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MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

COMMUNICATING INFORMATION

OF THE TROOPS OF THE UNITED STATES

HAVING TAKEN POSSESSION OF

AMELIA ISLAND, IN EAST FLORIDA.

JANUARY 13, 1818.

Read, and ordered to lie upon the table.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY E. DE KRAFFT.

1818.

To the Senate and House of Representatives
of the United States.

I have the satisfaction to inform Congress, that the establishment at Amelia Island has been suppressed, and without the effusion of blood. The papers which explain this transaction, I now lay before Congress.

By the suppression of this establishment and of that of Galveztown, which will soon follow, if it has not already ceased to exist, there is good cause to believe that the consummation of a project fraught with much injury to the United States has been prevented. When we consider the persons engaged in it, being adventurers from different countries, with very few, if any, of the native inhabitants of the Spanish colonies, the territory on which the establishments were made; one on a portion of that claimed by the United States, westward of the Mississippi, the other on a part of East Florida, a province in negotiation between the United States and Spain—the claim of their leader as announced by his proclamation on taking possession of Amelia Island, comprising the whole of both the Floridas, without excepting that part of West Florida which is incorporated with the state of Louisiana—their conduct while in the possession of the island, making it instrumental to every species of contraband, and in regard to slaves of the most odious and dangerous character, it may fairly be concluded, that if the enterprize had succeeded on the scale on which it was formed, much annoyance and injury would have resulted from it to the United States.

Other circumstances were thought to be no less deserving of attention. The institution of a government by foreign adventurers in the island, distinct from the colonial governments of Buenos Ayres, Venezeula, or Mexico, pretending to sovereignty, and exercising its highest offices, particularly in granting commissions to privateers, were acts, which could not fail to draw after them, the most serious consequences. It was the duty of the executive, either to extend to this establishment, all the advantages of that neutrality which the United States had proclaimed and have observed in favor of the colonies of Spain, who by the strength of their own population and resources, had declared their independence, and were affording strong proof of their ability to maintain it, or of making the discrimination which circumstances required. Had the first course been pursued, we should not only have sanctioned all the unlawful claims and practices of this pretended government in regard to the United States, but have countenanced a system of privateering in the Gulf of

Mexico, and elsewhere, the ill effects of which, might, and probably would have been deeply and very extensively felt. The path of duty was plain from the commencement, but it was painful to enter upon it while the obligation could be resisted. The law of 1811, lately published, and which it is therefore proper now to mention, was considered applicable to the case, from the moment that the proclamation of the chief of the enterprize was seen, and its obligation was daily increased by other considerations of high importance already mentioned, which were deemed sufficiently strong in themselves to dictate the course which has been pursued.

Early intimations having been received of the dangerous purposes of these adventurers, timely precautions were taken by the establishment of a force near the St. Mary's to prevent their effect, or it is probable, that it would have been more sensibly felt.

To such establishments made so near to our settlements, in the expectation of deriving aid from them, it is particularly gratifying to find, that very little encouragement was given.

The example so conspicuously displayed by our fellow citizens, that their sympathies, cannot be perverted to improper purposes, but that a love of country, the influence of moral principles, and a respect for the laws, are predominant with them, is a sure pledge, that all the very flattering anticipations, which have been formed of the success of our institutions, will be realized. This example, has proved, that if our relations with foreign powers, are to be changed, it must be done by the constituted authorities who, alone, acting on a high responsibility, are competent to the purpose; and until such change is thus made, that our fellow citizens, will respect the existing relations, by a faithful adherence, to the laws which secure them.

Believing that this enterprize, though undertaken by persons, some of whom may have held commissions from some of the colonies, was unauthorized by, and unknown to the colonial governments, full confidence is entertained, that it will be disclaimed by them, and that effectual measures will be taken, to prevent the abuse of their authority in all cases to the injury of the United States.

