

The Panama Rail-Way and the Gulf of Mexico.

1. *Carta del Istmo de Tehuantepec, copied by order of Commodore M. C. Perry, Commanding U. S. Home Squadron, Mexico 1847, by Wm. May, Lieutenant U. S. N.*
2. *Plan de la Boca del Rio Coatzacoalcos, copied by order of Commodore M. C. Perry, Commanding Home Squadron, Mexico 1847; by Lieut. Wm. May, U. S. N.*
3. *Sketch from the Mouth of the Coatzacoalcos River, to the town of Mina-Titlan made by order of Commodore M. C. Perry, Commanding Home Squadron, 1847, by Lieuts. Alden, Blunt and May, U. S. N.*
4. *Mouth of the Coatzacoalcos River, Surveyed, January 1848, by order of Commodore M. C. Perry, by*
WM. LEIGH, Lieut. Commanding,
E. T. NICHOLS, Acting Master,
A. L. BRADBURY, Master's Mate,
Officers of the U. S. Brig Stromboli.
Hydrographical Office, Washington.

The continent must be cut in two. The convenience of the world requires that the two great oceans should be joined together.

The subject is attracting a large share of public attention. Two propositions were submitted to Congress, at the last session, for opening a way for commerce across the Isthmus. The routes proposed were, one via Panama, the other via Tehuantepec.

It will be recollected that Mexico granted, a few years ago, to Don José Garay and others, extraordinary privileges for constructing a railroad or ship canal across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Under this grant, Cayetano Moro, an Italian engineer, was employed to survey the route. The map of Tehuantepec and the plan of the Coatzacoalcos, mentioned as 1 and 2, at the head of this article, are the results of that survey.

They were found by Commander McKenzie, U. S. N., at Mina-Titlan, 1847, in the hands of

the agent of the Company which had been formed in England upon the faith of Moro's survey; from this agent they were borrowed by Commodore Perry; they were copied by his order, and the copies sent to the Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography. By authority of the Bureau, these with the two other charts named above, were engraved and published at the National Observatory.

The surveys of Moro have been widely circulated both in this country and in Europe. They have produced a general impression, both here and there, that this Tehuantepec route is very favorable, if not the most favorable that has been proposed across the continent either for railroad and ship canal.

Moro's Survey cannot be relied on. He gives twenty feet water on the bar of the Coatzacoalcos. The survey, both of Lieut. Leigh, and of Lieuts. Alden, Blunt and May, agree in giving not more than twelve and a half feet there. Commodore Perry states further that he had, in 1847 and '48, three several surveys made of the mouth of that river; that he had himself been in and out of it several times, sounding both ways; and that his own observations, as well as the three surveys, all by different officers, agree; and that they show that more than twelve and a half feet cannot be carried into that river.

Misled by this survey, Messrs. Hargous & Co., in their memorial, last winter to Congress, state that "thirty miles of the river Coatzacoalcos is navigable for ships of the largest class." Our officers followed Moro only fifteen or twenty miles up the river (they went up as far as Mina-Titlan;) they give twelve feet only that far; he gives thirty-three—a difference of twenty-one feet. What difference they would have made for the thirty miles, we cannot say. These are vital points; points upon which the merit of the route depends, and which form serious objections to it.

Moreover, there is reason to believe that Moro took his soundings in the rainy season, when the river was swollen with a flood from the mountains. Yet, no mention is made of this fact. Now, what would be thought of an Engineer with us, who should be employed to examine the navigability of one of our rivers for the purpose of giving the public correct information as to its depth of water, with the view of connecting some internal improvement with it, and with the view of getting subscriptions to the

or Hume, and impart to him some slight notion of what has happened in this long interval. If he does not belong to that class of people who "never learn any thing, and never forget any thing," he may possibly open his eyes to the absurdity of his speculations: or at least may diversify his labors, by endeavors as useful and promising, to stop the printing-press, prostrate the telegraphs, blow up the steamboats, and run the locomotives off the track. When he has done all this, let him dam up the waters of the Amazon and the Mississippi, and roll them backward to their springs. Then—and not till then—may he expect to divert the mighty current, whereon float the destinies of England and of the world, from that channel in which, for good or for evil, the hand of Providence has appointed it to flow.

"LETTERS AT SEA."

