

From the Columbian Centinel.

Mr. Russell, If none better are offered, please to publish the following answers to PILATE's enquiries after "truth."

PAUL.

TO PILATE.

Question 1. "Why is it that Drifts sometimes become Christians?"

Answer. Because some Drifts enlightened and influenced by the divine spirit, perceive and embrace the truth.

Q. 2. "Why do the latter (i. e. Christians) never change sides?"

A. Because they do not choose to change a good religion for none at all, or that which yields them comfort and hope, for that which deprives them of both.

Q. 3. "Why is it that trinitarians often become unitarians?"

A. All trinitarians are unitarians—i. e. They believe there is but one God. Unitarianism, therefore, is not a proper term of distinction. But to adapt the answer to your meaning—The reason why some trinitarians (or those who believe the doctrine of Christ's divinity) become unitarians;—viz. deny and reject the doctrine of Christ's divinity, may be, either because such trinitarians have never been settled and established in this branch of scriptural faith, and are, therefore, proper subjects to be borne about by every wind of doctrine; or, because they have proudly disdained to believe what they could not comprehend and explain; or, because, like a great part of the world, they prefer error to truth, or for the same reason that our Lord assigns for men's loving darkness rather than light.

Q. 4. "Why do these rarely become trinitarians?"

A. Because men who have imbibed so dangerous and inveterate an error as unitarianism, or the rejection of Christ's divinity, are seldom cured of it.

PAUL.

Extract from the speech of Charles Pinckney, Governor of the State of South-Carolina, to the Legislature of that state at the opening of their session on the 23d ult.

On the subject of our intercourse with foreign powers, it is my duty to acquaint you, that on the President of the United States being informed, the French republic had refused to receive our minister, and that their agents and cruizers continued to seize the vessels of our citizens, he considered it as his duty to call a special meeting of congress—that they did convene, and after having agreed in opinion with the president, that another attempt should be instituted to settle our differences, by negotiation, had passed some acts: among the most important of which, are the acts for prohibiting for a limited time the exportation of arms and ammunition—for preventing the citizens the United States from privateering against nations in amity with us—providing for the further defence of the ports and harbours of the United States—authorizing a detachment of the militia of the United States—for registering and enrolling ships and vessels—for making certain appropriations for additional expenditures, and laying duties on stamp vellum, parchment and paper.

On the laws for authorizing the president to call out a certain proportion of the militia, I have acted as far as rested with me, by issuing the necessary orders to the adjutant general, for apportioning their quotas on the respective brigades, and ordering them to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's warning, and he has issued orders to the brigadiers for their returns to enable him to do so. Most of these acts have been passed by Congress with a view to place us in a state of preparation, should the republic of France still continue unfriendly, or refuse to assent to an amicable adjustment of our differences. I trust, however, that from the arrival of our envoys, and the manner in which our government have again attempted to adjust our differences, the moderation and justice of both nations will prevail—that they will repair recent injuries and recollect former mutual sufferings and services—that they will remember, it is always the true interest of republics to aid and protect each other, and that the present negotiation may terminate in producing as harmonious a connection, as has hitherto existed between the two countries. Convinced as I am from the most deliberate reflection, that considering our original connection, and the nature and principles, as to commercial views of both governments, while we can do it with honor, it is our interest to be upon the most friendly terms with France, it has been with as much concern I have viewed our unhappy differences, as it is now with pleasure I find myself enabled to communicate to you the appointment, during your recess, of three gentlemen of known character and talents, to repair to Paris, invested with proper powers to terminate them. As I have already observed, the solemn manner in which this embassy was formed, is a proof how highly our government value the friendship, and how important they conceive the intercourse with France to be—and as there can be no doubt of our envoys being vested with ample powers, I have been led to expect the most favorable consequences. Should our differences with France be amicably settled, those with Spain, her ally, will of course be more easily accommodated.

