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THE SURRENDER OF AMELIA ¹

Fernandina, 19th March, 1812.

Dear O'Reilley-

You all must be anctious to know our situation, and we as much so to know your's. The passes between this and St. Augustine being all stopt, a silence has reigned on boath sides. Dr. Bartohome de Castro having obtained a pass to go there, I cheerfully imbrace the few moments allowed by his hurried departure, to tell, in brief, some of the many occurrences of a few days.

Amelia, alas my friend! is no longer ours - The fources of the United States have compelled us to surrender it to those that owe alligianee to our Government; and they have delivered it into the possession of the United States - The Stars and Stripes now flies triumphant over our feelings, and publishing their disgrace -

We had repeated information that an attack, aided by the naval and military fources of the United States, was intended on us, but you know how often such reports have blown over unregarded. We could not suppose such large preparations as we knew were making were intended against our unprotected, unoffending province ; nor did we expect that they would meet so large a cooperating fource on our side. On Saturday, the 14th inst., we got certain account by my brother Witter that a considerable body of our countrymen, joined by a number of respectable persons from the town of St. Mary's, and many rag-amuffins from the fag-end of Georgia, had assembled at

¹ The original of this letter of G. I. F. Clarke's has been presented to the Society by Mrs. Hazel F. Barsa, Daytona, through the Fernandina Chamber of Commerce.

Row's Bluff on Bell's River, under the command of McIntosh, Ashley and Cook, and had erected their standard (a white flag bearing a soldier in the act of charging bayonett with the motto *Salus populi lex suprema*) and were recruiting fast. We all flew to armes and used every industry our forlorn situation admitted of, and continued at work all night. On the morning of the 15th, eight Gun Boats (seven, with two twenty-four pounders each ; and one with two thirty-two's with all their war equipments, men, and three months provisions on board, dropped down from the town of St. Mary's and rained themselves at the entrance of our harbour ; and the Rebel camp was removed from Row's Bluff to Low's plantation ; their flag flying full in view of our garrison. Cook, now Major, attended by Pickett, came down with a flag, demanding by letter, our surrender in writing within one hour; with great terms if we consented or terrible threats if we persisted in making further preparations of defence. We had sent Mr. Atkinson over to the town of St. Mary's, and the American garrison at Point Peter, to enquire from the civil and military authorities, what part the American Government intended to take in the contest; but their answers were evasive, and portended evil towards us. Our Commandant immediately called a council where it was agreed that Messrs. Arredondo, Hibberson, Atkinson, and myself, should wait on Commodore Campbell, Generals Mathews and Floyd, and Major Laval, at their different quarters ; and then call 'at the Rebel Camp, and regulate our conduct the best we could according to the sum of information we should procure from those american chiefs ; while all hands should be employed in improving hurried preparations of Defence -

Time does not permitt my entering on the minucia of our various interviews - We found Commodore

Campbell on board his Gun Boat; which, with seven more, formed a blockade to the entrance of our harbour ; and waiting the orders of General Mathews- We met the Generals, Mathews and Floyd, at Point Peter; the latter had not, as yet, received any orders to act against us ; nor was it, he said, in his power to withdraw his militia from the junction they had made with our Rebels. We found General Mathews strongly contesting with Major Laval, commander of the military force at Point Peter, for refusing to permit his troops to cooperate against us ; and who had, by his very correct and firm behavior, delayed our fate, and entirely saved St. Augustine from a surprise, which was planned and intended two days before-

To our grief we found that our fate was decreed, and that to escape we must repel the whole land and naval force of Georgia. We begged them to hold off their troops and Gun Boats and allow us to decide the contest with the insurgents, and if we did not drive them over St. Mary's River in one week we would then submit as they thought proper; but we spoke to the winds. We proceeded to the Rebel Camp, and arrived there at ten o'clock at night, and found they were preparing to attack us at daybreak the next day ; and wishing still to bear off the evil hour as long as possible, as there had two sail appeared off the bar in the evening, and it was probable that one of them was an English armed ship, we after much argumentary talk with McIntosh, Ashley and Cook, agreed on a suspension of arms until ten o'clock the next day, at which hour we were to send them an answer. On the morning of the 16th, the Gun Boats observing by the increase of our work during the night that we were bent on resistance ; and that we had not been sufficiently intimidated by the position they then occupied, five of them weighed anchor,

sailed up the harbour, three of them passed our flag, and all moored themselves in battle array within pistol shot of our gaurd, with their cannon unmasked, and pointed at our workes, and the most conspicuous parts of the town. We then sent Messrs. Yong and Atkinson as the flag promised to the camp, with a view to procrastinate still further, and afford us an opportunity of making a surrender to General Mathews; who was about that hour to be at the Camp;. and sent Messrs. Cashen and Arredondo on board of Commodore Campbell's boat to try and effect the same with him ; as officers of a legal authority - they refused our offers of submission to the United States - the Rebels returned an answer fraught with horror and embarked their fource in a number of large boats provided for the purpose and was descending with the ebb tide.

Great God! view our situation - the cannon of five Gun Boats staring us in the face ; their men at quarters, and matches lit; two more laying below in reserve ; and the Commodore sailing up and down our harbour throwing out his signals ; the Rebel flag attended by 276 effective men with fixed bayonetts procured from the stores of the United States, now full in view - only an occasional signal gun, and the shrill whistels piping orders, are heard through the awfull gloom-no alternative left-we must submit or die, and that immediately - the American Authorities would not relieve our feelings by receiving our submission, while their cannons stood gaping in our faces to compell our submission to the Rebels of our country, joined with the scurf of theirs! or crush our lives, or families, our properties, into eternity.

Some few actuated by desperation still called for a battle, while a large majority clamoured to our Commandant for a surrender - the land was irretriveably lost, and humanity called aloud to save what

stood upon it-the last moment was arrived. I was ordered, with a flag of surrender, to go forward and save the blood of our few friends already worn down by fatigues - I met their boats, and presented our submission to McIntosh and Ashley ; and, on a signal I made, the Flag at our gaurd was struck. They took possession, hoisted theirs at four o'clock in the afternoon, and remained in possession untill the next afternoon, when General Mathews, with a company of Riflemen from point Peter, came over and received the possession from them. -

Don Justo our commandant surrendered his sword with tears, while his few friends that were arround him blended theirs with his-the interview was truly feeling.

Our fources consisted, at the last moment of time, of about fifty fire-locks of various kinds and a few pistols and swords (these kept continually decreeing, as they had friends among us that were employed in stealing off or secreting our armes) two six, and four four pounders, a swivel and two blunderbusses, all of which excepting the armes of 14 soldiers, were borrowed from the shipping. We had covered the front of the garrison with brest workes of bales of Cotten, and at the neck that formes in McClure's field in our rear, where we expected the Rebel attack, we threw up two small intrenchments, and crowned them with bales of Cotten ; - Messrs. Hibberson commanded one at the garrison, and myself the other at these trenches - the Stores supplied us with powder, and spike nails as langrage shot - I have no more time, farewell -

Shew this to our Governor, a letter directed to His Excellency will be shure to be stopt. -

G. I. F. C.

P.S. There is little else but treason all around us - Com. Campbell had fired five signal cannon, at considerable intervals after his Gun Boats had taken

their last position, before the Rebbles imbarked their fources at Low's: evidence of a preconcerted plan- They worked round their canon athaut - ship to face us, as the change of tide swung round their Gun Boats. One of their Captains, (worthy of the cause in which he was engaged,) has since made his bost, that one of his cannons contained the materials of distruction to the amount of one hundred lbs; and the other, one thousand musquet balls.