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WASHINGTON CITY, Nov. 19.

Naval Victory.

Yesterday captain STERRET, commander of the schooner *Enterprize*, part of the Mediterranean Squadron arrived here with dispatches for the Secretary of the Navy.

Capt. Sterret is the bearer of dispatches from Commodore Dale, which exhibit a detailed account of the proceedings and situation of the Mediterranean Squadron.

On the 11th of August, the schooner *Enterprize*, commanded by cap. Sterret, and carrying 12 six pounders and 90 men, bound to Malta for a supply of water, fell in with a Tripolitan cruiser, being a ship of 14 six pounders, manned by 80 men.

At this time the *Enterprize* bore British colours. Captain Sterret interrogated the commander of the Tripolitan on the object of his cruise. He replied that he came out to cruise after the Americans; and that he lamented that he had not come along side of some of them. Captain Sterret, on this reply, hoisted American, in the room of British colours; and discharged a volley of musquetry; which the Tripolitan returned by a partial broadside. This was the commencement of a hard fought action, which commenced at 9 A. M. and continued for three hours.

Three times, during the action, the Tripolitan attempted to board the *Enterprize*, & was as often repulsed with great slaughter, which was greatly increased by the effective aid afforded by the Marines. Three times, also, the Tripolitan struck her colours, and as often treacherously renewed the action, with the hope of disabling the crew of captain Sterret, which as is usual, when the enemy struck her colours, came on deck, and exposed themselves, while they gave three cheers as a mark of victory.

When for the third time, this treacherous attack was made, captain Sterret gave orders to sink the Tripolitan, on which a scene of furious combat ensued, until the enemy cried for mercy.

Captain Sterret, listening to the voice of humanity, even after such perfidious conduct, ordered the captain of her to come himself, or to send some of his officers on board the *Enterprize*. He was informed that the boat of the Tripolitan was so shattered as to be unfit for use. He asked, what security there was, that if he should send his men in his own boat they would not be murdered?

After numerous supplications and protestations the boat was sent. The crew of the Tripolitan was discovered to be in the most deplorable state. Out of 80 men 20 were killed, and 30 wounded. Among the killed were the second lieutenant and surgeon; and among the wounded were the captain and first lieutenant. And so decisive was the fire of the *Enterprize*, that the Tripolitan was found to be in a most perilous condition, having received 18 shot between wind and water.

When we compare this great slaughter, with the fact that not a single individual of the crew of the *Enterprize* was in the least degree injured, we are lost in surprise at the uncommon good fortune which accompanied our seamen, and at the superior management of captain Sterret.

All the officers and sailors manifested the truest spirit, and sustained the greatest efforts during the engagement. All, therefore are entitled to encomium for their valour and good conduct. The marines especially, owing to the nearness of the vessels, which were within pistol shot of each other, were eminently useful.

After admitting to the relief of the distresses of the wounded Tripolitan, and the wants of the crew, captain Sterret ordered the ship of the enemy to be completely dismantled. Her masts were accordingly all cut down, and her guns thrown overboard. A spar was raised, on which was fixed, as a flag, a tattered sail; and in this condition the ship was dismissed.

On the arrival of the Tripolitan ship at Tripoli, so strong was the sensation of shame and indignation excited there, that the Bey ordered the wounded captain to be mounted on a Jack Ass, and paraded thro' the streets as an object of public scorn. After which he received 500 ballanades.

So thunderstruck were the Tripolitans at this event, and at the apprehended destruction of their whole marine force, that the sailors then employed at Tripoli on board the cruisers that were hired out by the government, all deserted them, and not a man could be procured to navigate them.

But one cruiser to wit, a ship of 16 guns, remained out. She was reported to be off Sicily, but had not been seen by any of our squadron.

Capt. Sterret brings the latest intelligence respecting Egypt. When at Malta he was informed that Alexandria had not capitulated nor was it expected that it soon would capitulate, as the French had received a full supply of water of which before they had been in the greatest need. Captain Sterret states this upon verbal information which was, however, fully credited by the English officers at Malta.

The following are the particulars of an insurrection that happened at Algiers about the 18th of September. When the Dey was in his mosque at prayers with his aids, 10 Turks entered the palace, armed, took possession of his seat, hauled down his colours, secured the palace doors, hoisted a flag for a new dey, and from the windows above, offered a reward of 10,000 sequins to any person who would take his life. As he could not come out of the door of the mosque, on account of its being situated under the windows of the palace, and the Turks within having it in their power to fire upon them, they cut a passage thro' the back of the building, and entering the palace attacked the infernals, seven of whom made their escape, the other three fought until two of them, overcome by loss of blood, were compelled to surrender. The other was cut to pieces in the dey's seat, after usurping that post of honor for three hours. All, however, was quiet the 22d September.