It was my wish, and I had some ground to expect, it would have been in my power, at the opening of this session, to have congratulated you on the termination of differences among all the belligerent powers; and

that to the unexampled horrors and distresses, produced by a contest, extending thro' almost every part of the civilized world, a period was to succeed, when liberty, with the genial arts of peace and commerce might establish her mild dominion—when from the wide and proper use of these advantages, you may have been enabled to recollect, without regret, that the sacred flame you first kindled had successfully extended through the fairest parts of the earth, and that we had repaid the benefits derived from the old world in their discovery and settlement of the new by an example, and by light and instruction upon questions of all others the most interesting to them. It is with the deepest concern, therefore, I am to announce to you, that the negotiations for peace between the powers at war have ended without success; and that it is yet uncertain what will be the future situation of Europe, and of the nations with whom we are most connected. Impossible as it must be for us, at this time, and at this distance, to form an accurate opinion of the events which have produced these late and important changes—lamenting as we must do, the continuance of the war, and its attendant calamities, let us still hope they may soon see their true interest in the establishment of a general peace, and that the measures produced by our example, may be followed by the same moderation which accompanied our revolution—that they may really prove a blessing to the people who have imitated us—that when the heat, which must ever accompany the destruction of ancient despotisms, and the erection of republics, is subsided, the change shall operate so beneficially, as amply to repay the ravages of the contest, and that the time is not distant, when such proper and liberal systems, in the intercourse of nations shall be generally established, as will be the means of preventing wars, and ensuring to the world the blessings of peace, and an undisturbed and general commerce.

COMMERCE.

An exact list of the ships of different Nations that have passed the Sound in the Years 1790 and 1796.

The navigation of the Sound has been considered as an object of so much importance in a political light, that the following account of the Trade of two years, at a considerable distance from each other, must necessarily be received with interest and attention.

Ships that passed through the Sound.

Table with columns: In 1790, In 1796. Rows: American, Brementers, Courlanders, Danish, Dantzickers, Dutch, English, Flemings, French, Hamburgers, Lubbeckers, Odenburghers, Papenburghers, Portugueses, Prussian, Rostockers, Russian, Swedish, Spanish, Venetian, Total.

The foregoing list must give rise to important reflections and remarkable comparisons. The annual revenues arising from the toll levied upon vessels passing through the Sound, has been generally estimated at between 5 and 600,000 rix dollars: so that the Royal Treasury must have received nearly 150,000 rix dollars more in the year 1796 than in the year 1790. It does not belong to this place to enter into the causes of so extraordinary an increase in the navigation of the Sound, which for the most part, depends upon political circumstances, upon encasing speculations, and the spirit of commerce. It is sufficient to remark, that this navigation has increased about a fourth in the interval of the time between the years 1790 and 1797. The subjects of one country (Denmark) must observe with the sentiments of patriotism and gratitude how much their trade has been promoted by the wise measures of their government, and what sources of prosperity have been opened to them. The increase of Prussia and Sweden has been almost incredible, the trade of the former being increased to nearly a triple, and the latter almost in a quintuple proportion.

Great Britain, whose navigation has increased with the present war, is also a considerable gainer by the increase of her trade to the East Sea. But the French Revolution, and the war which succeeded it, have produced the most melancholy consequences to the trade of France and Holland, and have been no less destructive to their Baltic trade than to their commerce in other parts of the world. France, whose merchantmen formerly passed the Sound in considerable numbers, cannot reckon a single ship in the year 1796; and Holland, that country so famous for its wealth, the commercial rival of Great-Britain, and which before the Revolution had drawn to itself a considerable part of the trade of the East Sea, saw that important branch of its commerce reduced in the last year to a single ship. The trade of the United States to the East Country appears to have received a considerable increase; but Hamburg, whose trade according to the most general received opinion, has risen to an astonishing height in the course of the

* It may be necessary for the information of many readers, who may be unacquainted with this appellation, to state, that in the Danish shipping lists, all vessels clearing out from any of the commercial places from the Wefer to the Ems are distinguished by the above description.

present war, has experienced a considerable diminution of its trade to the Sound. That of Bremen has also diminished; Lubec only has maintained its former proportion, though with some considerable decrease.

C O N G R E S S.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TUESDAY—DECEMBER, 19.

The Speaker informed the House that he had received a letter from the director of the mint, inclosing a report, in pursuance to the order of the house passed yesterday. This report states, that it is not deemed prudent to take into the mint more bullion than can be worked in one mafe, when it comes from any of the banks of the city, from whence it can be had in a very short time when wanted; that deposits are now waiting till such as are in hand are finished; that it is expected the banks of this city and of New-York will make deposits for about 300,000 dollars, in French crowns, but that these deposits are kept back until prior ones are paid off; that when there is sufficient bullion in the mint to keep one press striking, this will be done at the rate of from 18 to 20,000 dollars weekly. The gold coin engraves in amount according to its additional value. It is stated that the gold bullion deposited in the mint, since the 29th November, 1796 (the time at which the last report was made) to the 18th instant, was 5997 oz. 15 dwts. 9 gr. value 106,626 dollars and 95 cents. The quantity of silver bullion deposited, during the same period, has been 42,151 oz. 8 gr. value 48,635 dollars 76 cents 5 mills. The quantity of silver coin issued since the last report is stated to have been 12,546 dollars, 3918 half-dollars, 252 quarter-dollars, 25,261 dimes, 44,527 half dimes—amounting in the whole to 19,320 dollars 45 cents. That there were nearly ready for delivery in the mint 34,000 dollars in silver coins. It is also stated that the quantity of gold coin issued, during the same period, has been 9172 eagles, 6406 half-eagles, 1756 qr. eagles; equal to the value of 128,190 dollars.

