow, and seems to have varied in the number of its strings and in its tuning. One species of it is described as having five gut strings, and five metal wires tuned in unison with the strings, but passing under the finger-board and bridge, and thus vibrat­ing only as *open* wires, to arpeggios or harmonics, &c., play­ed upon the open gut strings. The principle of this instru­ment seems to have been revived in the construction of some recent musical instruments.

Viola di Gamba, a musical instrument no longer in use, but which was the immediate predecessor of the violon­cello. A clever musician, C. F. Abel, in the last century, threw away his fine talents upon this nasal and ungrateful instrument. A good *viola di gamba* affords excellent wood materials for making a fine tenor-violin.

VIOLIN, a bow-instrument of considerable compass, and great powers of expression and execution. Its origin is obscure. The best violins are those of the old Cremona makers, Jerome, Anthony, and Nicholas Amati, and Stra­divarius and Guarnerius, and F. and T. and G. B. Rug­giero. Next in quality are those of Jacob Steiner, and of the two Klotz, father and son, Tyrolese makers. The dif­ference between the tone of the Cremona violins and the Tyrolese has been compared to the difference between the tone of a flute and a clarinet. The violin has four strings, tuned G, D, A, E, reckoning upwards. The lowest string is covered with fine silvered copper wire. Some persons have used silver, or even gold wire, which does not cor­rode like the copper. Gross impositions are often prac­tised by unprincipled dealers in pseudo-Cremona violins. Like *copies* of old pictures, they deceive many purchasers. Many of the finest violins of the old makers have been destroy­ed by ignorant repairers, or by capricious alterations made at the desire of ignorant amateurs. See article Music.

VIOLONCELLO, a powerful and expressive bow-instrument of the violin family. It has four strings, the third and fourth of which are covered with silvered copper wire. It is tuned C, G, D, A, reckoning upwards, and is an octave lower than the viola. Passages of rapid execution do not suit this instrument, especially on the third and fourth strings. The best violoncellos are those of the old Italian and Tyrolese makers. (See article Music.)

VIOLONE, Contra-basso, or Double-Bass, the largest instrument of the violin kind. The best are of Italian make. See article Music.

VIQUE, or Vich, a city of Spain, in the province of Catalonia. It is situated on the river Ter, above Gerona. The country around, though not naturally fertile, is render­ed productive by high cultivation. The most considerable works for printing calicos are within this district, and there are in the city considerable manufactories of cotton. The hills around it have mines of topazes, amethysts, and co­loured crystals, which are worked into ornamental jewellery by the jewellers of Barcelona, and form part of its traffic. Vique is the seat of a bishop, and has a splendid cathedral, with several other churches and several convents. It is si­tuated in Lat. 41° 47', and contains several monasteries, and 8400 inhabitants.

VIRAGO, a woman of extraordinary stature and cou­rage, who has the mien and air of a man, and performs the actions and exercises of men.

VIRAGNE, a town and mud fort of Hindustan, province of Aurungabad, in the Nizam’s territories, 100 miles south-east from Ahmednuggur. Long. 76.15. E. Lat. 18.11. N.

VIRANCHIPURA, an open town of Hindustan, in the Carnatic district of Vellore, situated on the south shore of the Palur river. It was formerly a large place, and pos- ssessed many public buildings; but suffered severely during the war with Hyder. Long. 79. 5. E. Lat. 12. 56. N.

VIRAPELLE, a town on the Malabar coast, in the dis­trict of Cochin, five miles north from the town of Cochin. It is the residence of the apostolic vicar of the Roman Catho­lic Christians, who superintends sixty-four churches. There are besides forty-five governed by the archbishop of Craga- none, and also the large dioceses under the bishop of Cochin and Quiton, whose churches extend to Cape Comorin. Here is a convent of barefooted Carmelites, besides other Catholic seminaries. Long. 76. 10. E. Lat. 10. N.

VIRE, an arrondissement of the department of Calvados, in France. It extends over 373½ square miles, and com­prehends six cantons, which are divided into 97 communes, containing 89,450 inhabitants in 1836. The capital is the city of the same name, a manufacturing place of great acti­vity, containing 7339 inhabitants, who make annually 24,000 pieces of cloth, said to amount in value to 3,840,000 francs. It stands on the river Vire, and in the neighbour­hood much cider is made, and some of it distilled to mix with brandy. It was the birth-place of the celebrated na­turalist Du Hamel. Lat. 48. 50. 16. Long. 1. 0. 0. W.

VIRGIL. Of the personal history of Publius Vir- gilius Maro, the greatest of Latin poets, little is known with certainty. The principal authority on which his bio­graphy rests, is a life usually attributed to Tiberius Clau­dius Donatus, a grammarian who flourished in the fifth century of the Christian era. Its authenticity, however, is very questionable; and, at all events. It is so much disfi­gured by interpolations, that it is difficult to extract from it such facts as may be implicitly relied on. To this sus­picious document we have to add a few scanty allusions by the poet’s contemporaries, and the scattered remarks of an­cient scholiasts and grammarians.

By all accounts, the parentage of Virgil is represented as exceedingly humble. Donatus informs us, that, accord­ing to some authorities, his father was originally a potter, but according to others, and those the more numerous, the hired servant of a travelling merchant, to whom he recom­mended himself by his faithful services, and who gave him his daughter Maia in marriage. By his father-in-law he was entrusted with the charge of a small farm in the vicinity of Mantua, which he ultimately seems to have inherited, and which probably constituted the poet’s patrimony. What­ever may have been the original condition of his father, it is gratifying to find this testimony to his moral worth, and to be assured that he was capable of appreciating, and pos­sessed the means, as well as the desire, of cultivating the rising genius of his illustrious offspring. In this respect, Virgil was equally fortunate with Horace, whose father, al­though possessed but of moderate fortune, placed him un­der the ablest masters at Rome, along with the sons of knights and senators.

Virgil was born at Andes, now called Pietola, a village about three miles distant from Mantua, in the year of Rome