

To John Henry Eaton

Hermitage Decbr. 28th. 1819.

Dr Sir

Having recd. a confidential communication from the Dept. of war which rendered it probable that I might be ordered to take the field, I found it necessary Early this month to proceed to Florence to make some arrangements for such an event, from whence I returned on the 26th. where I found your letter of the 7th. Instant, for which I thank you.

I am happy to find, that on the Florida question the members of Congress begin to feel like americans—and I hope, ~~that~~ by a firm & Just course they will save our national charector, and not only do Justice to our citizens, but consult the safety of our country by seizing on such points as will give us a lasting security, as well as full indemnity to our citizens for losses sustained.

I reciprocate the idea, and fully appreciate it—of abandoning all Temporizing policy through fear of the holy alliance—it is time to be Just to ourselves, as well as to be Just to others; ~~to~~ maintain our rights at all hazards—by which alone our nation will be respected abroad and we can enjoy a lasting peace with foreign powers. I deprecate the idea of waiting longer for explanations from unfaithfull Spain. Can we receive a minster from that power under present circumstances, without compromitting in some degree our national charector—under the bad faith of Spain, as I believe the only good explanation that can be given is from the mouth of american cannon—although I have long wished for retirement, and am doubtfull whether my enfeebled constitution would bear me out in the attempt of leading another campaign. Still before I would see our growing republic Truckle to Spain or the whole united uropean world, I would make the attempt & bury myself in defence of our national rights—and if my Government orders it; will soon give an emphatic explanation to the infidelity of Spain by seeizing again the strong holds in Florida. The national security, & indemnity to our citizens for spoliations by Spain may require much more. The *key* to the commerce of the west ought to be ours—it is the Giberalter of the south west & if ever possessed by a maratime power will embargo the mouth of the Mississippi when *its possessor pleases*. By occupying the whole extent of Louisiana—It will aid our south american neighbours—& soon bring Spain an explanation of her duplicity and perfidy to us that will be durable and lasting. These crude & hasty hints are alone for consideration & the decision of Congress—they are the guardians of the nation, & I hope will faithfully execute their trust.

Ere this Doctor Brunaugh is with you and my several letters with my answer to the report of the committee of the Senate will have been recd. They will have taken such a direction as your wisdom dictated—& with which I ~~am~~ will be content. I had upon the most mature reflection, deemed my answer the only proper course—if you have thought with me I will be gratified. I fear not investigation, I wish to be Judged agreeable to facts, not falshoods—& the mode proposed of presenting the letter to the President of the Senate with the documents—would, (as I believe) never be read. I hope ere long to hear from you on this subject.

In my late Tour I had bad weather, was exposed in the whole of it, and feel the worse of my Jaunt. present me to Doctor Brunaugh & Capt Easter if with you. I will write Doctor Brunaugh as soon as I have leisure I am engaged perusing the lengthy trial of Colo. King & preparing if possible to forward it to the Dept. by Tomorrows mail Present me to my worthy friend Colo. G. Gibson, and all those who enquire for me your friends are all well here. Accept assurances of my friendship & Esteem.

Andrew Jackson

Swann Galleries, Sale 2139 (March 18, 2008), Lot 163.