

terior navigation on rivers or artificial canals; for like Persia, the greatest part of New Spain is in want of navigable rivers. The Rio del Norte, which from its breadth hardly yields to the Mississippi, flows through regions susceptible of the highest cultivation, but which in their present state, exhibit nothing but a vast desert. This great river has no greater influence on the activity of the inland trade, than the Missouri, the Cassiquiare, and the Ucayale, which run through the Savannahs, and uninhabited forests of North America. In Mexico, between the 16° and 23° of latitude, the part of the country where the population is most concentrated, the Rio de Santiago alone, can be rendered navigable at a moderate expence. The length of its course,* equals that of the Elbe and the Rhone. It fertilizes the table lands of Lerma, Salamanca, and Selaya, and might serve for the conveyance of flour from the intendancies of Mexico and Guanaxuato, towards the western coast. We have already proved†, that if on the one hand, we must renounce the project of establishing an inland navigation between the capital and the port of Tampico, on the other, it would be very easy to cut canals in the valley of Mexico,

* The Rio Santiago, the old Rio Tololotlan, is more than 170 leagues in length.

† Chap. iii. and viii.