Mr. T. Claiborne moved the usual order for printing this report.

Mr. Nicholas had no objection to the report being printed; that it might be taken into consideration when the subject of the mint should come before the house; but hoped it would be suffered to lie on the table until the bill, with which some gentlemen had supposed it to be connected, should be passed, in order that it might be referred to whilst on the table by those who wished it, as he trusted they should not delay the consideration of the bill relative to foreign coin until this report should be printed.

Mr. Thatcher could not see the use of printing the report, after the subject to which it alluded was disposed of. This would be like executing a man and then trying him. The printing of these papers, he supposed, could not delay the business more than 24 hours, or 48 at most. He thought, therefore, it would be much better that they should be printed, than that the clerk should be frequently called upon to read them, or that the members should collect themselves in clubs, as on a former occasion (meaning, we suppose, the Quakers' petition) to read them, in different parts of the house.

The motion for printing was put and carried.

Mr. Harrison presented a memorial from D. M. Randolph, marshall of the district of Virginia, complaining of the ruinous state of the prisons in that quarter; stating the utter impossibility of confining any person, under process of the courts of the United States, for debt, who wished to be at liberty, and that on account of this defect several persons had made their escape from him, and he was sued by their creditors for their debts. He prays relief in the premises, referred to a select committee of five.

Mr. Baird presented a petition from Simon Cogler, a soldier in the late war, praying for compensation for his services; and Mr. Sewall one from G. Pomeroy, stating that he had not only lost his house and furniture, but several certificates of public debt, for which he prays recompense.

Both these petitions were referred to the committee of claims.

Mr. Harper, from the committee appointed to prepare and report a bill prescribing the mode of taking evidence in cases of contested elections, and to compel the attendance of witnesses, reported a bill accordingly, which was twice read, and committed for Monday.

Mr. D. Foster, from the committee of claims, made an unfavourable report on the petition of John Black, which was concurred in by the house.

Mr. Harper called for the order of the day on the report of the committee of ways and means, on the petition of William Tomlinson and others, citizens of the state of Virginia, which being agreed to, the house resolved itself into a committee of the whole accordingly.

The petition states, that in consequence of the construction put by the Treasury Department on the acts for laying duties on spirits distilled within the United States and on stills, persons desirous of obtaining licences for distilling, pursuant to the act of the 3d of March, 1797, on that subject, are required to make their election, as to the length of time to which the licence shall extend and the time of its commencement in the month of June, the time fixed by law for making entry of stills. From hence they allege that great inconveniences result to the distiller; inasmuch as it is impossible to foresee, so early as June, what quantity of fruit or grain, the year will afford, and consequently, for the owners of stills to judge when, or for what length of time, they ought to take out their licences.

This construction, the committee find, has been adopted by the Treasury Depart-

ment, and they conceive that it has been properly adopted; but though they conceive the construction put on the act, 1797, by the Treasury Department, to be strictly legal, they are nevertheless, of opinion, that for the reason set forth by the petitioners, it null, in its effect, prove highly inconvenient and detrimental both to individuals and the public. And they have the satisfaction to find, that the Secretary of the Treasury, with whom they thought proper to confer on the subject, agrees with them in opinion as to the expediency of altering the law so as to permit owners of stills, having duly entered them, to make their election both as to the time, and the extent of their licences at whatever period may suit them best. In pursuance of these ideas, the committee beg leave to present, for the consideration of the House, the following resolution:

"Resolved, That it is expedient to amend the several acts respecting duties on spirits distilled within the United States, and on stills, as to permit owners of stills, duly entered, to make their election, at any time of the year, both as to the time of taking out licences pursuant to the said acts, or any of them, and as to the period to which such licences shall extend—and that the committee have leave to bring in a bill accordingly."