For these injuries, especially those proceeding from Amelia Island, Spain would be responsible, if it was not manifest that although committed in the latter instance through her territory, she was utterly unable to prevent them. Her territory however ought not to be made instrumental, through her inability to defend it, to purposes so injurious to the United States. To a country over which she fails to maintain her authority, and which she permits to be converted to the annoyance of her neighbours, her jurisdiction for the time, necessarily ceases to exist. The territory of Spain will nevertheless be respected, so far as it may be done consistently with the essential interests and safety of the United States. In expelling these adventurers from these posts, it was not intended to make any conquest from Spain, or to injure in any degree the cause of the colonies. Care will be taken that no part of the territory contempla-

ted by the law of 1811, shall be occupied by a foreign government of any kind, or that injuries of the nature of those complained of, shall be repeated, but this it is expected, will be provided for, with every other interest in a spirit of amity, in the negotiation now depending with the government of Spain.

JAMES MONROE.

*War Department,
January 12th, 1818.*

SIR,

I have the honor to transmit copies of the orders which have been given by the acting Secretary of War to major Bankhead, in relation to taking possession of Amelia Island, and copies of the communications which have been made to this department by that officer, which embrace all the information in my possession.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
With the highest respect,
Your most obedient servant,

J. C. CALHOUN.

The President of the United States.

*United States' Ship John Adams,
Off Amelia, December 22d, 1817.*

SIR,

We have received orders from our government to take possession of Amelia Island, and to occupy the port of Fernandina with a part of our force, which will be moved over, as soon as it will be convenient for your troops to evacuate it.

To avoid unnecessary delay, we think proper at this time to inform you, in the event of your acquiescence in this demand, that you will be at liberty to depart with the forces under your command, and such property as belongs unquestionably to them will be held sacred.

You are to leave the public property found by general M'Gregor, at Fernandina, in the same condition it was taken, and the property of the inhabitants of Amelia Island must be restored to them, where they have been forcibly dispossessed of it, and no depredations on private property from this period will be permitted with impunity.

Should you, contrary to the expectations of the President of the United States, refuse to give us peaceable possession of the Island, the consequences of resistance must rest with you.

We have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your most obedient servants,

J. D. HENLEY,

Captain in the navy, and commander in chief of the naval forces of the United States, off Amelia.

JAS. BANKHEAD,

Major first battalion artillery, United States army, and commanding military forces.

*General Aury, commander in chief
of the forces at Fernandina.*

Head Quarters, Fernandina,

*Island of Amelia, December 22d, 1817,
and 8th of the Independence.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have had the honor to receive your official letter of this day: The nature of its contents requiring mature deliberation, I have sub-

mitted the same to the representatives of the republic, and as soon as I shall have obtained their opinion it shall be immediately sent to you.

I can, however, state to you gentlemen, that no opposition will be made to surrender the Island of Amelia, on the part of this government.

I have the honor to remain,

With consideration,

Your obedient and humble servant,

(Signed)

AURY,

Commander in Chief.

Commodore J. D. Henley.

*Major Bankhead, &c. &c. on board the
United States' ship John Adams.*

Head Quarters, Fernandina,

*Island of Amelia, December 22d, 1817,
and 8th of the Independence.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have received your official letter of this day, by which, in the name of the government of the United States, you summon us to evacuate this place with the troops under my command, as possession thereof is to be taken by the forces under your commands, under certain conditions therein specified.

This republic, that of Mexico, nor any other of South America, being at war with the United States, oblige me to state to you, that the contents of your letter have greatly surprized this government, and the people of the state. You have nevertheless intimated, that in case of our acquiescence to your demand, we shall be permitted to evacuate this Island, which never was or ever has been a part of the United States. Allow me gentlemen to observe to you, that from the moment we took Fernandina by the force of our arms, we entered into the full possession of all the rights appertaining to our enemy, and that to this day, we have supported these rights at the risk of lives and fortunes. The boundaries of the Floridas and the United States, having been fairly settled by the treaty of friendship, limits and navigation, on the twenty second of October, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five, leave us at a loss to ascertain your authority to interfere in our internal concerns.

Our surprise increases when we reflect, that your communication comes as authorized by the government of a people, who glory

in their respect for the rights of nations, whether great or small, and who no doubt sympathize and wish success to their southern brethren in the struggle for liberty and independence, in which they are engaged, as were the United States forty years ago.

