

APPENDIX.

THE CESSION OF FLORIDA.

THE following important letter from General Jackson to Major Eaton, (received too late for insertion in the proper place), shows that the administration in 1819 had serious thoughts of seizing Florida, and that General Jackson was disposed to annex Texas also. The unexplained delay of Spain to ratify the treaty of cession, signed at Washington, February 22, 1819, was the cause of these hostile feelings. See Chapter XLIII.

GENERAL JACKSON TO SENATOR EATON.

* HERMITAGE, December 28th, 1819.

"DEAR SIR: Having received a confidential communication from the Department 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 by a firm and just course they will save our national character, 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 explanation from unfaithful Spain. Can we receive a minister from that power under present circumstances without compromising in some degree our national character? 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 doubtful 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 European world, I would make the attempt and bury myself in defense of our national rights. And if my government orders it, will soon give an emphatic explanation to the infidelity of Spain by seizing again the strongholds in Florida. The national security and indemnity to our citizens for spoliation by Spain may require much more—the *key* to the commerce of the west ought to be ours—it is the Gibraltar* of the south-west, and if ever possessed by a maritime 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 neighbors, and soon bring from Spain an explanation of her duplicity and perfidy to us that will be durable and lasting. These crude and hasty hints are alone for consideration and the decision of Congress. They are the guardians of the nation, and I hope will faithfully execute their trust.

“Ere this Doctor Bronaugh is with you, and my several letters, with my answer to the report of the committee of the Senate, will have been received. They will have taken such a direction as your wisdom dictated, with which I 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 falsehoods, and 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 Bronaugh and Captain Easter, if with you—I will write Doctor Bronaugh as soon as I have leisure. I am engaged perusing the lengthy trial of Colonel King, and preparing, if possible, to forward it to the Department by to-morrow’s mail. Present me to my worthy friend, Colonel G. Gibson, and all those who inquire for me. Your friends are all well here. Accept assurance of my friendship and esteem.

“ANDREW JACKSON.

“MAJOR J. H. EATON,

“Senator in Congress.”†

* “Gibraltar” in the original.

† The original in the collection of Edward M. Thomas, Washington, D. C.