

**CANAL OF NICARAGUA: OR, A
PROJECT TO CONNECT THE
ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC
OCEANS BY MEANS OF A CANAL**

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Canal of Nicaragua: Or, a Project to Connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by Means of a Canal by N. L. B.

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Report on the proposed Canal

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THE

ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC OCEANS

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INTRODUCTION.

IN the year 1842, several influential persons of Central America wrote to the prisoner of Ham, through a French gentleman established in Jamaica, with a view of inducing him to ask for his liberation, and proceed to America, where, as they said, the Prince would be welcomed with enthusiasm, and would find occupation worthy of his name and active mind. This offer Prince Napoleon Louis Bonaparte at that time declined. Touched, however, by such marks of sympathy, shown to him from a country so distant, even through the gates of his prison, the Prince continued in correspondence with those gentlemen.

The more closely the body is confined, so much the more is the mind disposed to wander in unbounded space, and to canvas the feasibility of projects which it would scarcely be at leisure to entertain in a more active existence; thus the Prince, having received a visit from an officer of the French navy, who was about to start for Central America, directed him to make observations on the practicability of cutting a ship-canal that should join the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, through the lakes of Nicaragua and Leon. It is remarkable that nearly at the same time that Prince

Napoleon was directing preliminary observations to be made on the line of country through which a ship-canal could be undertaken with a greater chance of a profitable result, the French government sent an engineer (Mr. Garella) to make the surveys for a contemplated cutting across the Isthmus of Panama.

In the year 1844, the States of Guatemala, St. Salvador, and Honduras, sent Mr. Castellon, as minister plenipotentiary to King Louis Philippe, with directions to request for those states the protection of the French government, and offering in return many commercial advantages in favour of France. The French government declined the proposals made by Mr. Castellon, who then asked for a permission to visit the prisoner of Ham. His wish being complied with, Mr. Castellon had an interview with the Prince, during which he entered at great length upon the importance and possibility of joining the two oceans, urging him to go to Central America, and place himself at the head of this gigantic enterprise; but his exertions proving unsuccessful, he subsequently signed a treaty with a Belgian Company.

A few months had elapsed, when rumours of a forthcoming amnesty began to circulate. The Prince apprehending that he would not be allowed to visit his father in Florence, again thought of America, and revolved in his mind the great project recently laid before him, the accomplishment of which would reflect such high credit upon his name.

Mr. Castellon, during his stay at Ham, discovered that the Prince possessed an intimate knowledge of all points in connection with the project under consideration, and was fully alive to the importance to which his country was destined to attain at no distant

period, and he therefore desired that the Prince would reduce to writing the ideas which arose in his mind on the subject. In compliance with that gentleman's request, the Prince forwarded to him in America certain memoranda, embodying several of the considerations which will be found in this pamphlet ; and he stated, at the same time, that it was his decided intention, should he be set at liberty, to go to America, and place himself at the head of this undertaking. At that time, the Prince's father had taken no step to obtain his son's liberation. His health had not up to that period been impaired, as it has been since, and the difficulty subsequently opposed by the French government to the liberation of the Prince could not have been anticipated.

On receiving from Louis Napoleon the communication alluded to above, Mr. Castellon caused it to be translated into Spanish ; and no sooner was it made known throughout the country, than a great number of the principal inhabitants petitioned their government to the effect, that Prince Napoleon Louis Bonaparte should be exclusively entrusted with the execution of the projected ship-canal. Accordingly, on the 6th of December Mr. Castellon wrote to the Prince the following letter :—

(Translation.)

“ To his Highness Prince Napoleon Louis Bonaparte.

“ PRINCE :

“ Leon de Nicaragua, 6th Dec. 1845.

“ It is with the greatest pleasure I acknowledge
 “ the receipt of your Highness's letter, dated the 12th
 “ of August, containing the expression of sentiments of
 “ friendship and esteem with which I feel highly ho-
 “ noured. Annexed to it I found the development of
 “ your ideas relative to the canal of Nicaragua, viewed
 “ by you in that light which is best calculated to pro-

"mote the welfare of Central America. You, at the
 "same time, acquaint me that you are far more disposed
 "than when I first paid you a visit at Ham, to come to
 "this country in order to advance, by your presence
 "and exertions, the execution of that great work, suffi-
 "cient of itself to satisfy the most noble ambition ; and
 "that you are ready to accept the necessary powers for
 "its execution, without any other view than that of
 "performing a task worthy of the great name you
 "possess.