On the other side you promise to hold sacred, such of our property as *unquestionably* belongs to our citizens. Who is to be the judge in this case? The United States who can by no means claim any kind of jurisdiction from the source of the river St. Mary's, down to the ocean, on this side of the centre of the channel! We entertain too much veneration for your constitution, to believe for a moment, that you, supposed already in possession of this Island, which has never been ceded by the king of Spain, or by its inhabitants to the United States, can bring with you a competent tribunal to decide upon this question. The only law you can adduce in your favor, is that of force, which is always repugnant to republican governments, and to the principles of a just and impartial nation. The same observation may be applied to your interference with the property of the inhabitants, which we have always respected and considered as sacred.

You order us also, as if we were subjects of your government, to leave behind, when Fernandina is evacuated, all the public property that was found at its surrender. This demand is directly contrary to the public rights by which all public property captured by the enemy, is avowedly that of the captors when not otherwise stipulated: Are you acting in the name of the king of Spain or his allies? As we consider the people of the United States, as unquestionably the only free people on the surface of the globe, we cannot admit, that you have now become the adherents of a tyrant—otherwise your demand is inadmissible and unjustifiable in the eyes of the world, and if we must yield to it, all the blame rests with you.

Permit me therefore, gentlemen, to request of you to lay before the President of the United States, these remarks, in order that a matter of so serious a tendency may be reconsidered. We have read his excellency's message at the opening of Congress, with the utmost concern, and I have concluded that the political situation of this republic, has been greatly misrepresented in the United States, through the intrigues of our enemies. We have certainly a right to be heard, for which purpose, I shall have the honor of forwarding to your government, the necessary documents. If you are not disposed to let things remain in *statu quo* until the President's further determination be known, I am authorized to assure you, that we respect and esteem too highly the people of the United States, to carry matters to extremities.

I have the honor to remain, &c.

AURY, *commander in chief.*

J. D. HENLEY, Esq. *Captain in the U. S. navy, &c.*

JAMES BANKHEAD, Esq. *Maj. of the 1st. bat. artillery, &c.*

*United States' Ship John Adams,
Off Amelia Island, December 23d, 1817.*

SIR,

We have had the honor to receive your communication of the 22d inst. and will briefly remark, that as officers in the service of the United States, we are bound to obey the orders emanating from the authorities of our government, without any discussion or animadversion on our part as to the correctness of them. We have been ordered by the President of the United States to take possession of Amelia Island, and as the President has expressed his solicitude, that the effusion of blood may be avoided if possible, it must be gratifying to us to be informed by you, that no resistance will be made to us.

We will again remark, that private property will be sacred, and that our orders extend only to the public property captured by gen. M'Gregor, at Fernandina.

We propose to land a force to-day, and to hoist the American flag—under that flag, no oppression or unjust measures will ever be witnessed. And we feel assured, that there will be no difficulties in the arrangement made by us.

The squadron will immediately sail into the harbor, when the commanding officer of the land forces will wait on the commander in chief to make the necessary arrangements for the landing of the troops.

We have the honor to be,

Very respectfully, Sir,

Your most obedient servants,

J. D. HENLEY,

Captain in the navy, and commander in chief of the naval forces of the United States, off Amelia.

JAS. BANKHEAD,

Major first battalion of artillery of the United States' army, and commanding military forces.

GEN. AURY,

Commander in chief of the forces at Fernandina.

*Head Quarters, Fernandina, Island of Amelia,
December 23d, 1817, and 8th of the Independence.*

I have had the honor to receive your letter of this date. I am

ready to surrender this place to the forces under your command, whenever you may judge proper to come and take possession thereof.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

AURY.

J. D. HENLEY, Esq. *Captain in the navy,
and commander in chief of the United
States naval forces off Amelia.*

JAMES BANKHEAD, Esq.
*Major 1st battalion U. States' artillery,
and commanding the land forces.*

Department of War,

17th July, 1817.

