

one of our most sacred rights, and he who sets it at naught merits the severest censure. But what are the facts as I gather them from your communication and the orders and correspondence accompanying it.

It seems that in March 1862, when you abandoned your former places of worship, you secured the "New Assembly Rooms," where from that time until the 15th of February last you continued your religious exercises "free from any interruption whatever."

In your letter to Genl. Schenck of 14th of Feby. (a copy of which you send me) you say that when you assembled as usual for Morning service on the preceding Sunday (the 8th Feby.) "It was found that two large American flags were displayed immediately over and in the rear of the Preachers stand." It is to this display, I presume, that the Provost Marshal in his first order refers, when addressing Mr. M^r. Geough the agent of the Rooms he says: "I understand that considerable disgust is excited in the view of a class of persons who assemble at your Rooms in consequence of the American flag being displayed there" and then directs the said agent to cause that flag to be conspicuously displayed in the same place until further orders.

It was therefore the disgust manifested by some of your congregation at the flag which confronted them on the morning of the 8th of February that occasioned the first order of the Military Authorities directing its continuance there. It was not displayed on the morning of the 8th in consequence of any Military order, but as I understand to be conceded, was left there inadvertently, being one of many with which the Room had been decorated on the previous night on the occasion of some Ball or Concert. Here the suggestion naturally arises, that whilst all religious congregations are equally entitled to the same privileges and protection, no matter where they may worship, yet any one that selects as its sanctuary a public Ball and Concert Room, should hardly manifest surprise much less its disgust at any flag that may occasionally adorn its walls, and more especially the flag of the country that shelters it.

That such a disgust was exhibited by a portion at least of your congregation seems to be an admitted fact: It is expressly so stated as we have seen by Major Fish, in the first order which he issued, and although he states it as the very foundation of that order, yet the statement is not denied either in the proceedings of the official members of your Church, who met and in consequence of said order "declined any longer to occupy the New Assembly Rooms," nor in your letter to Genl. Schenck of 14th Feby. wherein you in effect admit the display of some such feeling when you say that the exhibition of the flag "may have been objected to by a few" — Here then we have the reason for the first interference of the Military Authorities in ordering the display of the flag — It was not because the congregation had seceded from the Conference or because they entertained, as some have supposed, sympathies with political secession — for although a similar Military Authority has existed in your City ever since your congregation was separately organized — you have more than once adverted to the fact that it has always heretofore enjoyed its religious services "free from any interruption whatever?"