The sun hung low, half hidden by the range
Of Cordillera's peaks, and o'er the surf
Threw rainbow colors for its foamy caps.
The soft winds from the shore bore the sweet breath
Of the Magnolia's bloom, and in each inlet
Its snowy leaves, like fleecy clouds, reposed
Upon the waves which on the pebbly shore,
Played a low chime as gentle as the tone
Of mother's lullaby at summer eve,
Sung to her slumbering infant. Farther out
The nautilus had spread his little sail,
And eyed his own light shadow on the wave.
The dolphin's back had caught more radiant hues
From the rich light of even, as it wreathed
In many a graceful form, and lingered still
Around the vessel's side. The drooping sails
Hung motionless, save when the rippling breeze
Waved the light cordage, and half-raised the curls
From the damp brow, fanning it with freshness,
And whispering of dells and leafy trees.
All was calm, and filled with stilly beauty
Which stole the sense away. It was one
Of those delicious moments when the mind,
Seeming to dwell on naught, feels o'er it come
Fair shapes of loveliness ineffable,
And on the heart the gentle dew of feeling
Doth fall unwittingly, to freshen there
The flowers of affection 'till their fragrance
Filleth our being. So felt one, who, pale
And languid, had been borne upon the deck,
That the cool air kissing his cheek, again
Might bring to it the rosy flush of health.
As murmured the light waves around, their tone
Seemed changed by magic and he heard instead
The voices of his home:—he wondered then
If those beloved ones e'er thought of him—
If midst the circle of their happy sports,
An eye grew sadder as it missed his smile,
Or marked his vacant place. Then came a fear
He was forgotten, and his full soul thrilled
With a wild, feverish wish for sympathy.
Starting, as from a trance, he gazed around,

As though he hoped to find the dearly loved
Beside him, but with sickening heart he sank
Again upon his couch and sadly gazed
Far o'er the waste of waters. Suddenly
His pulse beat quicker; he descried a boat
Bounding across the waves, and its gay motion
Gave life to hope. It near'd the ship; and soon
A friend, the bearer of glad tidings, came
With letters from his home. He turn'd them o'er
And o'er again. He scarce could read their lines,
His vision was so dimmed with tears of joy.
And as he caught their meaning, once again
He felt the fresh breath of his native hills,
And thoughts of childhood's happy home and friends
Brought back his childhood's tenderness and tears.

L. W.

AN APOSTROPHE TO NIAGARA

BY MARGARET JUNKIN.

Wonder of wonders! Earth hath naught in all
Her realm of beauty and magnificence,
To match thy matchless grandeur! Glorious Blue
Retires pavilioned midst his mantling mists,
Nor dares to claim a rivalry with thee.
The Alpine cataracts that headlong leap
From heights so dizzy that they fall dispersed
In fleecy sheets of foam, are but the play
Of Nature in her frolic mood, compared
With thy vast whirl of waters. The loud roar
Of Ocean in its fury only seems
A deaden'd echo to thy ceaseless plunge.
That giant Arch whose grand proportions fill
The gazer's soul with such sublimity,
That thought withdraws dismayed, serenely stands,
A silent witness of its Builder's power;
Whilst thou, sublimer still, dost make appeal
To the amazed and awe-struck ear no less
Than to th' enraptur'd, overflowing eye!
Thou hast no rival. Earth had only need
Of one such model of stupendous skill,
To shadow forth *His* might and majesty,
Who gave thee all thy glory.

Feeble man,

In thine o'er mastering presence shrinks, appalled
At his own nothingness. Can his weak hand
Prevent thy leap tremendous? Can he blow,
With vaunting wisdom's breath, the veil aside
That shrouds thine awful bosom, and behold
The dread abyss beneath? Or can he snatch
One jewel from the rainbow-diadem,
Wherewith the sun hath crowned thee sov'reign queen!

I tremble as I gaze:—and yet my soul
Revives again with this indwelling thought;—
That though thy stunning torrent pour itself
In undiminished volume, on and on,
For centuries unsumm'd,—there is a time,
When all that makes thee now so terrible,
(Yet in thy greatest terror, lovely still.)
Shall sink to silence quiet as the grave;
But now I stand upon thy fearful brink,
In mute, strange wonder rapt,—I, who appear
So evanescent when compared with thee,
Shall rise superior o'er this failing earth,
Whose ruins shall become thy sepulchre!

Lexington, Va.