List and particulars of American vessels under adjudication at Gibraltar, on the 14th September.

1. The schooner *Charlotte*, John Haynes commander, from Baltimore, with cocoa, &c. for Cadix, libelled for a breach of blockade, or otherwise, she was never warned, and when they got upon, was that of several shot being fired at her before she brought to, and was close in with Rota. As we are at war with Tripoli, I think our merchant vessels have a right to run as long as they can from the chasing vessels in those seas. The vessel and cargo belongs to a Mr. Pateron of Philadelphia, who was on board of her. She was taken by the Petrel sloop of war.

2. The ship *Apollo*, Samuel Thrift, commander, from Leghorn for the Isle of France, with a cargo of oil, soap, &c. the ship and cargo the property of Messrs. S. Smith and Buchanan, of Baltimore—she was stopped just after anchoring in the port, for coming from an enemy's port and bound to another enemy's port. It has since appeared that this vessel went from Baltimore for Leghorn, but being warned off the port, of its being blockaded, went to Naples, was there about three months, sold part of the cargo, when accounts arrived that the blockade no longer existed, on which she went round with part of the cargo—Of this and her being from one enemy's port to another, they make a handle, and is libelled as French.

3. Brig *Sally*, of Beverly, William James, commander, with a cargo Buenos Ayres hides, tallow, copper, horns, &c. loaded at Lisbon, on freight (though apparently the captain's, as he has declared) for this port and Trieste, stopped as being a suspicious cargo.

4. The schooner *Ma-y*, William Ward, commander, for a breach of blockade, stopped coming out of St. Lucar with a cargo of wine for New York—he was not warned when going in. Upon the captain's being interrogated he declares he does not know for whose account the wines are—and two days before he sailed, other vessels came out, which the British Admiral allowed to pass, also others to enter.

EARTHQUAKE.

A considerable shock of an Earthquake was experienced in Philadelphia on the night of the 12th inst. a few minutes before 12 o'clock. It was accompanied with a severe explosion, followed by rumbling distant sound. A slight agitation was perceptible in several houses—No injury of any kind has been sustained.

The Legislature of Rhode Island have terminated their autumnal session, and have adjourned till February next.

1. *Amendment to Federal Constitution.* During their session, the legislature took into consideration the amendment to the federal constitution respecting the choice of elec-

tors of a President, &c. proposed by the state of Maryland, and referred it to a committee of ten members to report thereon at the next session.

2. Militia Law.

In discussing the provisions of a Militia bill, Mr. C. Green advocated the propriety of paying those citizens who attended as militia men by a general tax on property.

After a short debate, the motion to this effect was negatived.

This proposition is noticed for the purpose of showing the attention of intelligent persons to the subject. It seriously becomes the legislature of the United States, and those of each state, in the existing period of tranquility and total freedom from alarm, to devise and put into a train of execution an energetic and wise militia system. In forming such a system, it may be worthy of consideration, whether a pressure upon the citizen would not of consequence be more the object of general regard, if a tax were laid in each state, either on property alone, or on property and persons, which should compensate the citizens called into the field, for the time employed in the exercise, & for their necessary equipment. The great end of a good militia law is the protection of the property and the person of the citizens. Those who possess the former should pay in the ratio of their wealth, and those who have no other than personal rights should pay a lesser contribution. On first thought this compound ratio would appear to be the most just.

The subject at any rate, is interesting, and merits the consideration of an enlightened mind.

3. Thanksgiving Day.

A resolution was introduced by Judge Bicknal, for the appointment of a day of Thanksgiving.

Mr. Pitman rose, and said that he must oppose the resolution for he was decidedly against a legislative appointment of any particular day for that purpose. It seemed too much like the molten calf, which Aaron threwed, and said these are thy Gods, O Israel.—He knew and felt the delicacy of his situation—that he should unavoidably provoke against him the honest prejudice of many, and many, perhaps less honest, would contribute to inflame those prejudices against him. But his own heart, and his own conscience admonished him that he should not become a sacrifice to them. We have, said he, the assurance of Christ himself (than whom there never was a more perfect character or better man) that those who resist the temporal power, from a connection with spiritual things, shall be countenanced, protected and justified—"My friends be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do—But I will forwarn you whom you shall fear. Fear him who after he hath killed, hath power to cast in to hell." Thus high and hal lowed are the assurances (said Mr. P.) that Daniel was cast into a den of lions, "for as much as he was faithful," disregarding the projects of the princes; and Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, into a burning furnace, because the sound of the dulciner and the harp could not allure them to fall down and worship the images set up by the king. But to them the jaws of the one were fastened, and the flames of the other were harmless.

