

No. 19.

THE following letter is taken from the same congressional document as the papers in No. 18.—TRANSL.

Mr. Livingston to Mr. Madison, Secretary of State of the United States, dated Paris, 20th May, 1803.

[EXTRACT.]

I called this morning upon M. Marbois for a farther explanation on this subject, (the cession of Louisiana,) and to remind him of his having told me that Mobile made a part of the cession. He told me that he had no precise idea on the subject, but that he knew it to be an historical fact, and on that only he had formed his opinion. I asked him what orders had been given to the prefect that was to take possession, or what orders had been given by Spain as to the boundary in ceding it. He assured me that he did not know, but that he would make the inquiry and let me know. At four o'clock I called for Mr. Monroe to take him to the minister for foreign affairs, but he was prevented from accompanying me. I asked the minister what were the last bounds of the territory ceded to us; he said he did not know; we must take it as they had received it. I asked him how Spain meant to give them possession; he said according to the words of the treaty. But where did you mean to take? I do not know. Then you mean that we shall construe it our own way? I can give you no direction; you have made a noble bargain for yourselves, and I suppose you will make the most of it.