

communication, between the capital and the port of Acapulco, arise from the sudden swell of the waters of two rivers, the Papagallo and the Rio de Mescala. These torrents, which in times of drought are not more than 60 metres in breadth*, are from 250 to 300† in the rainy season. At this period of the great swells, the *loads* are frequently stopt for seven or eight days on the banks of the Papagallo, which the muleteers dare not attempt to ford. I have still seen the remains of pillars constructed of enormous hewn stones, which the current had carried away before the arches were completed. A project was entertained in 1803, for making a new endeavour to throw a large stone bridge over the Rio Papagallo; and the government destined nearly half a million of francs‡ for this undertaking, which would have been of so great importance to the commerce of Mexico with the Philippine Islands. The Rio de Mescala, which takes the name of Rio de Zacatula farther to the west, is almost as dangerous as the Papagallo. I passed it on a raft formed according to the old Mexican custom of the dried fruits of the gourd, on which reeds are fastened together; the raft is directed by two Indians,

* 196 feet. *Trans.*

† From 820 to 984 feet. *Trans.*

‡ £20,000 Sterling.