Mr. Gallatin proposed an amendment to the report. Besides the duty paid on licences taken out for a shorter time than a year, there was a duty of 54 cents per gallon paid by those who choose to enter by the year. This duty was not so called a licence by the year, though not so called. The proposed resolution would not reach licences by the year, tho' he thought it ought, as persons taking out a licence for a year, were as much at a loss to know in the month of June, whether their crops would enable them to distil for so long a time as to make it their interest to do so, as those who took licences out for a shorter period. The consequence was, that, in the part of the country from whence he came, scarcely any person ventured to take out a licence for the year, but ran the risk of taking out a licence for a shorter period. This was inconvenient, as it probably left their stills for several months unemployed, and had an effect to injure the revenue. He hoped therefore, the report would be extended to yearly licences, as well as to those for a shorter period.

Mr. Harper seconded this amendment.—He said it would have been introduced into the report if the committee had thought themselves at liberty to do so; but as the petition referred to them did not complain of this part of the act, they did not think themselves authorized to touch it.

The motion was agreed to, the committee rose, the house agreed to the amendment, and a bill was directed to be brought in accordingly.

Mr. Coit called for the order of the day on the report of the committee of claims, on the petition of Anna Welsh; which motion being agreed to, the house resolved itself into a committee of the whole on the subject.

The petitioner asks for an allowance of the seven years half-pay, promised to the widows and orphans of certain officers killed in the service of the United States, during the late war. It appears that Mrs. Welsh's husband was a captain of marines—that he served on the expedition to Pemboldt, and was there slain; but the resolution of Congress, promising seven years half-pay to the officers who fell in service, did not extend to the widows of officers of the navy. The petitioner, as executrix of the last will and testament of her brother, George Hurlbut, deceased, further asks for an allowance of the commutation, and land warrants, to which she apprehends she is entitled, on the principle that her brother continued in service till the end of the war. That gentleman was a captain in Sheldon's regiment of light-dragoons; he was wounded by the enemy, in the performance of his duty, at Tarrytown, in the summer of 1781, and languished of his wounds until the 8th of May, 1783, when he died.—By the act of Congress of the 21st of October, 1780, half-pay for life was promised to the officers of the army, who should continue in the service to the end of the war. This was afterwards, on the 22d of March, 1789, commuted for five years full pay. If captain Hurlbut lived to the end of the war, he was entitled to commutation, and in his right the petitioner, as executrix of his will, and legatee, would be entitled, otherwise not. The question then arising is, when did the war end? or in other words, was there an end of the war before the 8th of May, 1783, the day of captain Hurlbut's death? On the solution of the question, rests the claim of the petitioner for commutation; it being placed on the ground of contract only. The provisional articles of peace between the United States and Great-Britain, were signed November 30, 1782, and the treaty between France and Great-Britain, on which the efficacy of those articles was conditioned, upon the 26th of January 1783. The first information Congress appear to have had of them, was on the 24th of March 1783, when the armed vessels, cruising under commissions from the United States, were recalled. On the 11th April 1783, a cessation of hostilities was ordered by proclamation of Congress. On the 23d of April, Congress, by their resolution of that date, declared their opinion, that "the time of the men engaged to serve during the war, does not expire until the ratification of the definitive treaty of peace." By the acts of May 26, June 11, August 9, and September 26, 1783, Congress directed parts of the army to be furloughed, and by their proclamation on the 18th October in the same year, they discharged absolutely, after the 3d November, then ensuing, such part of the federal armies as had been furloughed by the several acts aforesaid. On the 25th November, New-York was evacuated by the British troops. The definitive treaty of peace was, in fact, signed on the 3d September, 1783, but not received by Congress till about the middle of January 1784. In the 4 settlements made for pay, &c. by the commissioners of Congress, with the officers and men engaged to serve during the war, and furloughed as aforesaid, the 3d day of November, the day when the troops were discharged by proclamation, has been regarded as the end of the war, and they have been settled with, and paid to that day accordingly.

The committee state, that had they found no resolution of Congress, which seemed to have determined the question when the war ended, they might have been induced to fix on a period, antecedent to the death of captain Hurlbut, and consequently have been of opinion, that the petitioner was entitled to relief; but as Congress seem to have fixed on a later period, by their resolution of the 23d of April, and by continuing in service, the troops engaged to serve during the war, and paying the officers and men till the

3d of November 1783, as they were liable till that time, to be called into service, and in case of disobedience, would have been subjected to the penalties of the rules and articles of war; and as the House of Representatives, under the present government, rejected a petition for commutation, founded on principles, exactly similar with the present, by the administrator to the estate of Major Torrey, who died in September, 1783, the committee conceive they are not at liberty to contradict authority and precedent, so respectable—They therefore report, that the prayer of the petition of the said Anna Welsh, ought not to be granted.