SIR,

Circumstances having made it necessary to occupy without delay, Point Petre, and the St. Mary's river, by a military and naval force, I have to request, that you will instruct the officer whom, in pursuance of the order issued through the adjutant general, you may detail to take command at Point Petre, to co-operate with the officer commanding the naval force on that station, in such measures as may be deemed necessary for the preservation of the peace and tranquillity of that section of the country, which there is reason to apprehend may be disturbed in consequence of the contest between the Spanish royalists and patriots, for the occupation of the adjacent territory. The officer will also be instructed to use due vigilance to prevent the violation of the revenue laws of the United States, and in particular to prevent the illicit introduction of slaves into the United States; and in order to do this the more effectually, he will prohibit all vessels freighted with slaves from entering the river St. Mary's.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed)

GEO. GRAHAM.

*The officer commanding at
Charleston, S. C.*

Extract of a letter from George Graham, acting Secretary of War, to major James Bankhead, Charleston, S. C. dated November 12th, 1817.

“I am instructed by the President to direct you to repair immediately to Point Petre, with the effective force under your command, leaving only an officer and a few men as a guard at forts Moultrie and Johnson. Captain Wilson has been ordered to repair with his company now at fort Johnson, North Carolina, to Point Petre, and a detachment of new recruits, under the command of captain Hook, who was on his route to join the 4th infantry, has also been ordered to that place. The troops enumerated above, and those now stationed at Point Petre, will constitute a force of more than two hundred men, of which you will take the command until the arrival of general Gaines. A remittance of five thousand dollars has been made to your battalion quartermaster, whom you will take with you: and you will make requisitions for the necessary supply of provisions on the contractor’s agents. It will be advisable to take from Charleston, a supply of salted meat, and a sufficient quantity of flour and hard bread to serve two hundred and fifty men for thirty days at least.”

*Department of War,
November 12th 1817.*

SIR,

It appearing to the satisfaction of the President, that the persons who have lately taken possession of Amelia Island, have done it without the sanction of any of the Spanish colonies, or of any organized government whatever, and for purposes unfriendly to, and incompatible with the interests of the United States, he has decided to break up that establishment, and take temporary possession of Amelia Island: for this purpose, the troops ordered to assemble at Point Peter, will co-operate with the naval force which has been ordered to St. Mary’s, under the command of captain Henley.

It is the anxious wish of the President, that this should be accomplished without the effusion of blood; and he confidently hopes, that the force destined for the purpose, will be of such an imposing character, as to induce those persons who now have the military occupation of the island, to abandon it without the exercise of force; but if it should be found to be indispensably necessary force must be used. You will, therefore, immediately on the arrival of captain Henley at St. Mary’s, and in conjunction with him, despatch an officer to demand the abandonment of the Island, by those who now exercise authority there, and take such other measures as may be deemed pro-

per to obtain the peaceable possession of it; also for the preservation of the property of those persons who were residents of the Island when it was first captured by general M'Gregor. Should your demand for the evacuation of Amelia, be complied with, you will then occupy with a part of your force, the position of Fernandina, and take care that the cannon and other implements of war which belonged to the port when captured by general M'Gregor, are not taken off.

If peaceable possession of the Island however, cannot be obtained, and it should be the opinion of captain Henley and yourself, that your joint forces are not competent to the prompt and certain reduction of the naval and military forces which may then occupy the harbor and post of Fernandina, you will in that event, make a requisition on general Floyd, or such other officer as may command that division of the militia of Georgia in which Point Petre is situated, for a force not exceeding five hundred men, to be held in readiness to march at a moment's warning, and await the arrival of general Gaines, who has been ordered to Point Petre, for ulterior measures.

You will take with you from Charleston, the necessary military stores, and such heavy cannon as may be required for the reduction of the fort on Amelia Island, in the event of resistance.

As no answer has been received to the communication addressed to you from this department on the 17th July last, it becomes necessary to request, that the receipt of this may be acknowledged, and that you also advise this department regularly of your movements.

I have the honor to be, &c. &c.

(Signed)

GEORGE GRAHAM.

MAJOR JAMES BANKHEAD,

Commanding at Charleston, S. C.

Fernandina, Amelia Island,

December 24, 1817.