He proceeded. The still and most earnest desire of the religious and reflecting mind, as soon as it comes to a knowledge of the excellency of a God, is, that it may form ideas worthy of, & suitable to that fountain of all goodness. Thus impressed, our hearts would be constantly filled with gratitude towards him. We should never be unmindful of the obligations we are under. A sense of that duty would ever be present with us, when we lie down, and when we rise up. To consecrate one day only, as sufficient to make a return of our thankfulness for continual bounties and blessings, was in his opinion, far from being right; was really disgraceful. The legislature has no authority, nor can it have any jurisdiction in matters of religion. The constitutions of nine states, promulgate the principle, that it is the right of every man to worship God agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience. In the charter of this state, other words are made use of, as if it had been intended to preserve that right with more fulness and certainty. It is true, said he, it bears the semblance of a recommendation; but this is the first step to a religious tyranny. The Pope of Rome styles himself Christ's vice-gerent on earth, and if his advancement to that station does not supply the power, yet it implies an acknowledgment on the part of the people, of a belief of the existence of that power which

makes it constitutional. We have no delegated powers; for that reason it would be an usurpation.

Mr. C. Green observed that he was very sorry to have occasion to speak again upon that subject in the legislature of Rhode Island. He believed it to be an unauthorized interference, and an objectionable assumption of power. For though it was clothed in the soft language of a recommendation, yet it would operate upon those whose consciences might forbid a compliance, with all the disagreeables of penalty—the penalty of disaffection, disgust, and dislike, from the rest of their fellow-citizens. Experience had taught him the force of this observation. Many do not make the distinction between a recommendation of this kind, and a positive law; but consider, that whatever comes from the legislature, as entitled to respect, for which obedience is required. Thus its principal effect goes to create animosity among the people, and to make against many an unfavorable impression. He thought the bill to be an improper interference in matters of a religious nature. That a such interference was rather arbitrary, as the members of the house had no power invested in them to direct their constituents in spiritual matters. He believed that but few states were in the habit of this. It was true that the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut were—From whence he concluded that this state had taken the example. But he hoped the Presbyterianism of those states, in this respect, would never be introduced into this state, to tyrannise over the inhabitants. Yet he ardently hoped that the Presbyterians of this state might ever enjoy their religious liberties, in the fullest manner. What (said Mr. G.) was the object of our forefather Roger Williams, who was the first settler in this state, in coming here from Massachusetts? It was that he might enjoy the liberty of conscience. He there perceived a species of bigotry rising to intolerance. He left, and came to this state, then wild and uncultivated, and we are all entitled to the freedom for which he suffered. Mr. Green concluded by observing, that the reason why, in his state, the different denominations had so long lived together in harmony and friendship, was because there was no preference given to any sect by the laws, and that the least interference would tend to destroy that harmony. And as a connection between church and state had ever been so dreadful an enemy to society, he hoped the legislature would resist such an enemy while yet on the threshold.

The house being divided, the proposed resolutions were negatived by a great majority.

4. Legislative confidence in the Governor.

The following resolution was passed by the house: Forasmuch as several publications have of late been made, in a certain newspaper printed at Providence by Benet Wheeler, called the United States Chronicle, flandering and defaming the governor, supreme court, and other constituted authorities of this state, one of which publications was subscribed by John Dorance:

Resolved, That in the opinion of this General Assembly, the said publications tend to discredit this state abroad, and to disquiet the good people of this state, by weakening public confidence in the constituted authorities thereof.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this General Assembly, his excellency the governor, the supreme court, and the other constituted authorities of this state, are well entitled to the public confidence, and have deserved well of their fellow-citizens, by a faithful and meritorious execution of the trusts reposed in them by the people.

Without questioning the justness of the opinion expressed by the legislature, we cannot but deprecate the impolicy, and even pernicious tendency of a legislature stooping to interfere in newspaper discussions—We think it at once futile and undignified.

Capt. Annabel, arrived at New York in 31 days from Jeremie, informs, that that port was shut against neutral vessels; but it was expected by the merchants of the place, that it would be opened again in a few days.

A letter from a respectable American gentleman now in London, dated the 4th of September, mentions that several of our vessels laden with valuable cargoes had within a fortnight been taken by the English Squadron charged with the blockade of Havre de Grace. It had been before understood that they were to be warned instead of being detained, and several had been previously turned away with warning. It is added that the captured vessels would be discharged by an order of the cabinet.