Mr. D. Foster said the case was so fully stated in the report, that he believed it would be unnecessary to say any thing more than that Mrs. Welsh had obtained the land warrant to which she was entitled from the war-office.

This report was opposed by Messrs. Coit, Brookes and Dayton, who insisted upon the widow being entitled to her claim of commutation on account of the services of her brother, as the war must be considered as terminated, when the preliminaries of peace were signed, which was previous to his death, and if contrary decisions had been made, it was time they were reversed. In confirmation of what was asserted of the defects of captain Hurlbut, a letter and certificate of General Washington were produced, which spoke of him in the highest possible terms.

The report was supported, on the ground of precedent, by Messrs. D. Foster, Macon, and Nicholas.

It was finally negatived, there being only 21 votes for it.

Mr. Coit then moved a resolution to the following effect which, after a few observations was agreed to.

"Resolved, that provision ought to be made by law for allowing to the legal representatives of George Hurlbut, a captain in the service of the United States, the commutation to which he is entitled."

The committee rose, and the house agreed to the resolution, and ordered a bill to be brought in accordingly.

Mr. T. Blount presented a petition from sundry inhabitants of North-Carolina praying that a post road may be established from Washington to Woodstown. Referred to the committee already appointed on this subject.

Mr. Livingston presented the petition of William Dixon and Pierre Anpoix, merchants of New-York; the former praying for the reimbursement of duties which he had been obliged to pay on a vessel, considered as foreign, for want of a proper register; the latter to be allowed a debenture on a quantity of goods exported, the drawback on which had been withheld, on account of some informality in his entry. Both were referred to the committee of commerce, and manufactures.

On motion of Mr. Pinckney, the house went into a committee of the whole, on the bill for the relief of North and Vefey of Charleston; when Mr. Coit moving to amend the bill, by leaving the allowance to be made to be ascertained by the proper officers, instead of saying what it should be; Mr. Swanwick called for the reading of the petition, as he believed there was annexed to it a certificate from the collector of the port of the quantity of sugar consumed; but the clerk not being able readily to find the petition, a motion was made for the committee to rise and report progress, which being agreed to, the committee had leave to sit again. Adjourned.

PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

December 18.

A petition from a number of the citizens of Montgomery county, stating certain inconveniences from the present arrangement of election districts, and praying two new election districts may be laid out, was presented, read and referred to the members from Montgomery county.

A petition signed by a committee of the directors of the bank of Pennsylvania, praying that the cashier and his successor in office, may be appointed a notary public for the special business of the bank, was presented, read and referred to a committee.

A petition from Benjamin Chambers, praying that if Chambersburgh should be incorporated his property may not be included in the act of incorporation, was presented, read and referred to members from Franklin county.

Several other petitions were presented and read. The committee on the petition from Berks county, praying an alteration in the sixth election district, made report in favor of the petitioners.

The house proceeded to the further consideration of the report of the committee on the governor's address.

That on the election laws was referred to a committee consisting of Messrs. Wain, Leib, Carpenter, Whitehill, Wells, Ireley, and Palmer.

That on the organization of the militia was referred to Messrs. Gurney, Worrell, Lewis, Rhea, and Marshall.

That on the expediency of a toll on the Conowing canal, was referred to Messrs. Kirk, Hopkins, W. Snyder, and Henderson.

That on the insolvent laws was referred to a committee already appointed.

That on the territorial controversy in Luzerne, was referred to Messrs. Forrell, Hemphill, Kelly, Weaver, S. Marclay, Hendricks, and Wallace.

That on the public buildings in Ninth Street, was referred to a committee already appointed.

That on marriage and tavern licences was referred to Messrs. Bull, Power, Grelcup, Finley, and Kraus. Adjourned.

December 19.

Petitions from a number of the citizens of Montgomery county, praying a new election district may be allowed them, was presented, read and referred.

The committee on the petition of John Gibson praying permission to erect a dam across the river Youghiogenny reported in favor of the petitioner.

The house resolved itself into a committee of the whole on the answer to the governor's address, Mr. Ball in the chair—the answer as reported by the committee, was agreed upon without amendment.

The answer was taken up for a second reading in the house, and was adopted with the following addition which was moved by Dr. Leib.

"To establish our political institutions upon a genuine republican foundation, we heartily agree with you, was the great object of our revolution; and we also trust, that posterity will never behold the calamitous day, when, by insidious machinations, or by open force, so glorious a foundation shall be undermined or overthrown." Adjourned.