SIR,

I have the honor to lay before you the correspondence held with gen. Aury, the late commander of this place; and to inform you, that the American flag was raised here yesterday afternoon.

Several days will elapse before General Aury can withdraw his followers, but I have taken every measure to ensure tranquillity, by ordering all his black soldiers to be embarked on board one of the ships lying in the port, and by not suffering any person to appear in the town with arms, but his officers, and the moment their vessels are prepared to receive the whole of them, they shall depart.

Most of the inhabitants of this place, at this time, are followers of Aury, and those persons who have been drawn here from motives

of speculation, who are, I suspect, of that profligate character generally engaged in the violation or evasion of our revenue laws. I shall, therefore, consult with commodore Henley, and will enforce such regulations as may be most likely to preserve order, until I receive instructions from the government.

Until this place is completely evacuated by this band of negroes and privateersmen, I have deemed it prudent to keep the whole of my force here. On their departure, I shall move all but one company to Point Petre.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your most obd't. serv't.

JAS. BANKHEAD.

Major 1st battalion artillery, **S. D.**
commanding detachment **U. S.**
troops.

GEORGE GRAHAM, Esq.

Acting Secretary of War.

(Copy.)

Fernandina, Amelia Island,

December 27, 1817.

SIR,

I had the honor to forward to the War Department, on the 24th instant, a copy of the correspondence with general Aury, previous to the landing of the troops under my command; and I herewith send a duplicate of the same.

Some difficulty has arisen from a want of competent authority, to settle the disputed claims of the residents of this place against the late government and the followers of Aury, who do not seem disposed to comply with their engagements.

One or two vessels have arrived here with cargoes, which the owners are desirous to land; and it might be improper to permit it, without obtaining security for the duties which the laws of the United States require; and other vessels, loaded in this port, have met with some delay in clearing for their destination; but the counsel of general Gaines, who arrived here last night, will regulate my conduct, and will, in a great measure, relieve my anxiety.

I have been obliged to exercise my authority, as commanding officer at this place, to preserve order; and I am happy to say, that nothing unpleasant has occurred. I cannot say when general Aury and

his party will sail. Their vessels are much out of order, and their arrangements to that effect progress but slowly. The morning after I landed, I ordered all the black and French troops to be embarked on board some of their vessels; but the crews of their privateers, and many others of all nations, whom it is difficult to restrain from violence and excess, are still here.

Until I am honored with your instructions, I hope that the course I may pursue may meet the approbation of the President.

General Gains leaves this for the western frontier of Georgia the day after to-morrow.

I have the honor to be,

With high respect,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed)

JAS. BANKHEAD,

Major 1st battalion artillery,
and commanding this port.

*To the Honorable
the Secretary of War.*

Navy Department,

January 15th, 1818.

SIR,

I have the honor to enclose, herewith, copies of orders to captain John H. Elton, and commodore John D. Henley, in relation to Amelia island: also a letter from the latter officer, communicating information of the surrender of that place, to the military and naval force of the United States, together with the correspondence which took place on that occasion.

I have the honor to be,

With the highest respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

B. W. CROWNINSHIELD.

To the President of the United States.

Navy Department,

July 16th, 1817.

SIR,

Proceed immediately with the United States' brig Saranac under your command to the river St. Mary's in Georgia, and inform

the military commander of your arrival, and of the objects specially designated to you in these orders.

The recent occupation of Amelia island by an officer in the service of the Spanish revolutionists, occasions just apprehensions, that from the vicinity to the coast of Georgia, attempts will be made to introduce slaves into the United States, contrary to the existing laws; and further attempts at illicit trade in smuggling goods in violation of our revenue laws.

You are hereby directed to detain and search every vessel, under whatever flag, which may enter the river St. Mary's, or be found hovering upon the coast under suspicious circumstances, and seize every vessel freighted with slaves, or whose doubtful character and situation shall indicate an intention of smuggling.

In the execution of these orders, you will take special care not to interrupt or detain any vessels sailing with regular papers, and of a national character, upon lawful voyages to or from a port or ports of the United States.