"Before I enter upon that great object, of paramount
 "importance to the welfare of my country, I beg your
 "Highness will allow me to say, in reference to the flat-
 "tering opinions which, notwithstanding my deficiency
 "of merit, you express in my behalf, that nothing proves
 "more the magnanimous and benevolent disposition of
 "your heart, than this distinguished mark of esteem
 "and regard with which you have honoured me. I feel
 "happy in having obtained from you so favourable a
 "reception, and I can assure your Highness, that I will
 "seize upon every opportunity in my power, to testify
 "my gratitude to you, as well as my most hearty desire
 "to reciprocate the bounty you have shown to me.

"I beg now to resume the object now before us.

"When I went to France, some time ago, as minister
 "plenipotentiary to his Majesty the King of the French,
 "I was anxious, before leaving Europe, to pay you a
 "visit at Ham. I longed for the honour of seeing you,
 "not only on account of the popularity which invested
 "your name throughout the world, but also because
 "I had myself witnessed the high esteem in which
 "your character was held in your own country, and the
 "sympathy exhibited for your misfortunes.

"It was also my wish, Prince, to prevail upon you to
 "come to my country, fully convinced that you would
 "find there an admirable opportunity for the display of

“ your activity, and the exercise of your talents, which
 “ continued captivity might exhaust. I admired, Prince,
 “ your resignation, and the love of your native land,
 “ standing even the test of imprisonment; but it was
 “ with great pleasure that I saw your mind exalted at
 “ the recital of the immense work to be executed in my
 “ country for the general advancement of civilization.

“ I am happy to see by your Highness’s letter, that
 “ you feel disposed to come to this country, where the
 “ documents you have forwarded to me have elicited
 “ sentiments of the deepest gratitude, and of the live-
 “ liest enthusiasm.

“ Now, I am happy to be enabled to acquaint your
 “ Highness, that the government of this state, fully
 “ convinced that the capital necessary to this under-
 “ taking could only be raised by placing at its head
 “ one who, like yourself, is independent both by for-
 “ tune and standing, and thereby inspiring a general
 “ confidence in the two worlds, whilst it dispels from
 “ the easily-alarmed spirit of our people every fear of
 “ foreign domination,—this government, I say, relies on
 “ the co-operation of your Highness, as the only person
 “ combining in the highest degree these different quali-
 “ ties. Brought up in a republic, your Highness has
 “ shown by your noble behaviour in Switzerland, in
 “ 1838, to what extent a free people may rely upon
 “ your self-denial, and we feel convinced that, if your
 “ uncle, the great Napoleon, has rendered himself im-
 “ mortal by his military glory, your Highness may
 “ acquire, with us, an equal glory, in works of peace,
 “ which cause only tears of gratitude to flow.

“ From the day on which your Highness shall set foot
 “ on our soil, a new era of prosperity for its inhabitants
 “ will commence.

“ That which we beg leave to propose to your High-
 “ ness, is not unworthy your attention, for, previous to

“ the year 1830, King William of Holland had accepted
 “ a proposal analogous to that which we have the
 “ honour now to submit to your consideration.

“ If we do not at once forward to your Highness the
 “ powers necessary to the immediate progress of this
 “ great work, this is to be ascribed to the recess of the
 “ legislative Chambers, which have yet to take into
 “ consideration the terms of a treaty signed by me on
 “ the 2nd December last year, with the Count of
 “ H * * * *, president of the Belgian Colonization Com-
 “ pany. But, this treaty not having been so favourably
 “ received as I had reason to expect, there is a greater
 “ probability of the government being enabled to renew
 “ its proposals to your Highness, and thereby satisfy
 “ the wishes of our people.

“ The most influential persons of this capital, distin-
 “ guished both by their learning and their wealth, have
 “ presented to the government a memorial, which I
 “ shall hand to our friend Mr. * * * *, recommending
 “ that your Highness be intrusted with the final settle-
 “ ment and terms of the pending negotiation, or of any
 “ other which might hereafter present itself,—intended
 “ to promote the welfare of the state of Nicaragua. The
 “ government has not rejected the suggestion, but it
 “ appears that, at all events, it will feel disposed to
 “ send me to you with the necessary instructions, to
 “ enable your Highness and myself to come to an
 “ understanding on the subject.

“ Another cause of delay, is the recent popular out-
 “ break in the country ; but the number of malcon-
 “ tents being exceedingly small, and the government
 “ supported by public opinion, I think that this revolu-
 “ tion will soon be appeased, and the government will
 “ be able to display all the elements upon which it
 “ relies, to insure permanent peace, and to give this
 “ project the strong impulse it justly demands. The