

The waters of the Manzanares are very limpid, in quality and this river has no resemblance to the Manzanares of Madrid, which appears the more magnificent in contrast with the fine bridge by which it is crossed. It takes its source, like all the rivers of New Andalusia, in the savannahs (llanos) known by the names of the plateaux of Jonoro, Amana, and Guanipa,* and it receives, near the Indian village of San Fernando, the waters of the Rio Juanillo. It has been several times proposed to the government, but without success, to construct a dyke at the first ipure, in order to form artificial irrigations in the plain of Charas ; for, notwithstanding its apparent sterility, the soil is extremely productive, wherever humidity is combined with the heat of the climate. The cultivators were gradually to refund the money advanced for the construction of the sluices. Meanwhile, pumps worked by mules, and other hydraulic but imperfect machines, have been erected, to serve till this project is carried into execution.

The banks of the Manzanares are very pleasant, and are shaded by mimosas, erythrinas, ceibas, and other trees of gigantic growth. A river, the temperature of which, in the season of the floods, descends as low as twenty-two degrees, when the air is at thirty and thirty-three degrees, is an inestimable benefit in a country where the heat is excessive during the whole year, and where it is so agreeable to bathe several times in the day. The children pass a considerable part of their lives in the water ; all the inhabitants, even the women of the most opulent families, know how to swim ; and in a country where man is so near the state of nature, one of the first questions asked on meeting in the morning is, whether the water is cooler than it was on the preceding evening. One of the modes of bathing is curious. We every evening visited a family, in the suburb of the Guayquerias. In a fine moonlight night, chairs were placed in the water ; the men and women were lightly clothed, as in some baths of the north of Europe ; and the family and strangers, assembled in the river, passed some hours in smoking cigars, and in talking, according to the custom of

* These three eminences bear the names of *mesas*, tables. An immense plain has an almost imperceptible rise from both sides to the middle, without any appearance of mountains or hills.