The traffic in slaves is intended to be restrained, and in the performance of this duty, you will exercise your sound judgment in regard to all vessels you may visit.

Communicate frequently to this Department, every event connected with this service, and if it shall be found necessary, a further naval force will be sent, either to strengthen your command, or to relieve you so as to pursue your original destination. If you find it necessary upon your arrival at St. Mary's to employ a good pilot well acquainted with the coast, rivers, and inlets, you are authorized to do so.

I am very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

B. W. CROWNINSHIELD.

Captain John H. Elton,

Commanding United States' brig *Saranac*,

New York.

Navy Department,

November 14th, 1817.

SIR,

Having been appointed to the command of the United States' ship *John Adams*, you are hereby ordered, in conformity to the wishes of the President of the United States, to proceed *forthwith* to the port of St. Mary's, in Georgia, taking with you, the United States' brigs *Enterprize* and *Prometheus*, and the schooner *Lynx*, if

the two latter have arrived in New York, and are in a state of readiness to accompany you; but you will not procrastinate the departure of the ship John Adams on account of these vessels, as any of them not fully prepared to proceed with you, shall be ordered to join you as soon as practicable at St. Mary's, at which place you will find the United States' brig Saranac, captain John H. Elton, and gunboat No. 168, lieutenant commandant R. McCall, both of which vessels will act under your orders.

The object of the President of the United States in ordering this naval force to St. Mary's, is to remove from Amelia island, the persons who have lately taken possession thereof, and, as it is understood and believed, without authority from the colonies, or any organized government whatever, and to the great annoyance of the United States. It has therefore been determined, that these persons shall be removed from that island, and that possession shall be taken for the present, by the land and naval forces of the United States.

On your arrival at St. Mary's, you will consult with the officer commanding the military force, who is instructed to co-operate with you in the performance of this service.

It is hoped that these persons will withdraw without bloodshed; and you will for this purpose, should your relative rank be superior to that of the commanding officer of the land forces, make known to the chief, commanding in Amelia, the determination of the government of the United States, to take possession of the island, and if the said chief, and the armed forces under his command, will peaceably quit the island, you will permit them so to do, taking special care that no depredations be committed on the inhabitants, whom it will be your duty to protect from violation or injury, either in their persons or property.

Should the force, however, now in command of the island, contrary to all expectations, resist and refuse absolutely to give up and abandon the same, you are in co-operation with the military force of the United States, to proceed and take possession of the island, in the name and by the authority of the United States.

Should you fall in with, on your way to St. Mary's, or find in Amelia, any vessels from the United States, armed and equipped by American citizens, acting as privateers, contrary to the laws of the United States, you will capture such, and send them to Savannah, in Georgia, to be dealt with according to law.

You will detain all prizes, or other vessels having slaves on board, as the presumption is strong, that they are intended to be smuggled into the United States. You will report from time to time, to this Department the operations of the force under your command.

I am very respectfully, &c.

(Signed,)

B. W. CROWNINSHIELD.

Commodore J. D. Henley.

P. S. These orders are not to be delivered to any person.

*U. S. Ship, John Adams,
Off Amelia, December 24, 1817.*

SIR,

I have the honor to transmit a copy of the correspondence, with general Aury, late commander of this place, and to inform you that the American flag was yesterday hoisted at Fernandina, and the Island of Amelia taken possession of by the land forces under major Bankhead, of the U. States' artillery.

The black troops of general Aury, have been embarked on board one of their ships lying in the port, and the remainder of his followers will be sent off the Island, as soon as the necessary arrangement can be made for the purpose. They are now engaged in watering their ships, and in the course of a week I hope to see all of them over the bar.

Most of the respectable inhabitants of this place, retired on its capture by M^rGregor, and those now here, are principally adventurers who have been attracted by motives of speculation, and as I suspect, and have every reason to believe, been engaged in the violation of our revenue laws, to prevent which in future, such precautions will be taken as are within my power, and which will I presume be adequate to the purpose.

I have not yet been able to examine the ship, and therefore can give you but little further information than was contained in my last communication. The leaks (the principal of which is about two feet under water) still continue, so that we make twenty inches of water per hour, and this lying in port. We are obliged to examine the magazine twice a day, to clear it of the water. I shall land all the powder immediately, to prevent any further damage. The bread, except a very small quantity, is entirely ruined, and unfit for use. I shall order a survey to ascertain the exact quantity of stores damaged, and inform you as early as circumstances will admit.

I shall also inform you by the next mail (which leaves St. Mary's on Saturday next) more particularly of the state of the ship, than has heretofore been in my power, the object of the expedition not having been effected, rendering it impracticable to examine her thoroughly. I am however entirely convinced in my own mind, that the battery now on the ship is too heavy for her, so much so, that I should deem her unsafe for a long cruise.

This will be sent by an express to Darien, the mail leaving this place but once a week.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your most obd't. servant,

J. D. HENLEY.

*The Hon. Benjamin W. Crownshield,
Secretary of the Navy.*

*United States' ship John Adams,
Off Amelia, December 30, 1817.*

SIR,

Since my arrival here, I have been so much engaged, that I have not had one moment to write to my friends. You no doubt, however, have some idea of my situation, and from my official reports, know that the American flag is now flying on Amelia Island. As there are many novel cases which must present themselves, I should have been better pleased, had my instructions been full, but we are now left to act as circumstances may require, and I am fearful that Aury and his followers will give us much trouble before they quit the Island. I am sorry to add, that the Americans appear to be much worse than any others. Should we be able to get through this business, so as to meet the approbation of the department, I shall feel much gratified; but I trust, that should I err in any steps that I may take that it will be considered by the President as an error of judgment; for I do assure you, that nothing would be so pleasing to me, as to have my conduct here approved by the executive. I have endeavored to keep as close to the letter of my instructions as possible, and have avoided every difficulty that I possibly could. I regret very much the difficulty of communicating with the government. We have only one mail per week, and that does not remain in St. Mary's long enough to enable us to answer letters that we may receive by it.

The situation of my ships you are no doubt acquainted with, as I have written several times to the Secretary on that subject. I, however, do not wish to leave this place until every thing is settled, and the government have established some kind of police for the better government of this place, which I am in hopes will take place ere long. I am fearful that Aury expects that the American government will relinquish Amelia, which impression will retard his departure.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. D. HENLEY.

HON. B. W. CROWNINSHIELD,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

“Extract from the capitulation of the Island of Amelia,” dated at Fernandina, 29th June, 1817, and signed by “Francisco Morales and Joseph de Fribarren,” attested by “Bernardo Segin” and “approved” by “Gregor M’Gregor.”

“Brigadier general M’Gregor commander in chief of all the forces, both naval and military, destined to effect the independence of the Floridas, duly authorized by the constituted authorities of the republics of Mexico, Buenos Ayres, New Grenada and Venezuela, offers to Don Francisco Morelas, *Capitandel regimiento de Cuba*, and commandant, civil and military, of the Island of Amelia, the following terms,” &c. &c.

Extract from a proclamation of Gregor M’Gregor, dated head quarters Amelia Island, June 30th, 1817, and signed “Gregor M’Gregor,” attested by “Joseph Fribarren, secretary.”

“PROCLAMATION.

“Gregor M’Gregor, brigadier general of the armies of the united provinces of New Grenada and Venezuela, and general and chief of the armies for the two Floridas, commissioned by the supreme directors of Mexico, South America, &c.”

Extract from an address of Gregor M’Gregor, dated at “Head quarters. San Fernandina. 1st July, 1817, 7 & 1,” and signed “Gregor M’Gregor,” and attested by “Jas. Fribarren.”

“Gregor M’Gregor, general of brigade to the armies of the United Provinces of New Grenada and Venezuela, and general in chief of that destined to both the Floridas, with commission from the supreme governments of Mexico and South America, &c.”

“In the name of the independent governments of South America, which I have the honor to represent, I thank you for this first proof of your ardor and devotion to her cause; and I trust that, impelled by the same noble principles, you will soon be able to free the whole of the Floridas from tyranny and oppression.”